Ladies who golf [continued]

Before retiring from professional golf in 2008, Annika Sorenstam racked up 90 international tournament wins, including 10 LPGA Major Championships. Below, she shares five tips female golfers can use to swing it like Sorenstam.



- **Make a compact swing, and always accelerate:** The closer you get to the green, the greater the urge to manipulate the shot. To beat that urge, make sure you accelerate through impact. Make your follow-through as long as your backswing.
- **Set your tempo:** I seldom hit a shot very hard, and I seldom hit one very soft. This is particularly true with my wedges, mainly because I have shots to cover many distances. Never swing your wedges as hard as you can. When you press like that, you risk poor contact and wild shots. To set a tempo, try my 1-2-3 practice swing: Count 1-2-3 as you swing to the top left, then 1-2-3 to the finish. It will keep your speed in check.
- **Begin with a brief warm-up:** Hit a few wedges, then some short irons for tempo followed by a couple of drives. Before heading to the course, chip and putt to get a feel for the speed of the greens.
- **Control first-tee jitters:** First, take a few deep breaths to calm your nerves. Pick a club you're comfortable with and confident you can hit. Select a specific target, and use your pre-shot routine. Then, swing freely.
- **Simple putting tips:** Be aggressive. Putts in scrambles are only considered good if they make it to the hole. A nice firm, confident stroke gives you the best chance to make them.



BRAIN GAME



When forensic pathologist Dr. Bennet Omalu performed an autopsy on former Pittsburgh Steeler Mike "Iron Mike" Webster, he had no idea who the late NFL center was. Born in eastern Nigeria, Omalu knew nothing about American football, but he did know something was amiss in the 50-year-old's body. Given his passion for neuropathology, Omalu began studying Webster's brain. That's when he discovered something alarming: chronic traumatic encephalopathy, severe brain damage caused by repeated blows to the head.

"It looked very abnormal," Omalu says. "It was not something I was mentally aware of. I went to the library researching, trying to see if someone else had described it before, and no one else had."

When Omalu made his discovery public, he was stunned by the backlash he faced from the NFL. At the time and in subsequent years, the league tried to stifle Omalu's findings, which have now become accepted as fact in the medical and sports spheres.

Omalu continues to bring awareness to CTE, and his efforts have become immortalized in books and in the recent film *Concussion*, which stars Will Smith as Omalu. On February 16, he will lead a lecture at Florida Atlantic University's Lifelong Learning Complex in Jupiter. *PBI* chatted with Omalu about CTE and how the discovery of the disease altered his life. *(561-799-8547, fau.edu/llsjupiter)*

***PBI*: What are the causes of CTE?**

Dr. Omalu: CTE is the disease of the brain you suffer when you're exposed to any type of blow to your head. It's not just in football [but also] in motorcycle accidents, in industrial accidents, in child abuse, in assaults. When you suffer brain damage from such a blow, the brain damage is permanent because the brain does not have any reasonable ability to cure itself of any injury. In contact sports—with or without a helmet, with or without a concussion—when you expose your head and your brain to seemingly innocuous blows without any symptoms, over time those blows can cause permanent brain damage that would manifest in a constellation of symptoms, which are progressive.

What are the symptoms of CTE?

The symptoms could range from loss of intelligence, loss of judgment, loss of cognitive capacity, inability or diminution in the ability to engage in complex intellectual activity, mood disorders, rampant fluctuations in mood, exaggerated responses to life stresses, drug abuse, alcoholism, suicidal attempts, or suicide. Where this is very dangerous is you could receive these blows to your head over time without manifesting any symptoms whatsoever. But radiologically and neuropsychiatrically, when you're tested, we could elicit evidence of damage.

Why was it important to you to share your findings with the world?

I came from Nigeria—Nigeria is a very corrupt country. I ran away from corruption and came here just to find out that the NFL was systemically and systematically concealing this fact from the players. The players in retirement were all suffering in obscurity. I found that very painful. I said, 'Not in America, a country I have so much faith in.' ... Using my education, I wanted to become a voice for the voiceless.

What should people know about CTE?

People should be educated and enlightened so when they make the decision to play or not to play, they are making their own decision. You cannot make football safe; that would be a misappropriation of the facts. ... But this is America. People have the freedom to do whatever they want. [And] we should embrace the facts and educate the people.



WHAT DOES DR. OMALU LOVE MOST ABOUT STUDYING THE BRAIN? FIND OUT AT *PALMBEACHILLUSTRATED.COM/DROMALU*