

# Pace picks up on family's vacation in Colorado

## PHYSICAL FITNESS



Barry Franklin

This summer we took the ultimate family fitness vacation — a one-week trip to Colorado. We flew to Denver, rented a car, and drove to Vail — about two hours away.

When we first decided to visit Colorado, my children asked if there would be enough to see and do (since the ski slopes were closed). Once we arrived, their concerns quickly abated. We learned that you could go hot air ballooning, ride the gondola or chair lifts, rent a mountain bike, play tennis and regular or miniature golf, hike, go river rafting or kayaking, fly fish, sailboard, swim, relax in a hot tub, take a jeep adventure tour, go horseback riding, board a train tour, frolic in a fitness facility, see a nature center, or visit a silver mine or ghost town. Also, you could take nearby Breckenridge's incredible ride — an exhilarating half-mile dash down mountain meadows of flowers and fir trees.

During the first few days, we were constantly on the move. The scenery was absolutely breathtaking — both literally and figuratively. I felt unusually fatigued and uncomfortably short of breath. Even mild activity caused my pulse to race. My wife Linda developed a headache — all symptoms of altitude sickness. Indeed, we were now 8,000 to 11,000 feet above sea level. "If you become too tired or out of breath, slow down," cautioned one of the locals.

My son Mike and I played one of the most spectacular (and expensive) golf courses anywhere — Eagle-Vail is notorious for its unrelenting, unexpected demands. It has hidden holes, man-made streams, elevated tees, bridges, tunnels, huge cut-out sand traps, and the Eagle River which winds through sections of the front nine. The course is long, narrow and tucked in the mountains. Beauti-

ful condominiums line several of the fairways — some of the most awesome scenery I've ever seen. Motorized carts are a virtual necessity, as are a lot of golf balls — together we lost more than a dozen. By playing after 4 p.m. we got a "half-price" rate. Only \$80 for the two of us, for 18 holes, including the cart! A bargain?

I never hit such long drives in my life. I swear, several approached 280 yards. They say it's due to the thinner air. The ball really sails. Altitude has its advantages.

The next day we drove to nearby Beaver Creek Resort, tucked away in the heart of the sun-swept Colorado Rockies. This enchanting alpine village offers a serene enclave where you can enjoy outdoor adventures, fine dining, great shopping and sunny skies in the cool refreshing mountain air. We were fascinated by the lifelike bronze statues that decorated the village. They made for great souvenir photos — sitting next to Benjamin Franklin or the like, on a park bench.

My wife, a real estate agent, couldn't resist checking out the properties in the area. Color pictures of homes and condominiums for sale were prominently displayed in one broker's window. Starters (shacks) were going for about a quarter of a million. The premier mountaintop homes ranged from nine to 11 million dollars, however. "Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous," I thought.

Later that day we went horseback riding. They told us that one of the horses in our group had carried President Clinton just a few days earlier. Our horses moved in a long line, slowly and methodically, up and down the mountain trails and through the alpine meadows. Many of the paths were very narrow, on cliffs, with breathtaking drops below. You prayed that your horse maintained his footing, since one misstep could spell disaster. "See that huge house?" our guide yelled. "Jack Nicklaus lives there."

On our way back to the condo that evening, we just couldn't re-

sist a drive past one of the worst-kept secrets in the area — President Gerald Ford's home, tucked in the mountains at Beaver Creek. The house was surrounded by trees and a variety of cars and other vehicles, some of which likely belonged to Secret Service agents. Nevertheless, we did catch a glimpse of Mrs. Ford and the family dog on the front lawn.

The next morning we drove to Aspen, about 100 miles away. The ride was the most spectacular that I've ever taken. Many of the mountain tops still had snow on them. A special treat was driving through Glenwood Springs, famous for its public pool and hot springs. Although I'd skied in Aspen before, I never realized how beautiful it is in the summer. We stayed with our good friends, Dr. Ron Stewart, his wife Barbara and son Justin who were vacationing in Aspen at the time.

After unloading our stuff in their condo, we went for a workout at a nearby fitness club — the poshest exercise facility I've ever seen. Three wide-screen televisions were mounted from the ceiling, facing the treadmills. Following a brief warm-up, I set the treadmill at my usual workload, three miles per hour, 10 percent grade. After a few minutes, however, I realized that this was a mistake. I was pooped — and should have known better. Why?



White water rafting: Don the guide (left), Linda Franklin, Laura Franklin, Dr. Ron Stewart, Barbara Stewart, Justin Stewart, Barry Franklin and Mike Franklin experience adventure on the Colorado River.

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