

Kerrville Daily Times

Fairway or nothing

By I. Donnell Moore

The Daily Times

Published June 18, 2007

During a recent golf lesson, Anna Acker-Macosko's student said he hadn't played golf in a while and not nearly as often as he used to.

Join the club.

"Golf isn't everything for me anymore, either," she said. "I wasn't always in love with golf. I liked it, but it was just something I kind of did from time to time."

One of those times is now.

Last week, Acker-Macosko qualified for the Women's U.S. Open. She posted a 2-over-par 146 during a qualifier at the Westwood Golf Club in Houston last week to earn a spot in the national tournament June 28-July 1 at the Pine Needles Golf Club in Southern Pines, N.C.

Once a player on the LPGA Tour, Acker-Macosko today is a mother, wife and coach who gives lessons at The Club of Comanche Trace. She and husband Ron are the men's and women's golf coaches at Schreiner University.

"Life is different now — fun, but different," Acker-Macosko said. "The tour was a great experience, but changes had to be made."

Growing up in Marshfield, Wis., with a golf pro for a father, Acker-Macosko actually showed more interest in basketball.

"Working on the golf course was very normal to me," she said. "I liked basketball, but it was a different time then. Women's basketball wasn't actually a booming business, so I turned to golf. I noticed other girls using golf to take them to college and I wanted that, too. I was trying to do anything to get out of Wisconsin and golf just seemed like it would help me get there."

And help it did.

Acker-Macosko was the Wisconsin Junior Girls Player of the Year in 1986 and a year later was the state's Women's Match Play Champion. She earned a scholarship to the University of South Florida, when she was an All-American and led the Bulls to a fourth-place finish at the 1991 NCAA Championships — still the school's highest finish ever.

Acker-Macosko said her success had much to do with her parents' soft touch.

"With my dad being a golf man, you would think he would have pushed me into the sport," she said. "But he didn't. He guided me and I give him most of the credit for my swing."

pro in 1991 and, after marrying Ron, took to the road in an RV as a husband-wife and player-caddy

team.

“We were traveling quite a bit — tournament after tournament, trip after trip and somehow we are still married,” she said. “When I first turned pro I still hadn’t found that motivation for golf. Ron helped me find that and it really kept us going.”

Acker-Macosko spent 13 years as a touring pro — nine on the LPGA Tour. She finished as high as No. 67 on the LPGA money list and in 2004 shot an 11-under-par 60 during the final round of the Longs Drug Challenge. She is one of only four LPGA players to shoot a 60 or better during a tour event and only Annika Sorenstam, with a 59, has scored lower.

But, with son Benjamin born in 2001, touring became tougher and tougher to do.

“Though I was having fun, Ben needed to settle down.” Acker-Macosko said. “He was getting older and needed more attention. We were never in one place for long and we thought it was detrimental to his growth. So the tours had to go.”

Soon after, the Macoskos were Kerrville residents.

Now coaching and teaching, Acker-Macosko said she was still having fun.

“I actually like teaching more than playing golf,” she said. “I guess I got that from my dad. I teach so many different golfers from advanced to beginners and it has really been interesting.

Macosko’s student, Gary Garbish admitted his golf game needed work.

“I’m trying to get back to shooting somewhere in the low 80’s and find out what is wrong with my swing.

Macosko took one look, smiled and began to teach.

“Bring your feet together more.”

“Stick our your butt.”

“If you place the tee too low, you will feel like you have to swing down — you want to swing up on the ball.”

A short while later, Garbish was whacking golf balls 150 feet or more on the driving range — and the balls were flying straight.

“It’s like shooting free-throws,” Macosko said. “You block out everything else and work on mechanics. If you shoot a basketball with the same form each time, you have a much better shot of it going in. If you do the same with a club, you’re bound to get closer to the fairway.”

Garbish was also satisfied.

“I’ve had lessons before and could never get a full backswing,” Garbish said. “I did that today and it felt effortless. I thought I would be worn out after hitting a few hundred balls, but I’m actually not exhausted.”

With the Open more than a week away, Acker-Macosko said she would just concentrate on the basics.

“Golf is a very fickle sport and I’m a streaky player.” she said. “My goal is not to worry about my

competition, but to battle the course. If I beat the course, I have a good chance of doing well.

“None of this would have been possible without my family and I feel good going into the tournament with them behind me.”

Minus the “Go Anna”

T-shirts, the Hill Country is already proud

... and “Go Anna.”

Contact I. Donnell Moore at [donnell.moore\(at\)dailytimes.com](mailto:donnell.moore(at)dailytimes.com)

Copyright © 2007 Kerrville Daily Times