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He's Back!

Foley returns to lakes area golf scene

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Sports Writer

In a whirlwind countdown, Chris Foley gave 70 golf lessons in 10 days.

He moved his family across six states from South Carolina to East Gull Lake.

He drove back to South Carolina to host a three-day member/guest tournament, the largest golfing event held at The Members Club at Woodcreek & Wilde Wood, where Foley spent the last year and a half as director of golf.

He then drove the nearly 1,300 miles and 21 hours toward his next career path. The PGA Master professional is now the director of instruction at Cragun's Legacy Courses in East Gull Lake.

The family of five moved back into the previous home where they lived while Foley was the director of golf and owner of the Chris Foley Golf Schools at Madden's Resort.

"I'm exhausted right now," Foley said Tuesday.

But on Wednesday he had his first lesson. Thursday and Friday his lesson planner was almost filled. It was as if he had never left.

"The biggest thing for our family was we really missed the lifestyle in Brainerd, our friends and everything Brainerd has to offer," said Foley. "The golf in Brainerd, and how Minnesotans are so passionate about the game, is unmatched. That was one of the big surprises for me when we moved to South Carolina. We (the people in Minnesota) play as many or more rounds of golf in seven months as they do year round."

Foley called his time in South Carolina a great experience, but with the chance to move back to Brainerd and concentrate solely on teaching it was time to come back home.

Foley will teach golf at Cragun's. It is what he is most passionate



Brainerd Dispatch/Kelly Humphrey

Chris Foley (right), director of instruction at Cragun's Legacy Courses, discusses club choices Friday with Rob Birkeland.

about and after 24 years in the golf business, he finally gets to do what he loves full-time.

Foley still has all the gadgets and knowledge that made him one of the top draws in the lakes area for 14 years at Madden's. He's also implementing a supervised practice routine that he hopes will help players reap the benefits at a much quicker and more efficient pace.

"I really want to change up what we're doing as far as a junior program goes," said Foley. "Cragun's has always had a great junior program, but I want to expand it for the kids because for some, they're just learning how to

really try those in individual lessons. I want to take people beyond what we have been doing and help them practice to get better."

Foley is eager to utilize Cragun's training facility with a driving range that features tee boxes on both ends of the range, a large short game area and the Par 3 Course.

"The two-sided tees is great for a couple of standpoints," Foley said. "If the wind is blowing you can go to the other end of the tee and work on different shots based on the wind and you're hitting to different targets. It's also nice because it gives you a private tee where you don't have to worry about anyone else."

"The Par 3 is going to be really nice because you can take people out on the golf course and put them in golf situations instead of just hitting balls."

Never one to rest, Foley is also a key player in the formation off a USA Junior National team, sponsored by Callaway Golf. It's the first nationally recognized developmental golf program for juniors.

"It's coming along as scheduled," said Foley. "I hoped that it would be farther along in our Midwest schedule, but I'll start working on that this week. Cragun's is going to be our home base for the Midwest. We'll do seven or eight training camps. We'll do half of them here, one in Chicago, Omaha, Neb., and Des Moines, Iowa."

"This will be exciting. We're getting great response from the golf industry as a whole. It's really coming along."

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Chris Foley looks over the information on a screen at his tech cart that boasts TrackMan technology, which analyzes golf swing and ball flight, Friday at Cragun's Legacy Courses in East Gull Lake.

play golf, while others are wanting to prepare for tournaments and are preparing to play in high school and for junior high teams.

"That's really where I would like to use the supervised practices and

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