

Software lets you see your shift

BY SUSAN SCHNIER

Now you can watch your weight shift with your very own eyes. Using advanced software technology, a company called Synergy Sports Performance Consultants evaluates weight distribution and muscle firing throughout a player's swing and displays the results in rainbow colors.

Studies have demonstrated a direct link between proper weight-shifting and straighter ball flight.

"Being able to transfer weight by using one's feet and legs is so high on the scale of golf priorities," says PGA teaching pro Dr. Gary Wiren, "that it is senseless to continue until one can accomplish a basic weight shift."

But the question remains: How can players achieve the correct weight shift?

Synergy thinks it has the answer. Joanne Younker, president of the Whistler, British Columbia-based company, is training golf pros across North America in the Synergy system.

Using medical technology developed by Germany's Novell, she uses Pedars – a set of foot-beds containing 80 capacitor

sensors that measure pressure – combined with synchronized digital video to allow players to see how, when and where their weight is shifting.

In a typical session, golfers stand on a set of Pedars that are hooked up to a monitor.

A video camera is set up at knee level and synchronized with the Pedar feedback. As players prepare to swing and shift their weight back and forth, they'll see their feet light up in vivid colors on the monitor – from navy blue for low pressure to bright pink for the highest level.

Because there are 80 sensor cells, players can pinpoint exactly where in the foot – not just the general area – they are applying pressure.

Next, grip it and rip it. The monitor displays corresponding pressure shift and how well the player is stabilizing.

It will show if players are not putting enough pressure on their back foot during the back swing, if they don't have equal pressure on forefoot and heel, or if they're transferring weight too early in the down-swing. Since reality and perception often are quite different, this process ensures that technique is objectively correct.

Matt Carrothers, head pro at Big Sky Golf and Country Club in Pemberton, B.C., uses Synergy at his Full Swing School and in his simulator room at Whistler.

"There's nothing theoretical about this," Carrothers said. "It's all based on research. The visual feedback provides a level of awareness that even the most articulate person couldn't communicate."

For more information, contact Joanne Younker at synergy@whistlerweb.com or go to www.bigskygolf.com. ○