

# PLAYER'S ADVICE TO SOCIAL GOLFERS: **ROTATE YOUR BODY**

SOUTH AFRICAN LEGEND SPREADS GOLF'S GOSPEL WORLDWIDE; WILL RECEIVE TOP AWARD FOR HIS PHILANTHROPY

THERE'S a video circulating in which golfing legend Gary Player has the most basic advice for social golfers: Rotate your body when you swing.

Before that, he mentions names such as Lee Trevino, Arnold Palmer, Jack Nicklaus and Jim Furyk having odd swings, though they achieve the results they want.

Reason: they move the body forward after executing the drive.

So as the South African icon travels the world to promote junior golf, cut ribbons for grand events and plugs his The Player Foundation which helps poor children, his sermon is always also about keeping fit and eating right.

Now 84, Player does daily exercises, works out in the gym and the vegetarian is very strict about his daily intake of food, especially during his travels.

I have met the affable Player thrice, played with him a couple of holes twice, and one thing I cannot fathom is how he keeps himself so fit, trim and agile at his age.

At our last two meetings, at Laguna Golf and Country Club nine years ago and in Haikou, China, three years ago, he was very specific about how he kept in shape.

Both times, he thumped his abs (it has become a fashion statement now), and said: "Look at this."

Then he invited me to punch his stomach, saying: "This is not luck. A lot of it is down to the way I eat.

photo by Rolex



Gary Player doffs his cap to the cheering crowd at the British Open.

I also go to the gym to work out for two hours and do 1,000 sit-ups with a 100-pound weight here."

He added: "One out of 1,000 people, and I'm being kind here, worry about health. The biggest problem facing the world today is not economy or wars, it's obesity. More people die of obesity than of all the wars of the world put together."

"My father was a miner and very poor, never made more than a £100 a month in his life. I come back from school, my mother's dead, my father's 12,000 feet underground, my brother's in the World War at 17, and my sister's in boarding school.

"I come back, there's no one in the house, it's dark. "And I said: 'I know what it's like to have that much food.

I'm poor, I'm suffering, and one day – not if I'm a world champion, I will be a world champion in something – I'm going to help the poor people'."

The Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA) this month recognised Player for his yeoman service in this direction by selecting him for the 2020 Old Tom Morris Award.

The award has been presented annually since 1983 to an individual who, through a lifetime commitment to the game of golf, has helped to mould the welfare of the game in the manner and style exemplified by Old Tom Morris, a four-time Open champion.

He was the longtime superintendent at St Andrews in Scotland un-

til his death in 1908.

The award will be presented to the Johannesburg native on Jan 29 during the opening session of the Golf Industry Show in Orlando, Florida.

GCSAA president Rafael Barajas said: "Gary Player's legacy in golf is known worldwide, but he should be equally recognised for his philanthropic endeavours through the Player Foundation.

"We are truly honoured to bestow the Old Tom Morris Award upon a consummate gentleman who has worked tirelessly for underprivileged children and impoverished communities around the globe. Gary Player embodies not only the best in golf, but also the best of humanity."

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