

Turn your game around

Tour coach Jon Wallett did exactly that for David Howell – now he'll do it for you

David Howell has gone from Tiger beater on top of the world to a struggling pro outside the world's top 500. A chance meeting with coach Jon Wallett at the 2011 Singapore Open – where Howell had just recorded his sixth missed cut in nine starts – would prove crucial. Since then, he's returned to the winner's circle, chalked up nine other top-10s and is closing in on the world's top 100 again. So what did they do?

What's your coaching philosophy?

Simple – performance is a fusion of the technical, mental and management areas of the game.

What was the first thing you did when you started working with David?

We created an individual 'success model'. He'd been working with too many different coaches and by doing that he'd lost what took him to the Tour and brought him success. I told him that the things he was great at, like his scoring and his wedge play, had become average because all he was thinking about was his weaknesses, like his driving. I got him to work on his strengths.

How do you form that 'success model'?

You have to understand your history. If you don't you're destined to be limited by the successes and repeat the mistakes. You have to know what makes you play well and poorly and once you understand those patterns – which aren't just technical, they are mental and physiological as well – you develop your success model.

When did it turn around for David?

One of the challenges I had with him was that after four months he hadn't got better and wanted to bin it. We had a tough conversation and I convinced him to carry on and then he started to get some consistency.

Did you have to lower his expectations?

Yes because originally it was all about making top-10s for him. I showed him that he'd had four top-10s in 100 tournaments. There was no wonder his confidence was low because if top-10s were his target then 96 per cent of the time he was failing. We lowered the bar to top-40s and suddenly he was having success, which builds confidence and momentum.

■ Get your game in shape with Jon's Tour-proven practice plan: See page 51.



THE EXPERT

Jon Wallett is director of the Elite Coaching Golf Academy. He works with several Tour players

CLAIM TO FAME:

Helping two-time Ryder Cup star David Howell to a first win in seven years