

Focused Fun

PGA/LPGA Teaching Professional at Compass Pointe Golf Club, Nicole Weller is passionate about helping people learn to love the game of golf.

BY LARRY HERSHOFF
PHOTOGRAPHY BY LEIGH ROBERTS



How would you describe someone who teaches Learn About Golf in a Day; has developed and delivers a program titled “Drop Your Score, Guaranteed-How to Win from 50+ Yards and In;” has written a book, created flashcards and a jigsaw puzzle/treasure hunt to educate youngsters about golf; and helps adults manage the emotional, mental and physical aspects of golf?

One word will not suffice, and I hope I can do it in about 600.

Nicole Weller has an indescribable effervescence about golf, and she has the chops and awards to prove it. I had the

pleasure of meeting this PGA/LPGA teaching professional to learn about her exploits, and it is clear that golf runs through her veins and is resident in her heart and brain.

A standout student and golf athlete at Wake Forest University, Weller earned a master’s degree in sports psychology at the University of Tennessee. She embarked on a golf career that has “enriched the

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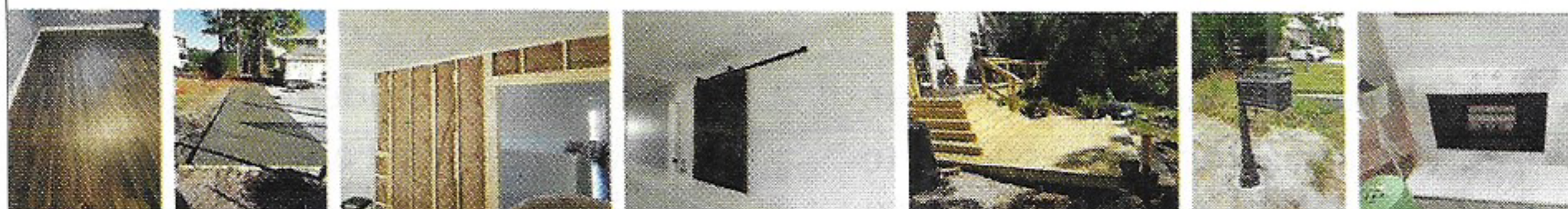
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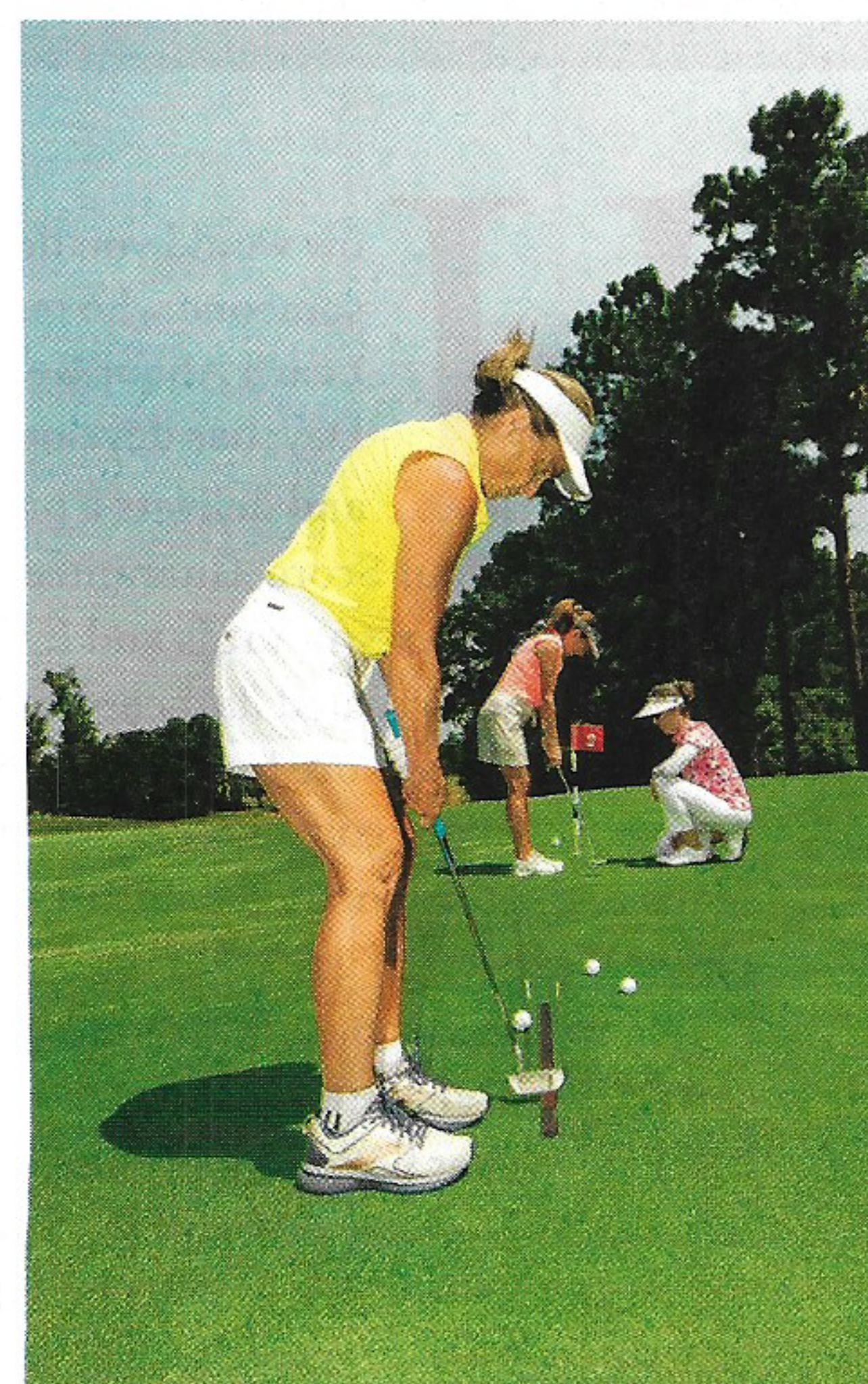
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lives of young and old by teaching them how to deal with golf's inevitable ups and downs" (and how to get up and down!).

A golf instructor at Compass Pointe Golf Club in Leland, she also regularly travels to teach at Pine Needles Golfari Schools near Pinehurst. You can check the odometer on her Jeep Wrangler to confirm that she's not one to relax at home. She and her husband, Ty Weller, the head professional at Compass Pointe, came to Leland a few years ago, and she works with toddlers and children ages 2 and older, men and women, small private women's groups and others throughout the golf continuum.

Weller teaches people how to break down and think through the process of getting the ball to the hole. She reminded me that one should realize that 25 percent of your shots will be great, but the rest are just ok (maybe 50 percent) or not-so-good at all (25 percent)





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Weller uses the “One-Two-Show-My-Shoe” phrase when teaching a youngster how to swing a club back and forth to send the ball toward its target.



— and as she notes “you have to learn to master the variability of outcomes.” Who amongst us has not followed a birdie with a triple bogey — or vice versa?

Once you meet Weller, you will understand why she is listed as the #3 *Golf Digest* Best State Teacher for North Carolina and was voted an LPGA Top 50 Teacher.

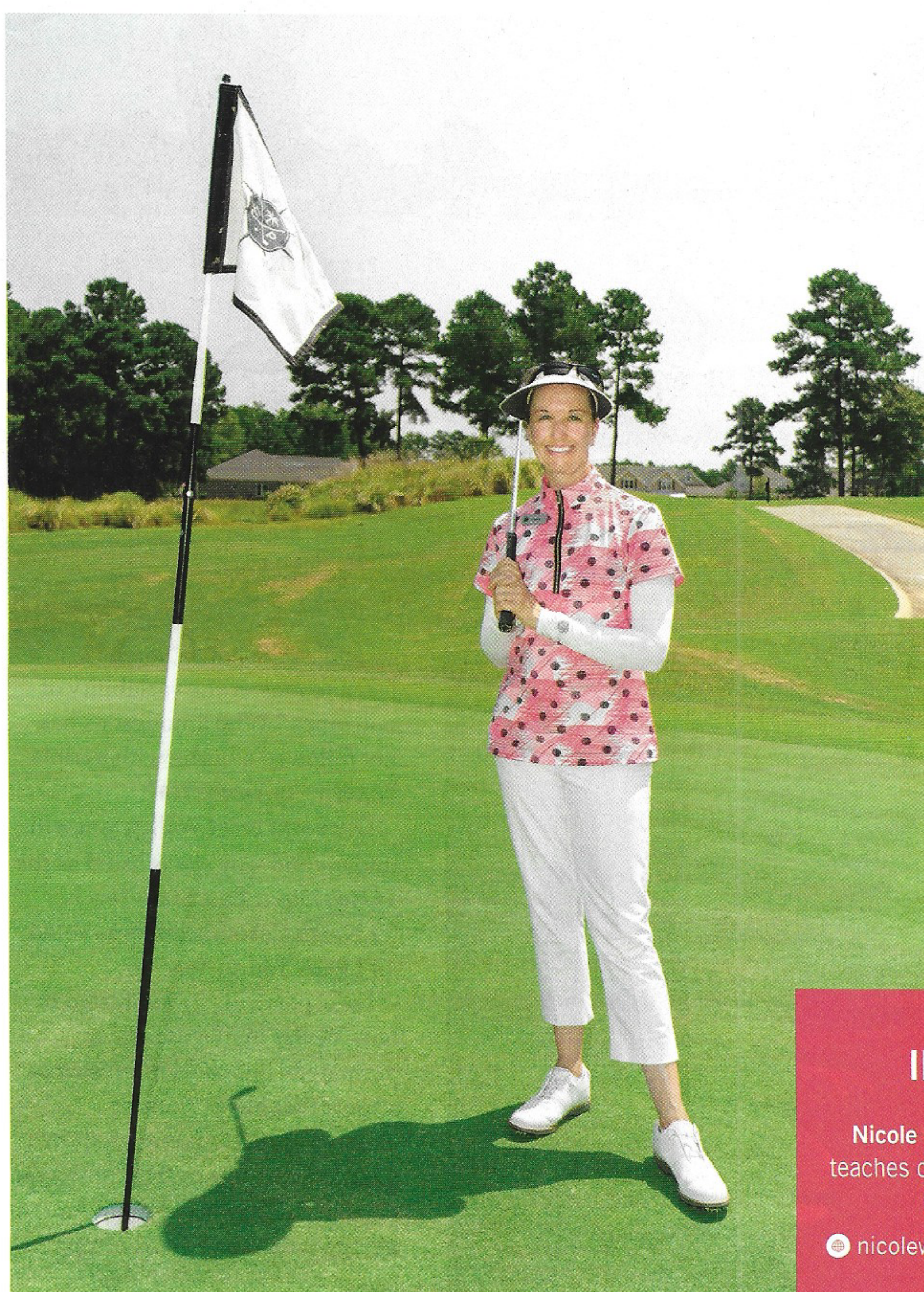
I was particularly interested in how Weller manages to keep peripatetic little kids interested in a sport that has periods of inactivity and frequently requires a thought process and planning far beyond the 4-year-old mind. In having taught hundreds of kids

ages 2+, she has no preconceived notions and develops a unique response to each child she teaches.

She admits that one-on-one instruction interspersed with bursts of creativity and the occasional diversion keep the youngsters engaged mentally and physically. I'm guessing it's easier with students the older they are, as long as she can get them to put down their phones! There is no way to swing a golf club while holding your phone!

Weller agrees that science and technology have overtaken some of the art of this sport, but she is very supportive of people making changes to keep the game fun. She underscores the "play it forward" approach and shares my disdain for terms like "ladies' tees" and "men's tees."

She acknowledges that practice needs to be focused to make progress and urges "you to practice 'Weller'



not just often." Here's what she says it means to "practice Weller":

- Identify what has not gone well
- Determine how to improve those outcomes
- Efficiently make the changes (emotional, mental and physical) to move forward.

As a lifelong hacker, I can attest that seeking professional help is required to make long-lasting progress. My wife has suggested I seek professional help, and I'm just not sure she is only referring to golf.

An accomplished golfer — having a sub-70 round and 5½ holes in one to her name, so far — Weller has the breadth of experience to help you learn to be kind to yourself and stay focused while having fun. ■



IMPROVE YOUR GAME

Nicole Weller offers playing lessons in foursomes, teaches one-on-one and is eager to learn how she can help you enjoy the game even more.

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