

TIGER WOODS –

(from Newsweek)

Became the best golfer... through an upbringing aimed at making him the best golfer since 15th-century Scottish shepherds smacked a feather-stuffed ball around the Highlands with their crooks

His first toy was a golf club –

Tiger started learning at 6 months, from his highchair, watching his father practice swings in the garage. At 10 months, he squirmed down from his chair and took a swing with a sawed-off club. Tida has grainy photos of Tiger on a practice green at 11 months. "When he was 18 months old he would go to the driving range" at NGC, Tida says. "And when he was done hitting I would put him back in the stroller and he'd fall asleep." While other toddlers frolicked in sandboxes, Tiger practiced chipping out of sand traps.

"He would call me every day and ask, 'Daddy, can I play golf with you today?' Each and every day I would pause so that he would think I was not going to say yes--and then I would agree. He was so excited. 'I'll have Mommy take me and I'll meet you at the golf course, Daddy!'"

Earl Woods wasn't a tyrannical parent who pushed his child into doing something he didn't want to do.

"Tiger was pursuing something from an intrinsic passion for the game, and wasn't forced to live out somebody else's expectations," Brunza concludes. "If he said, 'I'm tired of golf, I want to collect stamps,' his parents would say, 'Fine, son,' and walk him down to the post office. "As a teen Tiger tried several other sports. He was a natural switch-hitter, loved playing shooting guard, was a wide receiver and a 400-meter runner. But he quit everything because it interfered with his golf.

"So far as I know Earl never pushed Tiger to do anything," says John Anselmo, 75, the legendary southern California golf pro who taught Tiger from the age of 10 to 17.

Earl never had to tell him to practice. In fact, his parents had to pull him back a little."

(from abc news)

He grew up without siblings or many friends. Tiger and Earl did everything together, hitting balls into a net out in the garage, or spending hours at the golf course, and when they'd finish, Earl would order a rum and Diet Coke, and Tiger would get a Coke with cherries, and they'd sit and nurse their drinks like two old men. The golf pro at the Navy course, Joe Grohman, worried that Tiger didn't have friends his own age until high school. His friends were Earl and Earl's old military buddies. That's who he played golf with, retired old soldiers and sailors and marines, with the occasional active-duty guy stationed near Los Angeles. Fighter jets took off and landed at the airstrip parallel to the 17th and 18th fairways. Tiger heard the stories and saw the deep love even strangers felt for each other. His entire childhood revolved around these men and their code.