

ALLY BEGG

# Of Knee Snaps and Vaseline...

At long last I have found something in common with Tiger Woods, but unfortunately for me, any comparisons with golf ends here - we have the same knee problem...



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**T**iger's victory at the US Open at Torrey Pines was astonishing! Not just for his golfing skills but more for the fact that he played with a knee that required surgery and a double stress fracture of the left tibia. Relatively speaking, I have some idea of the pain that Tiger was suffering during the tournament as I've had numerous operations on my right knee to clear a problem due to complications after breaking my leg five years ago. In this day and age, the procedure to repair the anterior cruciate ligament (or more tenderly known as ACL to the brethren who've suffered the same ordeal) is fairly straightforward; the real work begins after the surgery. I have no doubt that the World Number One is receiving the best post-op care that money can buy.

Here is an insight from my own experience to help give you an idea what Tiger will be doing to re-gain full fitness. Now, I understand the procedure went according to plan from Tiger's surgeons but on the assumption that there is no secondary condition within the knee, I won't be surprised if he woke from the operating table with his leg in a CPM machine. This is a contraption that helps you bend your knee. After such surgery, it's vital that the knee is kept moving otherwise, like myself, the joint will stiffen and the range of movement will be minimal. I won't pull the wool over your eyes and pretend that it's not painful because it's excruciating. I'm sure Mr. Woods will be forgiven if a few expletives were occasionally heard during the rehabilitation. I have myself discovered a whole new vocabulary and my esteemed colleagues at ESPN Star Sports will vouch for that during our weekly round. (No need, I can vouch for that as well - Ed)

The other factors we have to take into consideration are his wounds. Basically the areas where the incisions were made during surgery will have to be 100 percent healed before Tiger can step into the swimming pool or climb onto a bike. This usually takes 10 to 12 days. After that Tiger, will be ready to do non-bearing exercises.

In the pool, he will be assisted by a physio who will continue the process of bending the knee and start strengthening the quadriceps muscles that help support the area. Depending on the range of movement, it will not be uncommon if he is already on a bike working on his stamina. This will also help keep the knee free of stiffness. Depending on the surgeon's post-op protocol, the period of six to 12 weeks is usually the time when the patient starts non-impact weight bearing exercise like cross training, walking on a treadmill, etc. Weeks

12 through 24 after the op is when he'll start on a more strenuous activity like jogging. During this time, work will continue on his knee to strengthen the muscles and making sure the joint is fully functional.

Now, for any of you who have gone through any kind of rehabilitation, you will know it's a long process that requires patience and hard work. As I alluded to before, it can at times be extremely painful. It can easily sap you of all energy and leave you with a sense of dread going into further sessions. The pain can be controlled with various medications, I personally had a supply of morphine but if I'm being honest, I sincerely hope Tiger has a milder form of the drug. Not to put a too finer point on it, morphine made me hum the tune to the "Magic Roundabout" at the top of my voice, have a full blown conversation with my grandfather (even though he's been dead going on 20 years), and left me with the impression that my hospital ward was infested with small birds! I was even trying

to catch the wee buggers, much to the amusement of my fellow patients.

Psychological strength is needed. We all know Tiger has an uncanny knack of holding his game together at crucial stages in tournaments; he will need to find that inner strength on a different level over the next few months. As his doctors said, if all goes according to plan and his rehab is successful, there should be no reason for long-term effects relating to his career. I, for one, continue to be intrigued and sincerely hope he's back where he belongs sooner rather than later.

I'm usually not one for offering advice, but on this occasion I almost feel duty bound to say something totally unrelated to the subject of my column, and you will thank me for it, I hope.

If, like me, you are relatively new to Singapore and have enjoyed the trappings of the country's finest golf courses, I strongly suggest one vital component to be had in your golf bag - a tub of the finest Vaseline that money can buy! If I may be so bold to admit during my early days on the fairways, the friction caused by "chaffing" (Scottish terminology meaning rubbing of one's body hair) was almost unbearable as the sweat caused by our climate continued to make life rather uncomfortable round a certain part of one's anatomy!

I suggest a generous portion rubbed evenly over the inner thigh of both legs. As horrendous as this may sound, believe me you will thank me in weeks to come! If I may be permitted to steal a certain well-known phrase, "I never leave home without it!"

Send your comments or talk to Ally at [info@golfpunk.com.sg](mailto:info@golfpunk.com.sg)

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