

Me Coach??

I Don't Even Play Golf!

By Tina Andrews

This article is probably going to be a little different than the average coach's article. You see, I know how hard it is to find that special coach for a blind golfer. When my son went off to college and could no longer coach my husband I felt that I should give it a try even though I have never, ever, even picked up a club. For years I watched these men and women coach the blind around the golf course and thought "Well, maybe I can". But, I had to find a way to be able to relate to it, not being a golfer. In watching my kids play with their Nintendo video games I came up with the idea that Bob would be my "Nintendo Golfer." The object was to get his ball from the tee to the green in only a few shots.

Bob set up a few lessons with his golf pro and I watched. I memorized how he put the club down, where his shoulders and feet were supposed to be in relation to the ball, and where the ball should be in his stance. I have a good judge of distance so Bob could tell me what club he needed, if I knew the distance. Now as long as I set the club down right; his shoulders, hips and feet were both going in the same direction as the club face; the ball was in the correct place in his stance and he swung easy, "my" ball would go where I directed it. And if not, I would tell him it was his fault!

The putting is actually an interesting facet of the game for a blind golfer and his coach. I will walk Bob from the ball to the flag and we count the distance. Then as we walk back to the ball he pays close attention to the way the ground is sloping and

how much. We can then calculate the break from there. It is all guesswork, but you can get pretty accurate after you have done it quite a bit and trust your judgment.

To me, the role of a coach can be just as rewarding as playing the game itself. Using Bob as my "Nintendo Character" puts me in the driver's seat and allows us to play the game as a team. Sure, at times it is extremely frustrating; but, the rewards far surpass the hard times, and I would highly recommend the challenge to anyone, any age, golfer, or not.