

Teaching golf makes summer a fun time

By Julie Brown
staff writer

Many Oakland County teen-agers are working at summer jobs these days, earning both practical experience and paychecks.

Lisa Harris, 19, is one of the lucky ones. She was able to find a job — working as a golf instructor — that she enjoys.

"I love it, I really do," Harris said. "I enjoy everything about it. It's not even like a job."

Harris is teaching golf through Farmington Hills' Parks and Recreation Division. She teaches classes for children, teen-agers and adults, including the senior adults.

The senior adult class is a particular favorite for Harris, who graduated from Troy High School in 1983.

"I've played golf with them on my days off. It's a riot, I just love it."

THE SENIORS have a good attitude, she said.

"They hit a bad shot and they can laugh it off, and I like to see that."

Howard Walker, a Farmington resident, is glad he signed up for the senior adult class.

"Very much. It's been good for my game. Again, I like the exercise. It's been a very enjoyable class, good instruction."

Walker had played golf previously.

"Yes, but not too well. The intent was to improve the game, I guess, sort of a refresher and improvement. Just to brush up, to go back to the basics and start over."

Farmington resident Erwin Whittaker signed up for similar reasons.

"I'm like this other gentleman here, it's for a refresher and improvement." He and his wife, Sally, are both taking the class.

"I wanted to learn to golf, so we could spend part of our time together this way," Sally Whittaker said. She has enjoyed the class Harris is teaching.

"She has a terrific personality, she just gets along with everybody. No work to it at all, she just makes it fun. She'll play with you until you get it, too."

The senior classes meet at the San Marino Golf Course in Farmington Hills and at Silger's Driving Range, just across Haggerty Road into Novi.

"She works on the basics and gets them ready so they can progress from there," said Andrew Lang, recreation superintendent for Farmington Hills.

"We saw a good opportunity," he said. "She had a very enthusiastic personality, which we look for."

THIS SUMMER, some of the senior adults requested that an advanced senior class be offered.

"That's the first time we've offered it," Lang said. "They felt they learned a lot, that she had a lot to offer and could help them with their games."

This is the first summer teaching through the Parks and Recreation Division for Harris. She has, however, done coaching for the girls' golf teams at Troy High School and at Adams High School in Rochester, and played golf during her days as a student at Troy High School.

"I played there four years on the golf team," Harris also participated in several other sports, including volleyball, basketball and reserve track.

For Harris, contact with senior adults isn't confined to her golf classes. She lives with her two grandmothers.

"One just turned 63, and one's 87. They're great, they're probably my biggest supporters. I couldn't do anything without them really. They support everything I do, as far as golf."

The women, Betty ("Mama") Wright and Winona Busbar, have traveled with Harris to tournaments over the last several years. Harris hasn't played in any tournaments this summer, however, due to her teaching responsibilities.

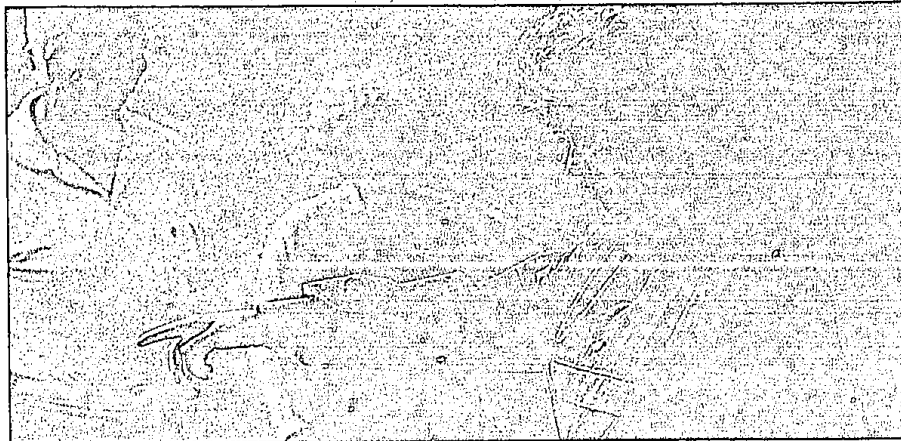
She worried about losing her amateur status by taking the parks and recreation job, "which was a hard decision, but I think it's worth it. I'm having a great time out here."

"It's competitive, it helps me. I learn something every day."

Harris intends to try to get her amateur status reinstated.

"I'm not sure how long it's going to take me, but you can get yourself reinstated." She would like to teach golf again next summer.

"I'd love to, I really would. I'm hoping the same people would come out, too. I really enjoyed this group."



RANDY BORST/staff photographer

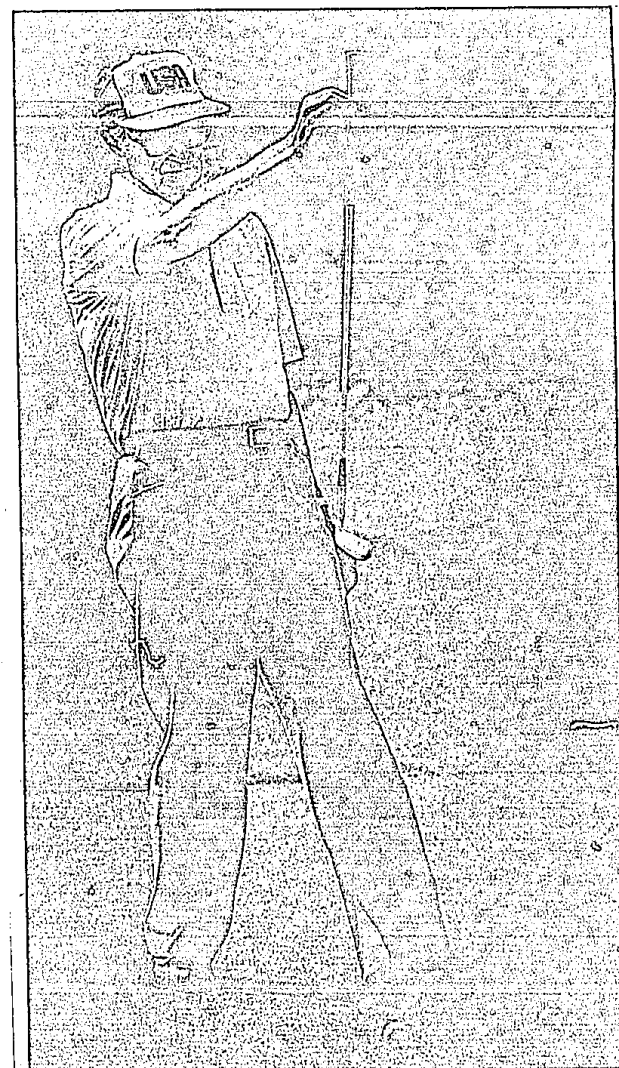
Her senior adult class is a particular favorite for golf instructor Lisa Harris.



Members of the senior adult class concentrate on instructor Lisa Harris' words.

"We saw a good opportunity. She had a very enthusiastic personality, which we look for."

— Andrew Lang
recreation staffer



Erwin Whittaker signed up for the golf class to help him improve his skills.

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