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My bio always says "I am a maxillofacial surgeon at play and a golfer at work." This is because I can do surgeries handily, but am passionately working towards golf.



"What has motivated you to start playing the sport?"

Since my childhood, I have played many sports. I have played cricket at Chembur Gymkhana, where I used to be the No.3 batsman for my team. I have also played tennis, carrom, and chess. Later on, obviously, in the chase and hurdles of life, cricket and tennis took a back seat. One of my mentors told me to start playing golf. I have also been seeing Jack Nicklaus, Nick Faldo, and Tiger Woods play, and I got fascinated by the sport, and thought, "Let's try to play this game." I am still only trying to play the game.

"What do you think is the biggest misconception about this game?"

I think the biggest misconception about golf is that it's considered an old man's game which requires no exercise. So, as you can see that I have been playing for 32 minutes and have already burnt 265 calories at 143 beats per minute. If you only play a 9-hole course game every Sunday, then you will have easily burnt a lot of calories. Moreover, you will end up doing a full body exercise, because as you must have noticed, with the shots, you require strong forearms, shoulders, spine, back, core, quads, fit knees and of course feet. So you are working out all regions of the body, just like swimming, but will anyone call swimming an "old man's game"?

"Sir according to you, how does being an athlete make you a better person?"

Success and victory make you arrogant. Failure keeps you grounded. As a sportsman who is playing every day, you are more likely to fail than succeed and this is a reason for you to keep practising. If you see the greats like Sachin Tendulkar or Rahul Dravid, they have an average of 50 runs even though they have played over 190 tests, which is over 300 innings. They did not score just 50 runs in every inning, but the average at the end of their career is 50. So, similarly, because I am playing this sport, I have had to face many failures, and can now handle it better. I know that whatever the consequences of my golf stroke will be, I can handle it, which makes me a better person, and a better surgeon; that no matter what happens during my surgery, suppose some complication occurs, I can handle it; no matter if something happens in my life, like a personal tragedy or some health problem, I know I can handle it. That is the reason I believe everyone must play some sport.

"Sir how you you find the time to play golf as well as be an oral surgeon?"

Oh! That is a tough question. It is difficult to do. I wish I had a time stone like Dr. Strange, but unfortunately, I do not. Although, my team does call me "Dr. Strange", what I can say is that in the first two decades of my life, as is the scenario with every surgeon; everybody gets busy in the hustle trying to chase their dreams. Then one day, it's a matter of realization, that now you've achieved everything that you wanted and have time for yourself.

So, to put it in a simple way, I generally cancel a time from 8 am to 11 am in my diary, for one day in the week and just label it as "golf", which was actually booked as a "surgery". I don't delineate unless there's some emergency.

"Who is your sports hero?"

There is Nick Faldo who is really good. I like Tiger Woods, Dustin Johnson and Rory. I also like a lot of Indian professional golfers such as Aditi Ashok. They have been practising for 15-20 years every day before they break even. People often ask me the "secret of success" and the answer to this is NOTHING. If you do something for 10 years every day for 5-6 hours, you will automatically be good at it. So if I start playing the game every day, and in 1 month if we come back again, you will see the difference in the way I am hitting the ball. Thus, it's just practice and more importantly, focused practice.

“When a golf ball is lying deep in the rough, you have to play it exactly where it is! That is why I love this sport, because it is exactly like life. You can't make choices according to your conveniences. It's a consequence of your action, or sometimes you're just in a bad situation and you've to do the best of what has been given.”

"Do you have a favorite club in your bag?"

I don't have a favourite club as such. It depends on the yards and the distances, but my favoured clubs are a 9 iron, an 8 iron, a 3 wood, and of course, the sand wedge and the putter.

"What emotions do you feel while playing?"

I feel a sense of exhilaration, gratitude and blessing that I can play this game. I also feel a deep sense of connection with the intensity of the game.

I feel just the way I am; I feel awesome!

"What is the best round of golf you have ever played?"

There is no best round of golf. However, if you reverse this question to the worst round of golf ever played by me, I will say that believe me, there have been many and there will be many more.

"Do you have any pre-round rituals or superstitions?"

No superstitions or pre-round rituals; I am a very spiritualistic and religious person. I do pray before an operation because we are operating on a person and he has trusted me for it. However, during golf, it's nothing like that. I try to be as relaxed as possible and focus on my breath because, if there is tension in your body, you tend to grip the club tighter and the shot doesn't come out that good. In a similar way, if you're anxious and nervous while a question is being asked to you in viva, then even if you know the answer, you won't be able to say it. After you get out of the viva, you'll realise that you were aware of the answer.



"Sir, people have an opinion that golf very is expensive. So how expensive is golf ?"

I would not say golf is very expensive, but it is at par with tennis. It's because, in tennis, you need racquets, balls and shoes which wear and tear. You also need a membership at a tennis court. Definitely, it's more expensive than other games like badminton. Now let's talk about the golf kit. I use a TaylorMade kit because my sports hero uses it. Cheaper kits are available which are Asian kits. They have second-hand kits as well. Number two is golf lessons which you can't play without. To play decent golf, you need to take lessons at least for 3 months. Here we are talking about two lessons a week for a period of 12 weeks which is 25 lessons. You also need a membership in a club to come and play wherein, you can either practice at a range which costs less and you can play the game. The expense comes in at the balls which we lose. If you look at the range, there are trees on either side and if you cross the other hole, you will see a river there. So the balls tend to get lost and that is where our expense is. There are sites available that give you secondhand and Indian balls. We can always work around with the balls that are resold by the golf courses when they find them. You don't need to go in for an expensive kit. Instead, you can buy a second-hand kit, but it depends on what your interest is. Finally, you work on pursuing the game that you've made a decision about. Even if you buy a kit as I have, it's good enough for 10 years and will not get spoilt unless you damage these clubs. I have been using my kit for 3 years and there is some wear and tear that happens, but that's okay.

"Sir, what is your favorite sports quote?"

I have multiple favourite quotes and if you ask my team, I always keep coming up with something or the other. Still, if you want to know some typical favourite sports quote, it should be the one where Michael Jordan says, "I've missed more than 9,000 shots in my career. I've lost almost 300 games. I've been trusted to take the game-winning shot and missed 26 times. I've failed over and over again in my life, and that is why I succeed". This is one of my favourite quotes which shows that even a guy like Michael Jordan has to struggle. Haven't we seen Virat Kohli score a century after 3 years? He is Virat Kohli! He should be able to do it easily, right?!

The second of my quotes is something that my Baba told me in my 10th standard. He took a printout and put it in my room. It's given by Arnold Glasow. He says, "Success is not a result of spontaneous combustion. You must set yourself on fire".

The last one is by the famous award-winning director, James Cameron, who has directed Terminator, Titanic and many other movies. He says, "If you set your goals ridiculously high and if it's a failure, then you will fail above everyone else's success." So keep your standards high; even if you don't beat them, it's okay. As my father used to say, "Perfection is our goal, excellence will be tolerated".

