



Worried about your swing? Check it out at The Studio

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By [MATT KIEFER](mailto:mkiefer@pioneerlocal.com) mkiefer@pioneerlocal.com

Typically, this is the time of year when the old golf game gets a little rusty.

But on a recent zero-degree day in January, young Kris McGovern was learning how to swing a driver inside a Deerfield office suite.

The Vernon Hills High School sophomore began taking lessons at The Studio when it opened in December. He played on the school golf team last year and is trying to improve his game by springtime, when he can hit the fairway again.

As McGovern hit balls into a screen, a nearby video camera captured his every movement.

Instructor Brett Packee consulted his laptop, where he analyzed a frame-by-frame video of his student's swing.

"As Kris gets to the top of his swing, he's losing his posture. That means his balance is off," Packee observes, drawing a digital circle around McGovern's head and a line down his spinal column. On the other side of the split screen, a video of Tiger Woods teeing off shows what an ideal swing would look like. "As Tiger gets to the top his swing, his head doesn't wobble," Packee observes.

It's that kind of high-tech, year-round instruction offered at The Studio that fills a niche with local golfers, according to Jeffrey Fishbein, who co-owns the business with Packee.

"The ultimate purpose for building this is to provide good golfers the best instruction -- physically, mentally and technologically -- in the area," Fishbein said. "Because of the weather," he adds, chuckling, "as we've seen, we need indoor facilities in Chicago."

Located at 770 Lake Cook Road, The Studio has attracted golfers from across the North Shore in the few weeks since it opened. It features three hitting stations, two chipping areas and a couple of putting greens in the 2,000-square-foot facility.

Packee and Fishbein go way back and bring quite a bit of golfing experience to their business. They played on the Deerfield High School golf team together in 1985, when they went undefeated and were ranked first in the state.

Packee, who lives in Vernon Hills, went on to become a professional golfer and last year earned Illinois PGA Teacher of the Year honors. Fishbein came to Deerfield after becoming a sports psychologist, and now offers his services to players on the Florida Marlins and Northwestern University teams, among others.

While they didn't have the same technology to train with when they were learning the game, Packee and Fishbein hope it can help golfers young and old to get better in the off-season instead of worse.

"Brett's helped me a lot. He's helping out with my swing and my short game," McGovern, the high school golfer, said.



770 Lake Cook Road, Suite 140
Deerfield, IL 60015 847-940-GOLF(4653)