

Back in the Golf Swing

*Portola Valley Man Grateful
for Washington Health Ortho Surgeon*

A group of senior golf buddies in San Francisco is quickly emerging as the No. 1 fan club for a Washington Health orthopedic surgeon.

John Costouros, MD, of the Institute for Joint Restoration and Research (IJRR) at Washington Health, a renowned shoulder surgeon and pioneer in shoulder joint replacement, has repaired the shoulders of several men in this Olympic Club golfing group. The grateful patients are happy to refer others to Dr. Costouros.

Michael Dougherty, who divides his time between Portola Valley, California, and Scottsdale, Arizona, is the latest member of this golf group to have shoulder replacement by Dr. Costouros, one of a handful of U.S. surgeons skilled in a novel type of robotic surgery.

“Last May, when I came back to California from the winter in Arizona, my buddies told me that I needed to see Dr. Costouros,” said Dougherty. Even though other prominent health centers were minutes away from his home, Dougherty trusted his friends and made an appointment to see Dr. Costouros.

Dougherty, who injured his shoulder slipping on a wet floor at a Mexican resort in 2024, had already consulted with three orthopedic surgeons in both California and Arizona, including team doctors for Major League Baseball. Only one of the three wanted to do the complicated shoulder repair, and the

last doctor to offer an opinion advised Dougherty to live with it.

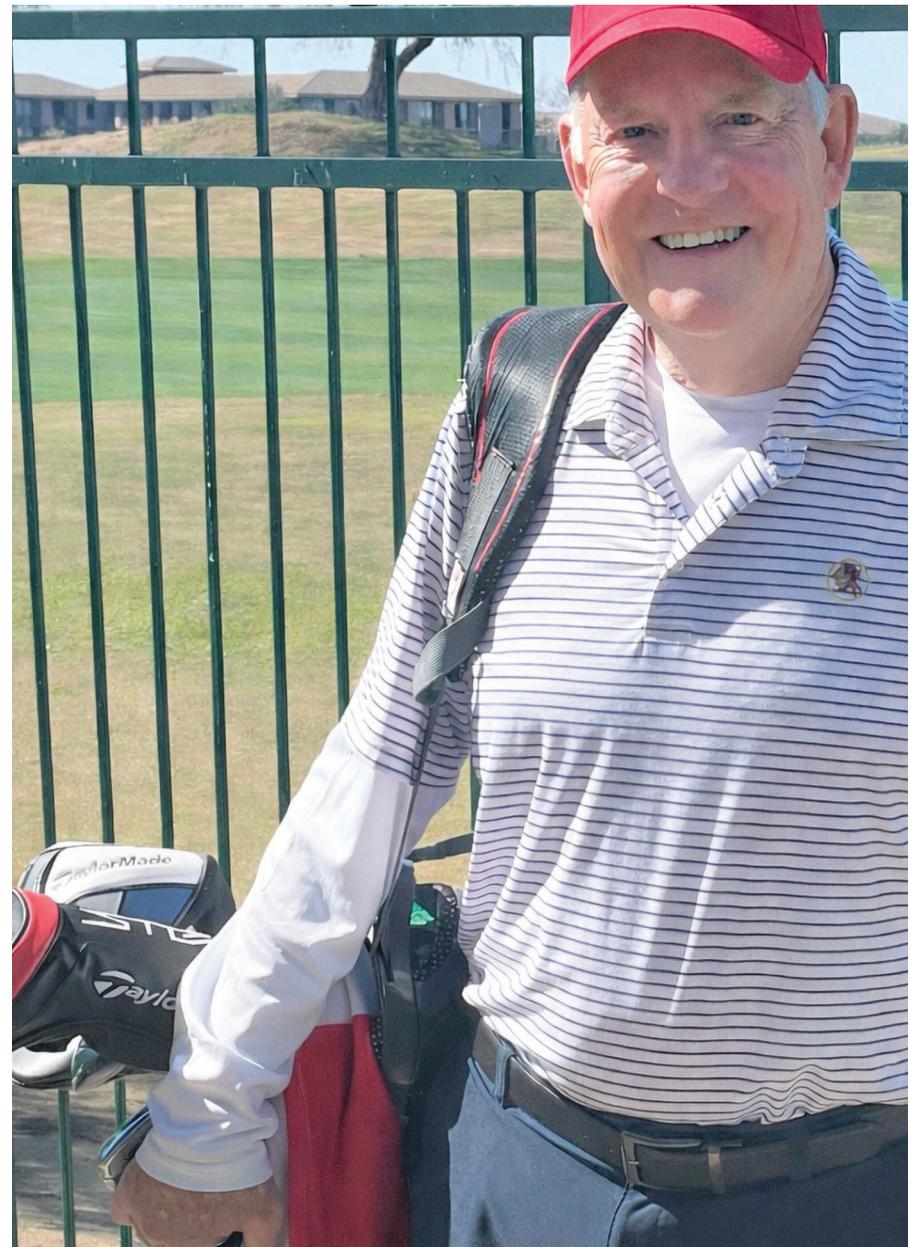
Living With Pain Was No Fun

“I lived with the pain because I was able to function and still play golf, but as I told my buddies, it only hurt at the top of the swing, on impact, and at the finish,” said the 73-year-old commercial roofing executive with a smile. “I finally said to myself, ‘This isn’t any fun.’” That’s when he went to see Dr. Costouros.

“I liked him immediately,” explained the married father of two and grandfather of three. “His resume was very impressive. Dr. Costouros explained how he would do the surgery, and said that after seeing my scans, a robotic procedure would be best to maintain the function for an active guy like me.”

A reverse shoulder replacement flips the position of the natural ball-and-socket structure of the shoulder joint, placing a metal ball on the shoulder socket side and a plastic cup on the arm bone. It allows the deltoid muscle to lift the arm instead of the rotator cuff. The type of robotic device that Dr. Costouros uses enhances his skill to make the joint fit within 1 millimeter of accuracy and precision, better than the human eye. This is the same technology that has perfected hip and knee replacement.

Dr. Costouros, who trained at Harvard Medical School, the University of California at San Francisco Medical Center, and Stanford University, also



After a robotic-assisted, reverse shoulder replacement, Mike Dougherty is back to enjoying time on the links.

studied shoulder replacement technology in Zurich, Switzerland, where the technology was first developed, and helped bring it to the United States.

Surgery Went Really Well

Dougherty had the surgery on Sept. 29, 2025, and was amazed at the lack of pain he had immediately following the procedure and during the month-long recovery in a sling. “I give Dr. Costouros all the credit and attribute having no pain to the way he did the surgery.”

“I didn’t ask a lot of questions,” Dougherty noted. “I knew he was a pioneer in robotic surgery, and I trusted my friends at the Olympic Club. I’m in

good shape for my age, and everything went really well.” He was home by mid-afternoon after the early-morning surgery.

This was Dougherty’s only orthopedic surgery and first experience with Washington Health, one that he is very grateful for. “Everyone was wonderful, from the surgeon to the physician assistant, to the nurses and physical therapists.”

Dougherty is back to playing a good round of golf, traveling, watching the stock market, and working.

For more information on the IJRR and shoulder replacement program, visit WashingtonHealth.com/IJRR.

“Dr. Costouros explained how he would do the surgery, and said that after seeing my scans, a robotic procedure would be best to maintain the function for an active guy like me.”

—Michael Dougherty