

Foul-Weather Fashion Finds Play your favourite game in any season

BY ALLISON DEMPSEY

There are golfers, and then there are *golfers*. You know the ones: arriving at the course before sunrise, refusing to come in out of the rain, playing until the snow starts to fly. Maybe you think they're crazy. Or maybe you've just never had the right equipment to join in the fun.

Never fear. Foul-weather gear is here.



Let's face it: Canada is not exactly a golfer's weather paradise, but we have to grin and bear it. Or grin and cover it up, if need be.

"There's definitely a seasonal aspect to golf," says Kim D'Oliveira, Apparel Business Manager for Nike Golf Canada. It was a late season this year, and cool. The golfer's question is: what can we do to extend the season?

"The west coast has a longer season and golfers can sometimes play all year round," she says. "But in other parts of the country we strive to play into fall, late October if possible. And the best way to achieve that is through layering clothing, then peeling off layers as needed."

We've all heard about layering our clothes for more extreme sports such as hiking or mountain climbing to achieve maximum outdoor enjoyment, but golf? It just isn't done...is it?

Apparently so.

Consider the new long thermal sleeve that's designed to slip on under your tried and true polo shirt, held in place with an elasticized top. It looks like a real sleeve and no one but you will know the truth. D'Oliveira also mentions the buzz around the "Elmer Fudd" hat, a knit winter flap cap that offers protection for your ears.

There's also the Elite jacket and pants, matching for men and women and designed for athletes: They're waterproof, block out wind and rain and sport a subtle graphic.

"It was worn by Tiger at the U.S. Open. It has stretch in it, is playable, and is made for the weather-conscious golfer. It's waterproof, wind-proof and breathable," says D'Oliveira. "A premium product that offers something for every price point."

Sure Canadians complain about the weather - it's practically a national pastime - but if nothing can deter you from hitting the links you can still look good while battling the elements.

Nicole McCassey, assistant product manager at Concord-based adidas Golf, heartily agrees.

"Our premium outerwear piece is the ClimaProof Storm 3-Way Convertible Jacket," she says. "Its advanced fabrication and innovative design delivers maximum all-weather protection and 100 percent range-of-motion for complete freedom. This is a versatile piece of equipment that can be worn three ways - long sleeve, short sleeve and vest - depending on the weather."





The jacket features a stretch-elbow articulation and a silicone shoulder gripper so the player's golf bag doesn't slip off his or her shoulders while walking in wet weather. It also boasts a flip-up adjustable storm collar, adjustable cuffs, internal compression wrap so the jacket stays tight to the body throughout the golf swing, and completely seam-sealed and waterproof zippers.

Adidas also offers the ClimaProof Storm Soft-Shell Jacket, a functional piece that can be worn both on and off the golf course. It features four-way stretch, zip pockets, articulated elbows for comfort and flexibility, critically seam-sealed and waterproof to 10,000mm.

European sports icon Lacoste combines form and function with an outerwear collection that includes a men's "must-have" rugby shirt with a badge logo, as well as a water-repellent hooded vest. Other men's items in the winter lineup include a range of solid, striped and checked polos, a series of checked and striped long-sleeve shirts, gabardine trousers, and V-neck sweaters in both long sleeve and vest versions — everything you need to step on the course in style.

"We wanted this theme to be an entrance to winter to ease into the cold," says creative director Christophe Le-maire.

For women, the 3/4-sleeve polo with banded cuffs and matching hem and collar combine with a sporty chic skirt to offer both style and sensibility. Long-sleeve Ts, turtlenecks, pants, sweater vests and short-sleeve V-necks in knitted jersey round out the winter line for women.

A traditional leader in performance outerwear, Sunice's lineup features Gore-tex and Paclite for ultimate protection in all kinds of inclement weather conditions. Features include soft-touch chin guards, rain channels to avoid dripping on wrist and hand, in-pocket ball cleaner and waterproof zippers with lock down pullers.

This season Oakley introduces its highly anticipated, first-ever active apparel line designed exclusively for women. The dynamic 17-piece collection couples clean, graceful lines with performance fabrics, technical detailing and feminine style. Modern looks meet mainstream active wear that looks great on and off the course.

So, no matter if you live in the icy east, balmy B.C. or somewhere in between, today's outerwear options can help make your golfing experience the best it can be, whatever the weather.

