## AVID GOLFER COLORADO GOLFER Elevating the Game.

## TPC COLORADO

The long-awaited course opens in August. Can a Tour event be far behind?

JENNIFER KUPCHO, NATIONAL CHAMPION

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SUNPROOF GOLF STYLES

GOLFTEC TURNS JAPANESE COBANK COLORADO OPEN PREVIEW MAN WITH A PLAN: TODD SCHOEDER REMAKES CITY PARK Golf Course





## GOLFTEC's Asian Equation

Of all Colorado's contributions to golf, GOLFTEC ranks as perhaps the most globally influential. From its beginnings in the basement of Cherry Hills Country Club in 1995, the Englewood-based company now operates nearly 200 corporate-owned and franchised golf-instruction and club-fitting centers in North America and Asia. Its 700 certified coaches have provided more than 8 million lessons, boasting a 95 percent success rate and an average score reduction of seven strokes.

Here's another number: 60. As of July 2, that's the percentage of GOLFTEC that the Japanese company Golf Digest Online will own. Not affiliated with the similarly named American magazine, GDO is Japan's largest golf conglomerate and owner of a major online retailer and an online tee times booking agent.

"They're a household name in Japan when it comes to golf—the GolfNow of Japan," explains GOLFTEC Co-founder and CEO Joe Assell. "They're also the largest golf retail site in the world. They're maxing out in Japan and we're the perfect partner for them to enter the U.S. market."

"We are connecting the world through golf, and GOLFTEC's global presence and effectiveness with students are tremendous assets to achieve this vision," Nobuya "Mike" Ishizaka, the founder, chairman and CEO of GDO, said in a press release. "Helping golfers around the globe to play better and enjoy the game is vital for the success of the golf industry, and so GOLFTEC will be an impactful addition to our group."

GDO has been the master franchisee of 10 GOLFTEC studios in Japan for six or seven years. "They then invested in 8 percent of the company about two years ago and took a seat on the board," Assell relates. GDO took that 8 percent to 60 percent by purchasing part of a stake held by Gart Capital Partners, which has been a majority investor since the company's inception. Financial details of the transaction were not disclosed.

Although GDO, which has roughly 550 employees, is publicly traded on the Tokyo Stock Exchange, GOLFTEC will remain a privately held company in the U.S.

Existing GOLFTEC leadership will remain in place to drive expansion and operational excellence while Gart Capital Partners will retain a minority position and continue to be actively involved in managing the partnership. "The Garts and the other original investors—me and (former Cherry Hills PGA Head Professional) Clayton Cole—are looking at this as a true partnership. We've got plenty of opportunity here."

For GDO, those opportunities lie in penetrating the U.S. market through its U.S. entity, San Diego-based GDO Sports, Inc. For GOLFTEC, it's about fortifying the technology as the company expands across the globe. "We'll help spread their wings here, and they'll help spread ours digitally and internationally," Assell says. "It's good for both of us. The two of us aligning makes us both stronger." golftec.com

## Golf By Numbers



Stewart from the field in the AGJA Hale Irwin tournament, held Jun 5 -7 at Walnut Creek Golf Preserve in Westminster. Sporting an orange hat and shirt featuring Oklahoma State's Pistol Pete, Stewart had some good shots of his own, carding a 66 on the final day to finish at 10-under 206. Stewart, an incoming senior at Fossil Ridge High School in Fort Collins, who has committed to attend Oklahoma State, became the first Coloradan to win the tournament's boys title in the three-round event's four-year history. His closest competitor was Davis Bryant of Aurora, who had beaten Stewart for last year's Colorado Junior PGA and 5A high school championships. ajga.org



Colorado juniors in five age groups qualified for the prestigious IMG Junior Worlds, held July 10-13 in the San Diego area. The boys are Cal McCoy, Davis Bryant (ages 15-18); Maxwell Lange, Matthew Wilkinson (13-14); Timothy Kelley,

Austin Barry (11-12); Andre Dumonteil, Gavin Amella (9-10); Brady Shaw (7-8). The girls are Hailey Schalk, Kelsey Webster (15-18); Jessica Mason, Sofia Choi (13-14); Hadley Ashton, Caitlyn Chin, Brooke Hudson (11-12); Livia Pett (9-10); Maddie Makino (7-8). Juniorworldgoff.com