

COLUMBINE COURIER

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 5, 2009

WWW.COLUMBINECOURIER.COM

## How to hit longer drives

Everyone knows the frustration of starting a hole with a poor drive. It can not only get you into the rough and make your second shot tougher, but hitting into a hazard on your tee shot is detrimental to your score. With a little focus on these fundamentals, you can turn in more consistent scores by starting each hole off on the right foot.

There are a couple of things to pay attention to that will help you hit your drives consistently longer and straighter.

The first is your ball position. Since the ball is on a tee, it should be positioned evenly with your left heel (for a right-handed golfer). This allows you to contact the ball on a slight upswing, which is ideal for the driver. In your set-up, 60 percent of your weight should be distributed to your right side, away from your target, allowing you to make a full weight transfer. Starting your weight on your back leg will help in achieving a weight transfer that ends with a balanced finish on your left side.

Also, having your feet, knees and shoulders lined up to the target ensures that you will be able to create a proper swing path.

The swing path that is needed for a driver is inside-out, which helps you swing around your body. With a long club like the driver, it is important to remember to swing around your body. When the swing becomes too vertical it can cause a faulty swing path, outside-in, which creates too much spin and a weak slice.

It is also important to square up the clubface at impact as you are rotating your body. To ensure the clubface is square at impact, position your right forearm so it feels as though it's over the top of your left forearm.

Take this tip to your next practice session and then to the course to get those drives longer and straighter down the fairway.

Josh Miller is a Class A PGA member and a graduate of New Mexico State University's Professional Golf Management Program. Miller takes an individualized approach to teaching golf, knowing that everyone's body and experience level is different. He builds upon these to teach the fundamentals, while building a consistent golf swing that any student can confidently take to the golf course. He can be contacted by phone at 720-234-3560 or by e-mail [jgmiller@pga.com](mailto:jgmiller@pga.com).



**JOSH MILLER**  
MILLER'S GOLF TIP

## Finding his stride

*Courier editor tackles 5K race*

By DAN JOHNSON  
Sports Editor

**EVERGREEN** — Before I begin, I should make one point:

I am not a fan of running.

I don't say that to be mean. I have no beef with anyone who chooses to run and think it's great when people perform any type of exercise.

But, for me, when it comes to selecting activities for cardiovascular exercise, running usually comes up last in a list of things I'd choose to do.

It wasn't always this way. I used to enjoy running. Ran all the time. Grew up in a household where my father ran nearly every day of the week (still does) and competed in 10K's, 15K's and three marathons. In my elementary school, I was one of the fastest kids in the school and ran a 6 minute, 59-second mile before I was 12 years-old.

When I moved into junior high, I ran cross-country. Mostly as a way to get in shape for basketball season, but also because I just enjoyed getting outdoors. Cross-country in Upstate New York was a blast. Most of the courses were full of hills and sent you through various paths and trails in wooded areas.

My first couple of years in cross-country I was a consistent top-10 finisher. By the time I reached my sophomore year of high school, my running shoes were retired. Looking back, I'm not sure why I stopped running but I think part of it was I just didn't like all the practice runs.

At the high school I attended, our cross-country program featured the best runner in the state. As a result, the practices became more intense as we as a team tried our best to match our top runner's pace and put together a dominant team.

As someone who just ran for fun, the sudden pressure of having to strive for running perfection didn't sit well with me, so I hung up my running shoes and never looked back.

That was 14 years ago.

Until recently, I hadn't done much running aside from occasionally hopping on a treadmill or doing a few laps around the indoor track at Club USA. In the six months, though, I found myself actually choosing to go outdoors and run.

Why?

I'm not really sure but whatever the reason, I got back in the game and got back to running just for the enjoyment of it.



Photo by MATTHEW JONAS | The Courier

**COLUMBINE COURIER SPORTS EDITOR** Dan Johnson makes his way toward the finish line at the 2009 Evergreen Town Race on Aug. 2. Johnson finished the 5K race in 28 minutes, 14 seconds. It was his first competitive race in 14 years.

Admittedly out of practice, my first few runs were weak affairs. I struggled to turn in a 2-mile jog around our neighborhood park. But, thanks to some help from my dog, Misty, I found motivation to increase my work capacity.

Misty had packed on a few pounds over the last six years since we adopted her and it was time for her to go on a diet. I figured that taking her along with me on my runs would be good exercise for her and luckily, I was right. Misty was a great running companion and after a few weeks, we were breezing past the 2-mile mark and working our way to 5K territory, or 3.1 miles.

That's when the idea of running a 5K hit me.

Originally, the plan was to run a 5K this year with Misty. But, due to a recent surgical procedure, my running buddy was unable to join me as she was still recovering from the operation.

After scanning the schedule of upcoming events, I settled in on the Evergreen Town Race as being the race I would compete in. The Town Race has been an Evergreen staple for 31 years and is known for its mostly

downhill course path.

It sounded like the perfect event for me to restart my running career, so I signed up.

When I arrived at Evergreen High School on Aug. 2, the parking lot was full of people waiting — more than 500 if I had to guess — to hop on a school bus that would take us from the registration area to the start line at Upper Bear Creek Road.

Being on that yellow bus immediately flashed me back to junior high and it felt similar to riding to a cross-country race.

After we exited the bus, the hard part of the race kicked in: the waiting. We had nearly 40 minutes to waste before the actual start of the race. I tried to stay busy, stretching my legs, checking my iPod for the proper song list and consuming a few fluids.

A few minutes before 8 a.m., we were ushered to lineup at the starting line to get ready for the start of the race. I wasn't nervous at all and was actually excited to get things underway.

The gun sounded and we were off. Well, those in the front of the line were off. For the

## JOHNSON

From Page 1B

other 500-plus runners, the start line is tough navigation as you're surrounded by people and there's not much room to get by if the people in front of you are slowing you down.

After a quarter-mile, the course started to open up and I found my stride. Before the race, I told my wife, Lauren, that I'd be happy with a time of around 28 minutes, as I had been running around 29 minutes at our home and figured that with the downhill course, I could shave a minute off that time.

My legs were strong and my stride was consistent. Not too long and not too fast. A good, steady pace that had me reach the 1-mile mark at 9:40. At two miles, I was at 18:40 so my goal of 28 minutes was within sight.

During the last mile, I found myself running neck-and-neck with a man wearing a San Diego Padres baseball cap. Turns out, that man was Marc Kouzmanoff, father of San Diego Padres third baseman and Evergreen High School grad, Kevin Kouzmanoff.

As we made our way to the finish line, located at the Evergreen Lake House, we were greeted by a nice group of spectators that clapped and cheered us on. I saw Lauren (who was great all day, from driving me to the race to taking me to lunch afterwards) near the finish line and she had her digital camera out and snapped a few photos of me as I crossed the line in 28 minutes, 14 seconds.

Out of 655 runners that took part in the 5K (there was also a 10K race and 5K walk), I finished 268th and had a pace of 9:07. Not bad for someone that isn't a consistent runner.

My time paled in comparison

to 5K winner, Joel Hamilton, who crossed the line in a lightning-fast 14:33. The 10K winner was Peter Vail of Boulder, who finished in 31:35. Evergreen's Ryan Haebe placed fourth with a time of 33:53.

The 5K was over. I had finished the race and reached my goal of 28 minutes in the process. I removed my ankle strap that contained my race chip, handed it to a volunteer and then proceeded to pick up my post-race goodie bag and T-shirt.

The Town Race, which benefits Alpine Rescue Team, also provided runners with a complimentary breakfast. I enjoyed a great-tasting bagel breakfast sandwich, which contained ham, egg and cheese.

Speaking of food, after the race I ran into one of my favorite people, the owner of The Garlic Knot, who had also ran the Town Race. Since moving to Colorado in 2004, The Garlic Knot (located in Littleton and Roxborough) has been my first choice when it comes to pizza and even though I now live in Lakewood, I still make a point to drive down to the Knot and indulge in some authentic New York pizza.

Seeing The Garlic Knot owner was another reminder of why running can be enjoyable: meeting new people or old acquaintances.

People often speak of catching the "running bug" after they partake in their first race. I'm not sure if I caught the bug, but I do know that going forward, I will continue to run (hopefully joined soon by Misty) and the 2009 Evergreen Town Race will not be my final competitive race.

*Dan Johnson is the sports editor for Evergreen Newspapers. Contact him at 303-933-2233, ext. 15 or by e-mail at [sports@evergreenco.com](mailto:sports@evergreenco.com). View this and other sports stories online at [www.columbinecourier.com](http://www.columbinecourier.com)*



Photo provided

**THE DAKOTA RIDGE EAGLES** won the JCJBL South Division and went on to win the 12 AA playoffs. The Eagles defeated Ralston Valley 22-4 in the semifinals and topped Lakewood 9-8 in the championship game. Members of the Eagles are: Josh Brown, Lucas DeSantis, Domenic Guterrez, Alex Haussmann, Brett Henkel, Chris Kuelling, Mark Mallett, David Parker, Nick Phelps, Harrison Quintana, Steven Santaniello, Taylor Sperry, Gabe Wygant. Coaches: Patrick Mallett, Jeff Parker, Paul Santaniello.

