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Gary McCord

*Golf Commentator and PGA
Senior Tour Champion*

Steve Keipert

Editor of Australian Golf Digest magazine

**Foreword by Brett Ogle,
Australian golf champion**



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by Gary McCord & Steve Keipert



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About the Authors

'Life is full of ups and downs, and it wouldn't be fun any other way.' Living by this optimistic philosophy, **Gary McCord** persisted through years of mediocrity before finding success. An outstanding player, television announcer, instructor, author, speaker and even movie actor, he has become a golf celebrity.

McCord is well known for enduring 23 years and 422 tournaments on the PGA Tour without nabbing a single victory. A man of good humour, he sported a 'NO WINS' licence plate for years to poke fun at his less-than-glamorous work as a professional golfer.

'Trapped in the headlights of bankruptcy', as he liked to put it, McCord pursued other avenues in golf and found himself launching a broadcasting career. He scored big when a CBS Sports executive tossed him a headset and asked him to do golf commentary — giving him only 15 minutes to prepare. McCord jumped in with no fear and impressed CBS with his performance. Twenty-five years later, he's still providing colourful commentary for CBS golf events. Fans and critics praise him for his knowledgeable perspective, refreshing humour and sometimes irreverent wit towards a game known for taking itself too seriously.

Broadcasting changed his perspective on golf. Realising that a better understanding of the golf swing would help his TV work, McCord studied the swing for two years. He emerged with knowledge, confidence and an improved golf game.

McCord's own golf really came together as he began his career on the Champions Tour after his 50th birthday. In 1999, his first full season on that tour, he won two events — the Toshiba Senior Classic and the Ingersoll-Rand Senior Tour Championship — to finish 17th on the official money list with nearly \$1 million in prize money. Since then, he has often finished in the top 30 on the money list while playing a limited schedule of 10 to 15 events per year.

When he isn't broadcasting or playing golf, McCord keeps busy with myriad other projects. He portrayed himself in and served as technical director for the golf movie *Tin Cup*, starring Kevin Costner, Rene Russo and Don Johnson. He's also a writer. In addition to writing *Golf For Dummies*, Gary's the author of a collection of essays about his life on tour, *Just a Range Ball in a Box of Titleists*. His bestselling *Golf For Dummies* was released in DVD form in 2004.

McCord and his friend and CBS Sports colleague David Feherty became known to millions of golf fans and gamers as the voices of EA Sports' Tiger Woods PGA Tour video games. McCord also instructs and consults with more than 20 PGA Tour players.

Gary brings a sense of fun to everything he does and never takes himself too seriously. He and his wife, Diane, share the 'ups and downs' of a busy life together at their homes in Scottsdale and Denver.

Late one afternoon in February 1987, a 10-year-old **Steve Keipert**, and his father, strolled onto North Turramurra Golf Course in northern Sydney and within a casual nine holes sparked an obsession with golf that grew with every round and each passing year.

Steve has never and will never reach the on-course feats of his co-author Gary McCord, but his passion for the game and knowledge of the biggest events and leading players is first rate. A university-educated journalist who entered the golf media more than a decade ago, Keipert's first involvement with *Australian Golf Digest* came in 1997 as a final-year journalism student seeking work experience.

Three years later he joined the editorial staff of Australia's leading golf magazine and in 2004 assumed the role of editor, a position he still holds today. While his lowest handicap is six and today he remains mired in the good-but-not-great level of low-80s scores, Steve's love for golf has never waned.

Steve lives with his wife and two young daughters in Sydney.

Dedication

Gary dedicates this book to spike marks, the wind just came up from the other direction, bad bounces, wrong yardage, rising barometric pressure, solar storms, dirt got in my eyes, yin and yang, the big bang theory, Brownian motion, dark energy, escape velocity, entropy, Newton's laws of motion and a bad caddie. All the things we golfers can blame our erratic play on instead of ourselves, providing peace of mind in the unstable environment of this maniacal endeavour.

Steve dedicates this book to Claire, Ashleigh and Jillian, whose smiling faces make even the worst round acceptable. Also to my dad, who started me off in this mad, mad game all those years ago and my mum, who kept me at it once the 'golf bug' had taken hold.

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Gary would like to acknowledge the game itself, golf. It's a clever game worthy of perspective. I'm not astute enough to unravel it all, but if you can get a good author, bingo, the game is easy. Thanks Kevin Cook for the time and effort he put into this edition.

To my wife Diane, my mom Ruth, my sister Karen and her late husband Chris, my daughter Krista and her husband Mike, and my four granddaughters Breanne, Kayla, Jenae and Terra: See what you can do with spell check!

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Foreword

Golf has been around for centuries. It is a complicated and intriguing game that has us all baffled and mesmerised at times. If you're reading this foreword you're obviously interested in buying a book that can help you either start playing golf or perhaps get better. *Golf For Dummies* can help.

Growing up in the small country town of Goulburn in New South Wales, I had a hand at every sport there was. At the age of 11, I headed down to our local golf course, Tully Park, which just so happened to be about 150 metres from where I lived. It was one of the only games that I hadn't tried as a kid, so I thought, 'why not give it a go?' After a couple of airswings and a few shots hit along the ground I started to hit a few sweetly and they travelled for seemingly miles in the air. I thought, 'this is a cool game'.

My main focus at that time was hockey and Rugby league, but at 14 years of age golf was starting to take a priority. My handicap started at 32 and in no time had come down to single figures. With the tuition from my club pro and a job after school in the golf shop I narrowed my handicap to 1 by the time I was 16. Not long after I won the Senior and Junior district Champion of Champions in Canberra and from there I knew golf was going to be my career path.

Many instructional books have been written over the years but I've never come across a more informative, easy-to-read and fun book than *Golf For Dummies*. It covers absolutely everything you need to know about this wonderful game, from playing with a professional, to the planning strategy of a course, to which courses you should play.

From starting out to playing in a pro-am with a professional, *Golf For Dummies* covers every aspect of golf and I know that you will keep this book proudly on the coffee table for visitors to pick up and read.

Great golfing,



Brett Ogle
Australian golf champion

Introduction: Should I yell 'Fore!' or 'Four!'?

It's hard to believe this is the second Australian and NZ edition of *Golf For Dummies*! If it's the first golf book you've ever held in your hands, don't worry. We've read more of them than we can count and this one's a particular favourite. To bring you this edition we've gone back through everything we wrote in the first edition, updating some material, writing a bunch more to keep up with this fast-changing game, and making everything even clearer and easier to follow.

Not to mention funnier!

Because golf, like life itself, can be hard, but must be enjoyed. Please remember that as you begin your adventure in the most maddening and wondrous game of all: Golf is fun. And the fun starts here.

About This Book

Although Gary's buddies on the professional tours will probably read this book just to see if he can write a coherent sentence, we like to think that we have something to offer golfers at every level, even the pros. The guys Gary grew up with at San Luis Rey Golf Course in Southern California will check out *Golf For Dummies* to see whether he's used any of their funniest lines. And we hope that the title piques the interest of many others who have never played the game.

This is no ordinary golf instruction book. Most of the golf books you'll find in your local bookstore (or, increasingly, online) are written by professional players or teachers. As such, they focus solely on the golf swing. *Golf For Dummies* covers a lot more than the swing. This book ought to be the only one you need as you develop a golf dependency. (Feel free to consult a doctor when you feel the first symptoms coming on — grinding your teeth, talking to yourself after missing a shot, punching the air after making one. These are the warning signs. *But remember:* This book is cheaper than a visit to the doctor.)

Having said all that, we're assuming that you have dabbled with golf and would like to get better. In our experience, most people give golf a try before they seek instruction. It must be an ego thing, kind of like those people who don't like to ask for directions when they get lost because they feel that it's an admission of failure. If that's you, then think of us as your personal GPS: Your Golfer Positioning System.

Golf For Dummies will put you on track to becoming not just someone who can hit a golf ball, but a real golfer. There's a big difference between the two, as you'll soon discover.

Conventions Used in This Book

When this book was printed, some web addresses may have needed to break across two lines of text. If that happened, rest assured that we haven't put in any extra characters (like hyphens) to indicate the break. When using one of these web addresses, just type in exactly what you see in this book, pretending that the line break doesn't exist.

What You Don't Have to Read

We've put this book together with your convenience in mind. Nice, huh? What that means is simple:

- ✓ When you see the Technical Stuff icon (shown later in this Introduction), you can skip that text if you want. It's not essential to understanding the rest of the book.
- ✓ The same goes for sidebars, which are scattered through the book, printed on grey backgrounds. Sidebars are extra added attractions. We've tried to make them fun and informative, but they aren't crucial to the rest of the book. Feel free to skip over them — you won't hurt our feelings.

Our Crazy Assumptions

Because you picked up this book, we assume that you're interested in golf. We also assume that you're not already a great golfer, or else you'd be out there making millions on tour. Beyond that, we're going to figure that you're a little like Gary was when he became a professional golfer.

When Gary started out on the United States PGA Tour in 1974, he was full of fight and enthusiasm but lacked a basic knowledge of golf-swing mechanics. A warm panic would start to rise in him about ten minutes before he was due to tee off. Gary's old friends Doubt and Dread would join him at the first tee. His brain would be racing, trying to figure out what *swing thought* (that one aspect of the swing that you meditate on to keep focused) to use that day. Most of the time, he'd be left with a thought like, 'Keep the left elbow towards magnetic north on the downswing'. Usually, that action resulted in a silly-looking slice into uncharted territory.

Gary swung the club that way for most of his career. So he knows what it's like to play without knowledge or a solid foundation. Gary's a lot happier — and having a lot more fun — now that he knows what he's doing.

The reason he's qualified to help you is that he's made a serious effort to become a student of the game. When Gary started working on golf telecasts for CBS, he didn't know much about the inner workings of the swing. But his new job forced him to learn. Gary's odyssey led him to seek advice from some of the world's greatest teachers.

One of them was Mac O'Grady, a golfer Gary grew up with in Southern California. O'Grady had researched his method with passion since 1983. The result was a swing model that worked. Gary was lucky to study under O'Grady and can't thank him enough. But we don't cover Mac's model in this book; it's for advanced golfers. We're gonna stick to basics.

How This Book Is Organised

Golf For Dummies will lead you through the process of becoming a golfer. Beginners need many questions answered as they take on the game. We've organised this book so that you take those steps one at a time and can flick back to them any time for quick reference. May this journey be a pleasant one!

Part 1: Welcome To a Mad Great Game

Where do I play and what's the course record? Wait a minute! First you need to know what this game is about. You need clubs. You need to know how to *swing* those clubs. You may want to take a lesson to see whether you like the game, then find golf clubs that fit you. In this part, we show you how to choose your clubs and give you some tips on the questions to ask before

you make your purchase. Then we give you some ideas about what kind of golf courses to play. Picking up golf is a never-ending process of discovery and it starts right here.

Part II: Getting Into the Swing

This part gets right to the point: We give you a close look at the workings of the golf swing and help with your mental preparation. You also get a good look at the short game, where most scoring takes place. We show you how to blast your way out of bunkers and how to develop a sound putting stroke.

Part III: Common Faults and Easy Fixes

In this part we tackle the tough shots and help you deal with bad luck and bad weather. You'll develop many faults during your golfing life and this part tells you how to fix most of them. You took a great first step by buying this book.

Part IV: Taking Your Game Public

In this part, you get the final touches of your education as a golfer. You learn how the rules were established, how to conduct yourself on the golf course and the fine art of betting. You even get the do's and don'ts of golf-course etiquette. After you read this part, you'll be able to walk onto any golf course and look like you know what you're doing. Because you *will* know what you're doing.

Part V: How To Be a Smart Golf Consumer

A sad fact of life is that you can't always be out on the course. In this part, we show you how to max out a day as a spectator and how to tap into the best of golf on TV and online.

Part VI: The Part of Tens

This part contains the best of, the most memorable — and some stuff that won't mean much to anybody except us. We just thought you'd enjoy knowing about it.

Part VII: Appendixes

Golfers have a language all their own. Appendix A lists the terms you'll want to add to your vocabulary. Appendix B lists some of the more popular golf organisations, products and resources, along with a select list of schools in Australia and New Zealand.

Icons Used in This Book

As we guide you through this maze of golf wit and wisdom, you'll spot several handy road signs. Look for these friendly icons; they point you towards valuable advice and hazards to watch out for.



Duck! This is an awareness alert. Pay attention.



This icon marks golf hazards to avoid. Be careful!



This icon flags quick, easy ways to improve your game.



Do this or Gary will never speak to you again.



Talk like this and golfers will understand you.



This might make your head spin; take two aspirin and get plenty of rest.



This icon flags information that's important enough to repeat.

Where to Go from Here

Feel free to flick through this book, picking your spots. It isn't designed to be read like a novel from cover to cover. If you're a complete novice, you might take a look at Appendix A first — get comfortable with the language. If you're a little more advanced and need help with a specific aspect of your game or swing, you can find that information in Chapters 6 through 10. The rest of the book will help you make that vital jump from 'golf novice' to 'real golfer'.

As Gary's former boss at CBS, Frank Chirkinian, said, 'Golf is not a game; it's a way of life. If it was a game, someone would have figured it out by now.'

Frank was right. But you *can* figure out how to get started in golf the right way and how to enjoy the game. That's what this book is for.