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# **GOLF can be an EASY GAME**

**JOE NOVAK**

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## ***DEDICATION***

Dedicated to the countless people in both professional and amateur golf ranks, who, by their messages of approval and commendation, stimulated me to do this third book on golf. It is done with the hope that it will not only provide some enjoyment but may be the means of greater accomplishment through better understanding.

## ***FOREWORD***

The material in this book may, at times, appear to be repetitious, but in discussing the golf swing from the different angles and aspects, repetition could not be avoided.

However, repetition has its merits, because it eventually brings one continually face to face with the same facts and fundamentals.

In all fields, facts and fundamentals do not change, and this is true in the golfing world.

Continued study and research have developed some new concepts—these concepts have produced clear-cut conclusions which are offered and presented herewith.

In addition to these conclusions, I have designed a practical method which can and will successfully develop "the art or knack of performance." Reread the text, restudy the pictures, and desired results will be produced.

In closing, let me wish "that all your drives be long and true, and all your putts real short and few."

JOE NOVAK

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**GOLF can be  
an EASY GAME**



**GOLF**

**Can Be**

**an Easy Game**



**Joe Novak**



# 1

## ***THE THREE REQUIREMENTS OF GOOD GOLF***

I think I can most readily explain the requirements of good golf by relating the case history of one of my pupils, whom I shall call "D.M."

When D.M. joined our Bel-Air golf club his handicap was 10. After three months play over this exacting course with its narrow fairways, D.M.'s handicap went to 13. This disturbed him considerably because he had a certain pride in his game, so he approached me with this comment: "I guess I am going to have to take some lessons." "Well," I answered, "you don't have to talk that way about the lessons, I am not selling castor oil on the lesson tee."

When we got to the lesson tee, I asked D.M. to take a few practice swings, and then I had him hit a half a dozen shots.

"What do you think of it?" asked D.M.

"Not bad," I answered, "in fact it is very good: Do you know exactly what your first move is in your swing?"

"I start the club away from the ball," D.M. answered.

"No, there is something you do ahead of that," I said.

Finally, after another half dozen shots I made D.M. realize that his first move, the very first move he made after he assumed his position to the ball, was a "forward press."

For those unfamiliar with this term let me tell you that it is as old as the hills, but aptly describes exactly how every good, reliable golfer starts his swing. The forward press is a slight forward motion, a slight forward bending of the right knee. This forward kick with the right knee enables the player to do a "reverse press," a reversing of the knee positions, whereby the player can balance himself on his right foot and right leg, so that the upswing of the club can be made with the right side of the body. And I want to say most emphatically that if there is any trick to making a good golf shot, it is exactly this trick of getting onto the right leg and right foot before the club is *picked up* on the back swing.

After I had demonstrated and proved to D.M. that he had this little forward press as the first move of his golf swing, I told him to never let anyone ever talk him out of that move, because with it he had developed the proper sense of footwork and balance to put himself in a fine position to swing the club. At this point I emphasized the fact that the proper way to swing a golf club was with a sense of body action, a sense of body control. This sense of using the body to swing a golf club is nothing strange or secret. The basis of all athletics is that whenever one wants to throw something, to kick something or to punch something, in fact, anytime one wants

to get power into his arms or legs, he does it by getting into proper position to utilize his body to generate the force.

I pointed out to D.M. that this combination of proper footwork for balance and proper body action for power was the basis of every good golfer's game, and that however he had acquired that little forward press, it had made it possible for him to use his body correctly and gave him the basis of a real good golf game.

After this long dissertation D.M. said, "That's great; tell me then, why I can't play golf."

"You can't play good golf for the simple reason that you do not know how to use your hands," I answered.

"What's wrong with my hands," he asked.

"For one thing," I answered, "you have a death grip on the club with your left hand. This grip, plus the fact that you raise the club on the backswing with your left hand and left arm, causes you to roll the clubface away from the ball on the backswing, and from this roll away action the club falls into an open position at the top of the swing. From here you pull sharply across the ball so that you produce high pop up shots, or you push the ball away off to the right, or you slice your shots badly.

"Now, from this same open face position of the club at the top of the swing, you might suddenly start *doing the very reverse*. Instead of bringing the clubhead into the ball with this dragging, cross-cut, lagging action of the club, you suddenly start lashing out with the right hand at the top of the swing. The club, with this 'too early hit' action of the right hand, is thrown outside the point

of impact. Often this 'too early hit' with the right hand causes the clubface to turn over, to toe in as the ball is met and a series of topped shots, smothered hook shots or shots that go off to the left result." (This is a common fault with beginners and is the reason why they get so many white paint marks on the top part of their wood clubs.)

So, I explained to D.M. that while his footwork and body action were good, this faulty hand action caused his shots to stray to the right or fall off to the left; in other words, they went any place but down the middle.

"You certainly hit the nail on the head," said D.M. "That is exactly my problem. I have no trouble hitting them but I don't know where they are going. What do we do about it?"

I then proceeded to show D.M. that after making the forward press, which was his first move, he then made move two, a reverse press (changing knee positions and thereby shifting his balance onto his right leg and right foot), that he then made move three (raised the club to the top of the swing) and then move four (brought the club down into and through the ball).

I told him that was the natural sequence of motion in a golf shot and that golf champions such as Harry Vardon, Bobby Jones, Leo Diegel, Jimmy Demaret, Jackie Burke, Paul Runyon, Lawson Little, Byron Nelson, Sam Snead, George Bayer, Mike Souchak, Jay Hebert, and countless others, all had or have this one, two, three and four rhythm in their golf swing.

I pointed out to D.M. that because of the tense death grip with his left hand, he kept raising the club with his

left hand and left arm and throwing or rolling the club into open position at the top of the swing.

Try as I might, I couldn't seem to get the idea across to D.M.—that his clubhead ought to be closed on the backswing. When I asked him to keep the club closed on the backswing I was only asking him to keep the club square with the line of flight as he took it back.

D.M. complained that his fingers were short, that his hands were thick and fat, and that it was impossible for him to take the club back as I suggested.

"D.M.," I pleaded, "I'm not asking you to perform a miracle. I'm only asking you to keep the club *in position* as you swing it up and down. This is something that you must do with your hands. Your number three motion, instead of being started with the left hand, which rolls the club away from the ball, should be actually started with the right hand; then your left hand instead of pronating \* could do the reverse, supinate, and the club face would be kept closed or square through the swing.

"In fact," I urged, "if you will do this on the backswing, when you reach the top of the swing you will have control of the club with your left hand as you ought to. Then and only then will you be able to come through with the left arm and the left side, and only then will you meet the ball squarely and drive it down the middle."

No amount of explanation seemed to break up D.M.'s faulty hand action until we were in our fourth lesson. At this point, having exhausted about all the suggestions I had, I suddenly came out with this statement:

• Pronation is defined in Chapter Six.

"D.M., why do you insist on playing with the back of the club, when it's so much easier to play with the front of it?"

It suddenly happened! D.M., instead of thinking of his hands, began thinking of the club—thinking of what he should do with the club—and very soon he learned the difference between what he should not be doing, *opening the club on the backswing*, and what he should do, *close it on the backswing or at least keep it square*.

Of course, every good golfer has that ability. Every good golfer learns that it is one thing to swing a golf club, but it is another thing to know what position the club is in while it is being swung.

Well, once D.M. learned the difference between letting his club fall open on the backswing and/or keeping it closed, square, or in position as he made his swing, D.M. began to play golf. His shots started to go straight, and he began to play golf as one ought to play it—he used each club for the shot or purpose for which it was designed.

Let me digress for a moment from the story about D.M., because this is a good time to tell you what an easy game golf is, and what an enjoyable game it can be with a correct understanding of the simple facts:

- (a) A golf club will only do what the player makes it do.
- (b) Each club is designed for a specific purpose, and only when it is applied to the ball in its true, natural state will it produce the effect for which it was designed.
- (c) Basically, there are only three clubs in golf:
  1. The driver, shaped so that it drives the ball on a low trajectory and is therefore used for distance shots.
  2. The iron, formerly called a lofter, does exactly what

the name implies—it lofts or lifts the ball. This club is used to place the ball into position in certain spots on the fairway or on the green.

3. The putter, which would be better named a "roller," is so designed that it rolls the ball; therefore, it is the club used to accomplish the very purpose of the game—*roll the ball into the cup*.

But golfers are not limited or restricted to these three clubs. Golfers get themselves a set of two or three, more generally four, but sometimes even five, drivers. They carry a set of three or six, most generally a set of eight, irons. They usually add to this outfit a heavy weighted club to get the ball out of deep grass or sand traps. And, the above clubs, along with a putter, generally constitute the set of 14 clubs that a golfer is permitted to use in tournament play.

Now, having such an outfit is a perfect waste of material unless *each and every club is swung in the same way* so that the various differences in the shapes of the clubs can each perform their objectives. In other words, golf is an easy game to play, because the player has a specific club or tool for each shot or effect that is desired. All he has to do is to learn the one basic swing and apply it to each club.

By comparison, the game of tennis is difficult. In tennis, the player has only one club or one racquet, the ball is never in the same position—it is either high or low, in front of him or behind him—and to make his shots successfully the tennis player must learn and be able to play several different strokes. But not so the golfer. If he correctly learns the one stroke, he can simply let the club do the work.

Now back to our story of D.M.

Once he learned how to position and direct the club on the backswing, and once he began to keep the club in that same true position throughout the swing, his scores began to improve. As a matter of record, six months after his first lesson from me he won a tournament at Bel-Air by shooting a score of 66, four under par for 18 holes. One year after he had his first lesson his handicap had been lowered from 13 to 3.

In one week of play he scored a hole in one in addition to scoring a 2 on a 390-yard hole, and another 2 on a 410-yard hole. To do this, the ball must have been flying true and straight off his clubs.

An interesting sequel to the D.M. story is that ten years after the above-mentioned instruction, he was playing with a 4 handicap, and in a tournament in which there were over 300 entries he turned in the low qualifying score of 67.

What brought his handicap from 13 to 3? What gave him the ability to shoot a 66, and ten years later shoot a 67? It was a simple case of synchronizing the two things every golfer must do if he wants to play good golf.

First, there must be a basic ability to swing the club correctly, and the correct way to swing it is with a sense of body control. This ability to motivate or swing the club with the body *is* impossible unless the player has the proper footwork and a proper sense of balancing himself, so that he has the full, free use of his body. It is from the body that the power flows, so that the distance aspect of a golf shot depends on *just how the body is being used*.

Second, the player must be able to keep the club *in*



*position* throughout the swing so that the club will produce the effect for which it was designed, and the ball will fly true and straight towards the objective.

Now, D.M. had (1) the footwork, which gave him the necessary balance so that he could (2) use his body to swing the club, but he was totally lacking in (3) the proper club positioning control so that his shots kept going "hither and yon," and until he corrected his errors in this respect, his golf game was erratic.

Everybody's golf game is subject to the following analysis.

First, how well does the player handle his weight; what is his sense of balance; does he know how to work his feet and legs in order to establish the proper sense of balance so that the body can be established as the motivating factor in swinging the club?

Secondly, how well does the player use his body; does he understand that a golf swing is a double-handed, ambidextrous motion in which there is an upswing as well as a downswing—an upswing that is made with the right side of the body and a downswing and follow through that is made with the left side?

Third, if the player has the footwork which will give him this double-handed, ambidextrous motion with his body, does he know exactly how to use his hands to exert the necessary positioning control over the club so that he can make the ball do just what he wants it to do?

While these three things are individually necessary and important, there is a certain order of importance, and a certain order of performance that prevails in developing the ideal result. For example, before a golfer can use his

body correctly in swinging the club, he must know how to handle his weight, and only when he has a working arrangement between his weight and his body is he in a position to learn how to use his hands.

In other words, there are prior factors and there are post factors in a golf swing. Let me call upon a scientific formula to help explain this order of importance that I am discussing. The formula reads as follows:

*Ultimate results depend on post factor efficiency.*

These seven words succinctly describe the artistry of a golf swing; there are things to do, but there is a certain time to do them.

First the golfer must handle his weight; but shifting the weight from one foot to the other does nothing of itself, it only places the player in a position where he can use and utilize his body correctly.

Secondly, *only* when the golfer has the basic or prior footwork so that he is in a position to use his body to swing the club, are the hands free to exert over the club the proper sense of position and control, and the ability to apply the club correctly to the ball. In other words, a golf shot only flies as the club makes it fly, and how the ball flies is a direct result of the club position. The club position is a direct result of what the hands are doing, and what the hands are doing is the post factor that determines ultimate efficiency.

No wonder so much time and effort is concentrated on the correct grip in golf.

I have often said that a runner runs with his feet, but a golfer golfs with his hands. Of course, for the runner to get his feet in action, there is a lot of arm and shoulder

work, and for a golfer to get his hands working, there is a lot of footwork and body action.

To repeat, there are three basic factors in golf:

1. Footwork, for balance
2. Body action, for power
3. Hand action, for club control

But to these three factors there is an order of importance, a delicate sense of timing that so many golfers miss. They fail to get the knack of properly coordinating these three factors into a working arrangement.

As there is a certain order of importance, so likewise there is a certain order of performance in these three basic operations of a golf swing. In other words, in the properly executed golf shot the player moves smoothly from one operation to the other, but all operations function collectively towards the final goal of applying the club to the ball. So there is in the golf shot an order of importance and an order of performance which precludes any such thing as a one-piece swing. Be prepared to reach your ultimate goal of a smooth, flowing performance through a natural step-by-step procedure rather than through any short cut.

The other comment I wish to make is that if there is error in the performance of any operation in the swing, then such an error would multiply and increase as it would be carried on into the next operation. So there must be sure performance in the execution of each of the three factors.

# 2

## ***ERRONEOUS THEORIES OF GOLF***

It is regrettable that

- (a) The thrills of a great game,
- (b) The wonderful companionships that are available in golf,
- (c) The recreational advantages that are a part of golf,
- (d) The healthful benefits that automatically accrue and flow from participation in the game

are out of the reach of so many players, because the game is played so badly. And it is played badly, not because of any physical incapacities but because of improper understanding.

This situation is all the more regrettable because there is so little one has to know or learn in order to play a good game of golf.

What could be more simple than golf? There lies a perfectly quiet, still ball, ready to be dispatched to the desired spot. The player can take as much time as he wants and he has a whole kit full of clubs specifically designed to produce whatever effect he desires. All the golfer has to do is to swing the club.

Again I must inject my comparison—tennis, compared to golf, is difficult. In tennis, the ball is moving, it never comes to the same spot, it's in front of the player, it's behind the player, it may be low, it may be high, and the poor tennis player has just one racquet to do the job. To play the ball in its various positions, the tennis player must learn and perfect several different strokes. Not so the golfer. All the golfer needs is the one perfect stroke—and let the club do the work.

But confusion and contradiction are rampant in golf. There are more theories and more ideas on golf than any single subject in the world. Here is how these numberless ideas have developed.

Originally, in trying to explain the various clubs and their uses in golf, an impression was created that each club in golf required a certain technique. In other words, there was a certain way to use the driver for the long shots, the use of wooden clubs for fairway shots was something different, long irons required another technique, short irons something different again, and so on through the pitch shots and the chip shots. When it came to putting, the experts had run out of ideas and techniques, until today the notion prevails that putting is something that cannot be taught.

What a silly situation! Putting can be taught and learned just as any other shot in golf. But more on putting later.

On top of this contradiction about using the different swings for each club in golf, there is another theory in golf, to wit: that no two people can or should swing a golf club in the same way. There is a belief that each player

must develop a golf swing designed to suit his own specific needs. From this school of thought we are swamped with ideas of how the tall, the short, the thick and the thin should play the game.

However, a serious consideration will soon prove that there are certain basic physical mechanics that exist in the human body and all persons—thick, thin, tall or short—must conform to that basic setup.

As if the above idea, of a different swing for each player and a different swing for each club in golf, has not developed enough confusion and conflict, there is still another prominent school of thought that has inhibited and restricted the naturalness in golf and the enjoyment that flows from such naturalness.

I refer now to the school that insists there should never be any body action in a golf shot. This school does admit that on the longer shots with the driver and other woods there may be some body action; but when it comes to the iron shots there must be none. Of course, when putting, complete rigor mortis should set in.

If ever one wanted to develop an unnaturalness in a physical endeavor, the way to do it is to eliminate or restrict all body action. Nothing could be more unnatural because the basis of all athletics is a full, free use of the body. For example, whether one is throwing, kicking or punching—whenever one is trying to get power into a hand or a foot—it is with a sense of body action. In fact, it is only with a full, free sense of body action that the desired effect of throwing, kicking or punching is accomplished.

Because of the confusion, contradiction and conflict

that the above three theories developed, because of the inhibitions and restrictions that the three theories have created, because of the inefficiency that has resulted, because of the ineptness that must result from this conflict and confusion and because this ineptness caused countless players to give up the game in sheer disgust, I wrote my first book, *Par Golf in Eight Steps*, several years ago.

It was recognized that the greatest need of people learning the game—and the greatest need in producing a consistency of play—was the need of a pattern, a clear-cut program whereby a player not only knew what he should do, but by knowing exactly what he should do he automatically learned exactly what not to do.

That is what *Par Golf in Eight Steps* set out to do for the player. It is a perfectly natural step-by-step procedure that indicates not only what to do, but it also indicates how to do it and when to do it. Only by having such a plan can the player act positively and aggressively. With such a plan the player will be able to correct wayward tendencies and to recognize his errors and his weaknesses. By being able to recognize them he will be able to avoid them, and then and only then he will be able to play good golf.

By having an understanding of what is right and what is wrong, the player will be able to teach himself. Only with this basic understanding and an ability to evaluate his own efforts will he be able to check and correct his errors. Once this basic pattern is established, and an ability to conform to the pattern developed, there will be an understanding from which a natural sense of confidence

will develop. With this confidence will come a natural sense of relaxation; and with this relaxation will come greater efficiency. Golf will become easy and natural, and only when it is easy and natural is it the real true fun it can and should be.

The discussion up to this point has been more or less of a negative nature, what one should not do. This is an endless, hopeless endeavor. Let's consider golf from the positive standpoint, and from this positive standpoint simplicity and conclusiveness can and will be reached.

The first point of understanding that one must have in regard to golf is that various clubs were designed and added to the golfer's bag in order to automatically produce different shots or different effects. Having these different clubs reduces the game to the simple task of using the same swing on each and every club.

If the player has a good swing he will play well; if he has a bad swing he will play badly. The perfect golf swing is something that is basically done with the body. Naturally, the arms and hands enter into a golf swing most importantly, but the actual swing of the club, the actual movement of the club, is done with a movement that originates in the body.

Bobby Jones, the great golfer, once expressed it as follows: "My golf swing is a something that starts within me." I thoroughly agree with this notion—that the golf swing starts within the player—it is a something that is done with the body.

However, in every golf stroke there are two swings: an upswing and a downswing. The upswing is accomplished by using the right side of the body, and the



downswing is done by using the left side of the body, and therein lies a catch.

To use the right side the player must be balanced with his weight on his right foot. To use his left side he must be balanced on his left foot. *And this is the first lesson in golf.* A player cannot use his body any better than he can shift or transfer his weight to the right foot, so that the upswing can be made with the right side, and then back to the left foot so that the downswing can be made with the left side.

Once the player has learned to handle his weight so that the right side can be utilized to raise the club to the top of the swing, and the player has learned to reshift his weight to the left foot so that the left side can be utilized to pull the club down into and through the ball, he will be in a position to learn lesson 2, the only other lesson he has to learn.

Lesson 2 pertains to the hands.

As the player swings the club up and down, he will soon discover that there is a need to keep the club in the proper position as it is being swung up and swung down. This keeping the club in position is something that is done with the hands, but they can never be utilized to perform this important function unless the player has first established the ability to use his body as the basic means of motivating the club.

*That, in a nutshell, is what the golf swing is all about.* Just as there are two basic requirements to *every* golf shot—*distance* and *direction*—so, likewise, are there two things to learn. First, a sense of body control and body action with which to swing and motivate the club, and it

is with this that the power or force in a golf shot is determined and controlled. Second, the direction of a golf shot is regulated and determined by the position of the club as it contacts the ball, and this club position is something that is created and controlled by the action of the hands.

Actually, this business of club position is the crux of each and every shot in golf. As the club is positioned, so the ball flies.

As a matter of fact, every good golfer can, in the same simple manner that a billiard player tilts his cue up or down in order to produce different effects on the cue ball, turn a golf club in or out, to make the golf ball hook, slice or go straight.

A golf club turned in towards the player is known as a club in closed position. This technique is used to curve or pull the ball to the left. If the position of the club is turned out away from the player, the position is known as open and is used to curve the ball to the right.

If the club is kept square, absolutely at right angles to the line of the shot, then the ball will fly absolutely straight.

The business of acquiring a good golf swing becomes the simple process of training oneself to use the body to swing the club, and if this body-type swing is established, then the hands are free to exert the proper and necessary sense of position control over the club so that the ball will fly true.

So much for what has to be done. Let's start to produce the perfect golf swing for everyone.

# 3

## ***THE FIRST HALF OF A GOLF SHOT -ASSUMING THE CORRECT POSITION***

### **Introduction**

In the making of every golf shot, there are two parts: First—Assuming the proper position to the ball—This means:

- A. Proper placement of the club to the ball
- B. Correct grip or correct hand positions on the club
- C. Correct placement of feet
- D. Proper position of body.

Once this starting position is established, the second part of the golf shot consists of the actual stroke, that is, the actual swing of the club.

To each of the above two parts, there are four distinct moves, and if these moves are followed in the step-by-step procedure in which they are going to be presented, there will be no difficulty in learning and acquiring a perfectly natural, efficient golf swing in very short order.

My good friend, Alton Brody, calls the above teaching method the "Double 4 Method," and I feel that his de-

scription aptly fits the case. It should give the reader the proper perspective of the golf shot—that there are two distinct sets of 4 moves each. The first 4 moves establish the proper starting position, the second 4 moves actually produce or execute the stroke or swing of the club.

Without further discussion let's learn the 8 moves that can create a perfect golf stroke.

#### The First 4 Steps of the Position

*Step 1—Place the club behind the ball, using the left hand only.*

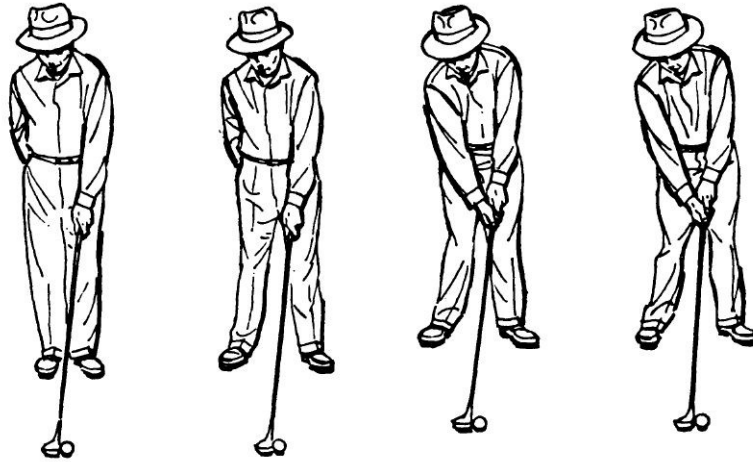
Golf clubs vary in length—from the 33-inch length of a putter shaft to the 43-inch length of the driver shaft. All clubs have handles on a graduated scale of lengths.

It is perfectly natural that the player should first place the club behind the ball, and from the placement of the club he will automatically know just where to stand, which is the second move.

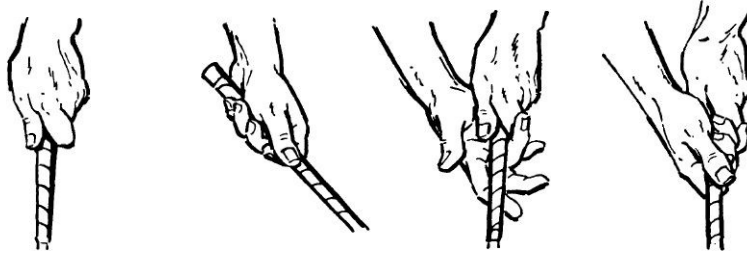
However, before we explain Step 2, let me call your attention to the fact that there is a certain peculiarity in the construction of golf clubs. The face of the club, the part that meets the ball, is not parallel with the shaft. It is "hooked in," that is, it is angled so that it points off to the left a matter of two to five degrees. This exists in all properly designed clubs.

To those unfamiliar with this peculiarity, difficulties can be created at this very step.

However, understanding the hooked-in face construction of the golf club, the player can and will place the club properly to the ball.



1. A) *The first half of the Double 4 golf swing. Place the club to the ball, place feet in position, complete the grip and turn right heel out slightly.*



1. B) *The correct hand position on the club.*

The proper way to place a golf club to the ball is to tilt the handle of the club slightly in the direction of the shot. The shaft, in other words, is leaning or tilted slightly forward in the direction of the shot. Because of this forward tilt of the club handle the left hand will be directly over the ball and not over the club head.

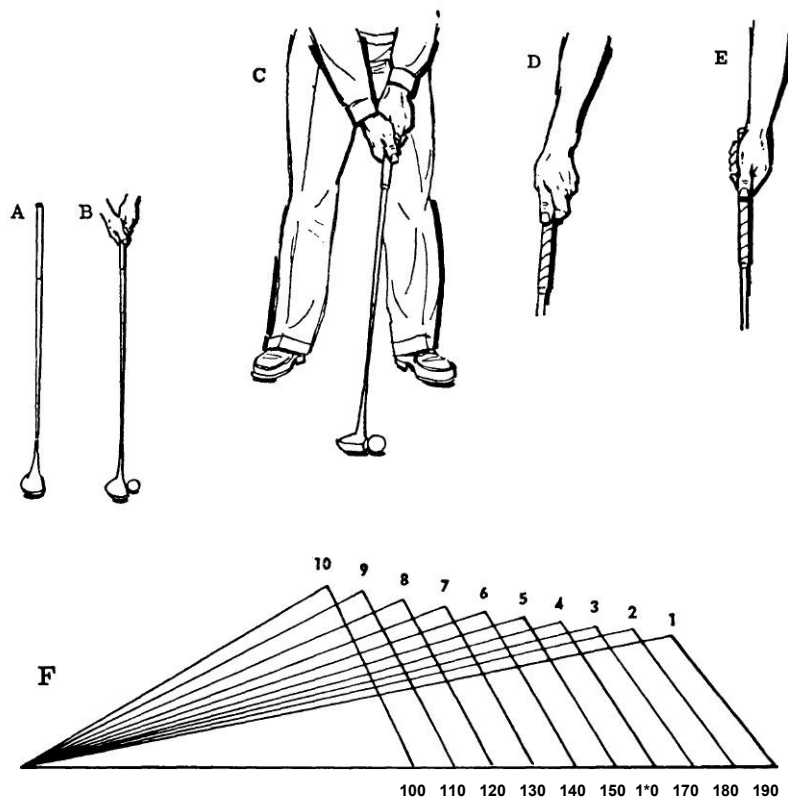
Players who fail to understand this peculiarity of golf club construction place the club to the ball so that the shaft is perpendicular—that is, straight up and down, instead of being tilted or leaned forward slightly.

Obviously, only when the shaft is tilted forward slightly is the face of the club square with the line of the shot; and when the shaft is perpendicular, or straight up and down, the face of the club is aimed off to the left of the line of the shot.

In addition to this failure of incorrect aim, there is one other important reaction that arises from the way the club is placed to the ball, and that has to do with the way the left hand fits to the club. If there is any one thing that is important in a golf shot, it is the way in which the left hand works. As a matter of fact, it will be learned that the left hand action is the very crux of every golf shot. Actually, the left hand has a triple duty in a golf shot:

- (1) creating or determining the position of the club will be in during the swing.
- (2) keeping the club in the desired position.
- (3) bringing the club into and through the ball.

Now, the proper position of the left hand on the club is as follows: the hand is more or less on top of the shaft. When it is in the proper position, three knuckles of the



2. A) *The hooked face of the golf club.*
- B) *Club shaft in perpendicular position will produce weak left hand position.*
- C) *The correct position, with the shaft tilted slightly forward to "square up" the face of the club to the line of the shot.*
- D) *Strong left hand position on the club.*
- E) *Weak left hand position on the club.*
- F) *Diagram shows respective angle of flight the various irons produce and corresponding distance.*

left hand are in clear view when the player looks down at his hand and the left thumb is at a point more or less behind the shaft.

All this happens naturally, if the shaft of the club is tilted forward slightly when it is placed to the ball.

By comparison, if the shaft is placed incorrectly, that is, straight up and down, then the left hand will automatically shift to a point in front of the handle instead of on top. Only one knuckle, instead of three, will be in view and the thumb will be right on top of the shaft. This is a weak position of the left hand. (See Illustration 2E)

Carried to extremes, the correct position, with the left hand on top, would tend to produce hook shots, whereas, the incorrect position, with the left hand too far in front, would tend to produce slice shots.

So much for Step 1 of the position.

*Step 2—Place feet in position.*

The proper place to stand is in a position where the ball will be opposite the left heel. A line running from the ball to the inside part of the left heel will be at right angles to the line of the shot. The feet should be so placed that the toes of both feet are parallel to the line of the shot.

*This position is to be assumed on all shots and with all clubs.* Of course, there are exceptions to this rule and these will be indicated later; however, the basic rule is that the ball is always played opposite the left heel with all clubs (the position is not changed for each club).

The reason that the ball is played opposite the left foot is very clear. In order to raise the club to the top of the swing when making the stroke, the player should use the



right side of his body. In order to accomplish this the weight must be on the right foot. When the player brings the club down into and through the ball, the player should use his left side, and in order to use the left side the weight must be on the left foot. Therefore, as the ball is being hit, the player will be balanced on his left foot. *The swing, therefore, will be centered at that point, opposite the left foot, and that is where the ball should be played with all clubs.*

The feet should never be wider apart than the width of the shoulders. In other words, always use a narrow, rather than a wide, stance because with the narrower stance it is easier to shift the weight to the right foot for the upswing and reshift it to the left foot for the downswing.

*Step 3—Complete the grip by bringing the right hand to the club.*

Up to this point the right arm has been inactive and hanging naturally by the right side.

Step 3 brings the right hand to the club. As the club is opposite the left foot and the right hand comes to the club at a point lower on the club than the left, it will be found that in order to bring the right hand to the club comfortably it will be necessary to relax the right knee slightly.

When the right hand comes to the club it assumes a position on the club which is directly opposite the position of the left hand. Whereas the left hand is definitely on top of the club handle, the right hand assumes a position more or less underneath the club. So the left hand

takes care of the top of the handle, while the right hand takes care of the bottom part of the club.

Too many players make the mistake of placing both hands on top of the club. With both hands working from the same position on top of the club, they produce a one-handed effect; whereas golf is definitely a two-handed, two-fisted game.

The correct position of the hands is to have them directly opposed to each other. In that way both sides of the club are under control and the club rests in a natural pull and push action, which is the only type of action that creates the desired effect of leverage on the club. It is this pull and push action of the hands that produces proper club-head feel control, and this can only be done when the hands take opposite positions on the club.

When placing the hands on the club be certain that there is no tenseness or tight grip. Any sense of holding or gripping the club should be confined to the front part of each hand—to the first two fingers and thumb.

The little finger of the right hand should never touch the club. We all know that the little finger is the shortest finger. If this digit were placed on the club, the latter would be locked in an immovable, tight position because of the shortness of the little finger. Furthermore, it happens that tension or tightness on the little finger immobilizes the arm. There is a long muscle that runs from the little finger to a point past the elbow, consequently any tension on the little finger causes this muscle to tighten up the entire arm.

Golfers learn by experience not to use the little finger of the right hand, but actually keep it clear of the club to

float freely in the air. They do this in the same manner that a person picking up a glass or a cup would do when they raise it to their lips or their mouth. This same sense of not using the little finger of the left hand should be cultivated in golf; it will permit the hands to fit closely together on the club. The thumb of the left hand fits naturally into the hollow of the right hand palm, and in a perfectly natural way the *overlapping grip is created*. (Illustration IB) Incidentally, this is the most widely used, most efficient and most desirable grip.

Notice that the bottom part of the V formation, created by the thumb and upper part of the forefinger on both hands, points directly toward the right shoulder. The placement of the hands on the club can be readily checked by seeing exactly where the thumbs contact the club. If the handle of the club was perfectly square, the inside part of the left thumb would contact the club at the top, side, right-hand corner of the supposed square, and the inside part of the right thumb would rest on the middle of the top flat side of this supposed square handle.

These thumb positions are most important. In the eventual movement of the club to the top of the swing there is a natural expansion of the hands and in the down-swing there is a contraction of the hands, both of which put the real punch into the shots. During this expansion and contraction, it is upon the thumbs that the club rests, and it is with the thumbs that the player regulates and controls the club.

Too much emphasis cannot be placed on the importance of the hand positions on the club and upon the ultimate effect and influence that the thumbs have in good golf.

To emphasize this let me recall a distinction that is made between humans and monkeys—the distinction is that the humans have thumbs and the monkeys do not. Furthermore, if there is any doubt about their importance, just try this little test. Take a golf club in your hands and then deliberately take both thumbs off the club. It will be noticed that the club is hopelessly locked in the back of the hands and little or no control can be exerted over it. So learn to use your thumbs when you play golf. Don't play monkey golf, which is golf without any thumb control and thumb influence.

*Step 4—Turn or flip the right heel out slightly.*

In a normal foot position it is generally natural to stand with both toes turned out slightly. This fourth and final move is to flip or turn the right heel out slightly so that a pigeon-toed effect is created on the right foot. (See illustration where heavy lines indicate a normal foot position and dotted line shows where the right heel is turned.)

The purpose of this move is twofold: first, this outward flip of the right heel places the right foot in a much stronger position for the backswing, and also makes it easier to shift the weight to that foot. Secondly, when the backswing is made—that is, when the club is raised to the top of the swing with the right side, it will be found that because of this outward flip of the right heel, there is a greater freedom in the vicinity of the right hip and throughout the entire right side of the body. This makes it easier to raise the club naturally and to take it *back on the inside*.

This business of a pigeon-toed position is one that most

athletes assume. It *is* particularly true of baseball and football players, who must at all times be alert and ready to balance themselves for almost any type of action.

The pigeon-toed effect gives a greater sense of balance on the feet and a sense of freedom throughout the body, particularly through the waist and hips; hence it is naturally adopted and acquired by all athletes.

Incidentally, the American Indians were noted for using this pigeon-toed position. By comparison, my friends on 42nd and Broadway are inclined to reverse their foot positions; they are likely to walk with both toes turned widely out, and this outward turn of the toes tenses, tightens and limits their leg and hip actions.

Therefore, if you want to be steady on your right foot and free and easy with the right side of your body, conclude your position for the shot by flipping the right heel out slightly. (A similar outward flip of the left heel will give the same steadiness on the left foot and the same freedom on the left side.)

#### Summary and Conclusion of the First Four Steps

Thus we have a sequence of moves in getting ready to play a golf shot:

- Step 1. Place the club to the ball, using the left hand only.*
- Step 2. Place the feet in position.*
- Step 3. Complete the grip by relaxing the right knee.*
- Step 4. Turn or flip the right heel out slightly.*

The above procedure will prove to be a perfectly natural and orderly sequence of moves whereby weight,

body and hands are properly coordinated, in effect, automatically lined up so that everything is in proper relationship and perfect harmony. It must be and should be followed in getting ready for each and every shot from the drive to the putt—the more often it is repeated the sooner this entire sequence of four moves will become automatic, so that in short order the starting position will be created and established systematically.

Following this natural procedure, it will be possible to adjust oneself to the different length clubs and at the same time take care of the irregularities of the terrain upon which the player takes his stance.

I cannot leave this discussion without calling attention to a marked difference that is apparent between the manner in which good golfers assume their position compared to the way novices seem to do.

The good golfers all assume a sort of "sit-down" position, whereas all novices in golf act as though their club were too short and seem to bend forward from the waist as they prepare to make the shot.

This bending forward from the waist straightens the knees and really locks them tightly so that any sense of footwork or shifting of weight is impossible. From the sit-down position the good golfer assumes his knees are easy and relaxed so that footwork and weight-shifting can be done easily. As you do your first four steps, learn to get the sit-down effect rather than the straight locked knee effect.

So much for the first four steps. Let's proceed now with an explanation of the actual making of the shot, which will be done with the second four steps.

# 4

## ***THE SECOND PART OF THE GOLF SHOT***

### **The Four Moves that Make the Stroke**

**If** you follow the first moves related in Chapter Three, you will find yourself balanced on your left foot. This position should give you a sense of aim, a sense of hit and a sense of contact with the ball. The position created by these first four moves will place you in the proper position at the time and point of impact with the ball. It is a position where you are really leaning the club against the ball.

However, the position so assumed is contrary to the act of raising the club to the top of the swing. As long as the weight is on the left foot, the player will have difficulty in making the backswing correctly.

Therefore, before the player makes any attempt to take the club away from the ball, he must shift his weight. He must change his balance from his left foot to his right, and only then will he be able to raise the club freely. All

good players assume this position of balance on the left foot as they address the ball; likewise, all good players shift their weight and thereby move their balance from the left foot over to the right foot before they make any attempt to lift or raise the club to the top of the swing.

Furthermore, all good golfers shift or change their balance from the left foot to the right foot in exactly the same way, because there is only one way in which to change one's balance from one foot to the other.

*The one way to shift one's weight, the one way to change balance from one foot to the other, is by changing knee positions.*

For example, if a person were a member of an army squad, and the officer called "Attention," heels would snap together and the soldier would stand erect, both knees straight. In this position his balance or weight is divided evenly between both feet. When the officer calls "At rest," the soldier simply "pops" or bends one knee, and thereby balances himself on the opposite foot. If he popped or bent his left knee, the right knee would remain straight and his balance or weight would be on the right foot entirely, while the left leg would be relaxed and at rest. After standing on the right foot for a while that right leg would tire, so the soldier merely reverses knee positions—in this case he would bend the right knee and, as he did this, the left knee would straighten and by this reversal of knee positions the weight and balance would be on the left foot. It is this rhumba-like maneuver of changing knee positions that gives a person the balance he wants or desires—and this holds true in every day activities, as well as in all athletics and in all sports.



As previously indicated, a golf swing is a double-handed, ambidextrous movement. There is an upswing or backstroke that is best made with the right side of the body, and there is a downstroke and follow through that is best made with the left side of the body. So, if a golfer fails to balance himself on his right foot for the upswing, and he fails to rebalance himself on his left foot for the downswing and follow through, you can rest assured this golfer will have difficulty playing the game.

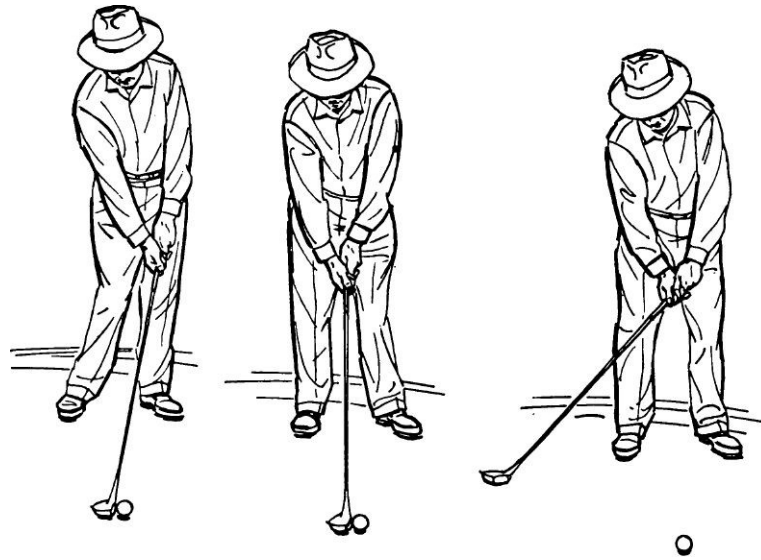
In other words, a person cannot use his body any better than his weight or balance permits him to use his body.

*Learn to handle your weight and balance so you can execute the type of body motion and body action that is needed.*

Because this matter of weight and balance, and the footwork with which it is accomplished, is so absolutely essential and yet so perfectly natural, I'd like to discuss it a bit further.

We humans are built like the letter X. Our right hand and left foot are but an extension of each other and they always work together. Again, our left hand and right foot are extensions of each other and they, likewise, work together. So when you stand on your right foot, you inhibit and restrict the action of the left hand and left arm. Likewise, when you stand on your left foot, you inhibit and restrict the action of the right hand and right arm.

In spite of this obvious muscular arrangement, there is a very common belief among golfers that they are balanced for a golf shot when their weight is evenly divided between both feet.



3. *The second half of the Double 4 golf swing. The forward press, the reverse press and the positioning of the club.*



4. *Raise the club to the top of the swing, swing the club down onto and through the ball and complete the stroke.*

Nothing could be further from the truth and nothing can be more harmful in golf than this idea.

On the very basic matter of balance, it is common knowledge that a left-handed person's left foot is larger than his right foot and, conversely, a right-handed person's right foot is larger than his left foot. This all comes about because a left-handed person will usually stand on his left foot, because in this way he balances himself so that he can use his left hand and arm more easily—and for the same reason, a right-handed person usually stands on his right foot.

One final thought on this matter of weight and balance and subsequent righthandedness or lefthandedness. If a person is terribly righthanded or terribly lefthanded, he is lopsided, one-handed, not ambidextrous and not ready and in position. He is not ready for the simple reason that he is not balanced for action, and he cannot balance himself for action because he does not have the necessary footwork to do so.

Do not walk up to a golf ball and plant both feet solidly on the ground with weight evenly divided, because you will be really locking up and thereby destroying all chance of an easy, natural swing.

All good golfers change their weight from their left foot to the right foot with a distinctive one-two move, also called a zig-zag movement. The first move of this one-two action is so common that it has a name. This is the forward press, which I have described in Chapter One.

From this forward bend of the right knee and the forward press of the hands, there is an easy natural oppor-

tunity, a natural impetus to make move 2, which is to reverse the knee positions, and through this reversing of the knees, transfer or shift the weight to the right foot. (All during Steps 1 and 2, the clubhead remains on the ground and so do the heels of both feet.)

*This Step 2 is actually the key move to good golf, because it opens up the way and makes it possible to raise the club to the top of the swing in an easy natural way.*

Before leaving Steps 1 and 2, let me issue a warning. Do not let the importance of these two steps (the forward press and the reverse press) lead you to any exaggeration because an overemphasis of these first two moves can produce a reverse effect; instead of the weight being shifted to the right foot on Step 2, an exaggeration will cause the weight to reverse itself back to the left foot. This, of course, would make things very difficult, in fact, impossible. With good players, Steps 1 and 2 are done with such nicety and finesse that, to an untrained eye, these moves can and do go by unnoticed.

In Step 3, the player raises the club to the top of the swing. As a result of making Step 2, he will find himself balanced on his right foot with the club thrown more or less into the right hand, because the reverse press moves the hands back to a point where they are more or less opposite the right knee. (See Illustration 4)

With the weight on the right foot and with the club under the influence of the right hand, it is perfectly easy and natural to raise the club to the top of the swing in exactly the same way that one would wind up to throw something. With an action that originates in the right

hip, the entire right side from hip to shoulder is drawn back—and it is with this action of the right side that the player naturally contracts his right arm. This contraction of the right arm raises the club to the top of the swing. Don't try to keep the right elbow locked in tight and close to the body but let it go free and natural as one would do in throwing a ball.

A reverse action of the left side (which, incidentally, is Step 4), an action which originates in the left hip and involves the entire left side, contracts the left arm, and it is this contraction that pulls the club down into and through the ball.

It is contraction, first of the right side and right arm, that raises the club on the upswing. A reverse contraction of the left side and left arm pulls the club down into and through the ball and gives the player a controlled method of swinging the club, because muscle contraction can be regulated and controlled.

The contraction of the right side on the upswing, and the reverse contraction of the left side on the downswing, plus the follow through are what constitute the body control and body action we have been insisting on as the basis of natural golf.

But a contraction of the right side can never be executed unless the player is properly balanced on the right foot. And, of course, the contraction of the left side can never be done unless the player is properly balanced on the left foot.

*This, then, as has been previously shown, is the first lesson of golf. Learn to handle your weight so that you can use your body to make the club swing.*

### Summary

Up to this point there has been a presentation of the 8 step procedure—the double 4 outline of the correct golf form—4 steps to establish the correct starting position, and another 4 steps to make the stroke.

There is no possible short cut from this procedure. It is impossible to do everything that has to be done in regard to footwork, hands and body, the three operations that are essential in every golf shot, without going through the complete sequence of these moves.

Emphasis has been placed on the need of proper footwork so as to establish in the body the proper sense of control, and the proper sense of swing.

I have often said that people either play golf or they play at it, depending on just how they use their body in a golf shot.

There will be more written about the action of the body in a golf shot, because a new concept of body action will enable us to present a clear-cut, understandable picture of just what the body action in a golf shot really is.

As a matter of fact, it is this new concept that has motivated the writer to write this third book on golf. It was a similar motive that prompted me to do my first book on golf, *Par Golf in Eight Steps*.

Previous to that time there had been much emphasis on the pronation method of golf play—a method which suggested that the body should never be used in a golf shot, that there should be no body sway. As a consequence, golfers were being so restricted and inhibited that they couldn't have any fun playing the game. This

situation made me determine to present the true picture of the golf swing—that it was something that was done with the body, that it was a perfectly natural procedure that made the game a real pleasure.

Years of study of our top golfing stars and an analysis of their game proved to me that their superiority as golfers came because they employed their body correctly.

Due to the enthusiastic reception of this first book, I wrote a second book on golf, *How To Put Power And Direction In Your Golf*.

The same 8 step procedure was used to point out how the two requirements of a golf shot were produced: (A) that a golfer should train himself to rely on the action of his body for the power in a golf shot, and (B) that a golfer should train his hands to give him the clubhead position and clubhead control with which to determine the direction of his golf shots.

It was immediately after these writings that the true picture of the body action became apparent to me and it is my desire to pass this information on to the golfing public. That will appear in a subsequent chapter.

My next discussion will be to present lesson 2, the part that the hands play in a golf shot, but before we get into that important subject, let us review again the double 4 step-by-step procedure of the golf shot—a system which will teach you to hit the ball with your eyes closed.

Here it is in condensed form:

*To assume the correct starting position:*

- (1) *Place the club to the ball with the left hand*
- (2) *Assume the correct position with the feet*



- (3) *Complete the grip by bringing right hand to the club*
- (4) *Turn or flip the right heel out*

*To make the swing:*

- (1) *Make the forward press*
- (2) *Make the reverse press*
- (3) *Raise the club to the top of the swing*
- (4) *Bring the club down into and through the ball*

# 5

## **THE CRUX OF THE GOLF STROKE**

With the presentation of the double 4 outline of the golf stroke, it is hoped:

- (a) that a positive and definite method of establishing a uniform starting position from which to make the golf shot was learned from following the first 4 steps.
- (b) that the second 4 steps provided a definite procedure of weight shift, so that the body could be established and utilized as the basis and means of motivating the club on the upswing as well as on the down swing and follow through.
- (c) that a clear understanding has been reached that this combination of weight shift and "body action" is and should be present in each and every shot in golf, from the drive *down to and including the putt.*

The above matter of body control and body influence in a golf shot constitutes Lesson 1.

We now come to Lesson 2, the part of the golf stroke we purposely omitted so that we could give it the emphasis it deserves. This lesson concerns the part that the hands play in a golf shot.

*The Crux of the Golf Stroke*

43

Upon the hands devolves the all important task of not only putting the club in the right position, but keeping it in that right position throughout the swing.

It does happen, however, that only if and when a player has established his body as the motivating factor and control of his swing, *are his hands free to execute over the club the proper positional control.*

To further explain why this important matter of hand action was deferred until this time, let me state that in all fields of learning there is a certain sequence or procedure and in this respect a golf stroke is no exception. In golf the learning process is as follows:

First, one learns the correct starting position;

Next, one learns to handle one's weight;

Then, one learns to use and establish the body as the medium of swinging the club;

Finally, one learns to use the hands *to put and keep the club in position* as it is swung.

As important as it is, the matter of positioning the club in golf is a simple and positive procedure. It can be likened to the technique employed by the billiard player.

For example, the billiard player can make the cue ball travel forward after impact, through the simple process of tilting his cue up, so that the cue contacts the upper part of the cue ball. Such a contact will produce an overspin on the cue ball, a "follow run" or "follow English," so that the cue ball will travel forward after impact.

By reversing the position of the cue, by tilting the cue down so that it contacts the lower part of the ball, a reverse spin or "reverse English" is produced, and after impact the cue ball reverses itself or travels backwards.

In a like manner, a golfer can produce similar results with a golf ball.

Through the simple process of putting the club in an open position, the golfer can make the ball slice, or curve to the right. By reversing the club position, putting the club in a closed position, the golfer can make the ball hook, or curve to the left.

Obviously, by putting the club into a square position, the golfer can make the ball fly absolutely straight.

And yet, on many occasions when I have made this simple explanation of how to hook and slice, I have had pupils throw their hands up in the air, as if in horror, and many have come forth with the same statement. "I don't want to be a tournament player. I don't want to hook or slice. I just want to hit a straight ball."

Well, the truth of the situation is that in all games where a ball is used, the basis and the measure of control that is developed is the amount and type of spin or English applied to the ball.

Of course, the object, the goal, the desire in golf is to drive the straight ball, but that perfect club position, the one that drives the ball straight, is the in-between position that is incapable of description, because it is neither open nor is it closed.

To express it another way, unless a player can distinguish between the open and the closed position he will never learn to steer that middle course, the square position.

One more comment before going into the detail of how and when the hands work in a golf shot. In some circles, the matter of hooking and slicing is taught as being a matter of foot position or stance, and it won't be denied that

if a player takes an open stance, advancing the right foot to the forward position, there is a tendency to slice the ball.

On the other hand, if the player assumes a closed stance, moving the right foot back, then a tendency to hook the ball is developed.

This change of stance is by no means a positive method of hooking or slicing. It is only a means of creating a change of movement in the body which might influence the hands to bring the club into position to produce the desired result or effect. But if the hands do not respond, or if they act contrarily, then a hook can result from an open stance, and a slice might result from a closed stance. All of which proves that the positive control of the direction of a golf shot is entirely within the province of the hands.

This leads us further to some interesting facts about the correct golf shot:

- (a) there is only one purpose to footwork and that is to create a point of balance so that the body can be properly used.
- (b) there is only one objective to body action and that is to create and supply the power or energy to swing the club. True, this power or energy can be increased or decreased as the shot requires, but the body is only used to produce power (and this is true whether the shot be a drive or whether it be a putt), so body action is also a constant factor.
- (c) there is only one time and one way in which the hands work in creating the club position for the shot—and that is the prime purpose of the hand action. However, the club position may be varied to change or shift the direction of the shot, or it may be changed or varied to pro-

duce a certain type of a shot, such as a high pitch shot, or a low run shot, *and herein lies the true artistry of golf.*

To conclude this discussion, a golfer cannot produce various results or effects with a shift of weight because he is considering only *balance*, nor can he or should he produce various effects with his body because here again he is only considering *power*. With his hands he is called upon to produce various effects or results in his shots, and he does this by changing the position of the club in the shot, so that the desired effect is produced.

#### Erroneous Theories and Suggestions About the Hands

I am attaching added importance to the matter of hand action in a golf shot because many experts have ignored it, and others have made harmful and detrimental suggestions.

The most common suggestion made in regard to the hands is that one should lock the club tightly in the back of the left hand, not permitting it to get away. Yet in actual practice the contrary prevails. For years the most commonly used grip in golf has been the overlapping grip, which properly takes all the tension and locked effect out of the back of both hands, so that there can be a natural sense of manipulation and maneuvering of the club.

To further substantiate this needed freedom of movement in the hands, let me quote some golfers. Bobby Jones said: "This may not be the proper procedure for all players, but I find it necessary to relax my hands at the top of the swing. Failure to do this causes bad shots

through too much tension." Bobby Locke, the great South African, stated: "I make certain not to grip too tightly because it will cause tension."

Another detrimental effect in golf has been the theory and insistence that there should be no wrist action on the backswing, until an above the waist-high position was reached. If this were true, how could anyone play a short shot just off the edge of the green? It would be impossible to play a chip shot if the club had to be raised to a waist-high position before there was any hand or wrist action.

*Only in recent years has the true concept of correct hand action been recognized, to wit, that the wrist action or wrist break occurs at the very outset of the backswing.*

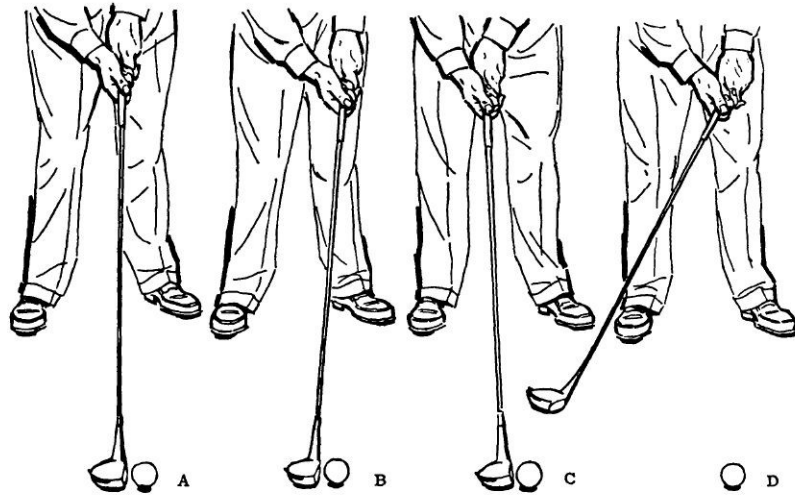
In this regard, I want to give credit to Claude Harmon, professional at the Thunderbird Golf Club in Palm Springs, California; Jerry Barber, once P.G.A. champion and professional at the Wilshire Golf Club in Los Angeles, and to my friend, Joe Dante, the New Jersey professional.

I emphasized this theory in both my previous books on golf, and I am sure that the explanations to follow demonstrate the efficiency, the value and the logic of hand or wrist action early on the backswing.

#### The Golf Sequence—When the Hands Work

In every golf shot there are three basic operations.

When a player assumes the correct position to make the shot, he will find himself balanced on his left foot. While in this position, he is actually prevented from taking the club to the top of the swing until he shifts his bal-



5. *Sequence of hand action throughout the swing.*

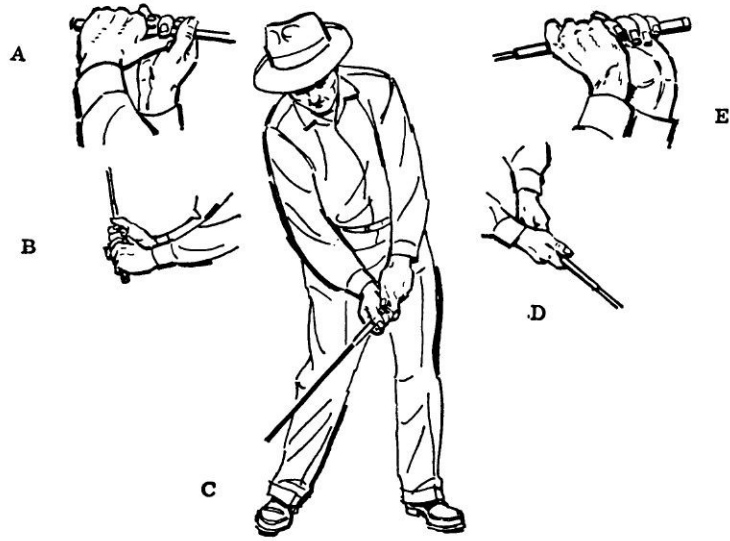
A) *Start*

C) *Reverse Press*

B) *Forward Press*

D) *Cocked and Set*





6. A) *Top of Swing*  
B) *On the Way Down*  
C) *At Impact*

- D) Just after Impact*
- E) Finish of Shot*

ance to his right foot. As previously stated, all good golfers shift their weight from the left to the right foot with that distinctive one-two movement. Through the medium of a forward press which is Step 1 of the golf stroke, and the subsequent reverse press, which is Step 2 of the golf swing, they transfer their weight from their left to their right foot with these two movements. This is universally done by all good golfers.

They thus become balanced on their right foot so that their body is in a proper position to raise the club to the top of the swing in the easiest and most effective way, that is, by using the right side (and thus raising the club to the top of the swing is Step 3).

In a perfectly natural manner, with the same movement one would use if he were preparing to throw something, he raises the club to the top of the swing in a full, free and controlled motion.

*However, at the very outset of this Step 3 movement, the hands must go to work.*

As the movement starts in the right side, it naturally begins to contract the right arm. As a consequence there is an immediate upward, pickup action of the club. The club is actually picked up with the right hand, but, simultaneously there is a natural, automatic resistance on the part of the left hand which counteracts the right hand's pickup action. It is this interwoven, combined action of the hands, *whereby and with which the club is immediately flipped and cocked into position for the shot.*

This pickup action on the part of the right hand and the simultaneous downward thrust on the part of the left hand gives to the correct golf shot the powerful one-two

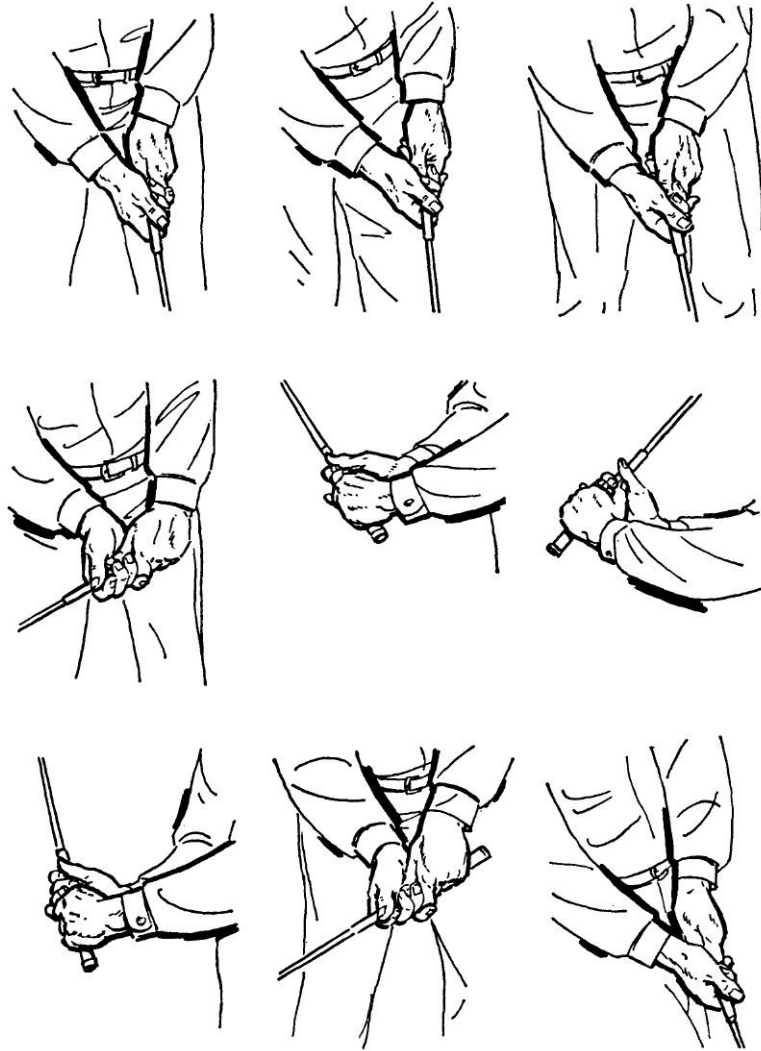
hand action that all golf swings must have. The golf swing acquires a natural pull and push action that continues up into the backswing. This leverage action is reversible because the pickup action on the part of the right hand and arm cocks the right arm so that it can apply a powerful thrust on the downswing and follow through.

At the same time the thrust of the left hand and arm in this cocking of the club naturally puts the left arm in an extended position, from which it can automatically produce a pull action into the downswing. It is this pull with the left and thrust with the right on the downswing that really makes for a powerful swing through the ball.

This pickup pull and the downward push of the hands flips or carries the clubhead to a 45° point. It is within this 45° area that the club is set or cocked for the shot. Any flip or movement of the clubhead beyond this 45° point indicates that action of the hands is not balanced. In such a case the hands are not working together in a perfectly even manner. One hand or the other will prove to be too strong during the swing, and the club will go out of position and the shot astray.

As these actions occur at the outset of Step 3, there should be an immediate and perceptible separation between the hands. Don't resist this separation but keep it constant on the backswing. On the downswing the action will be reversed; there will be a contraction on the part of both hands, which will come together and create a strong powerful formation of the hands as the ball is met.

The upward pickup pull will be felt and accomplished with the first two fingers and thumb of the right hand, and the downward thrust with the left hand will be accom-



7. *The sequence of hand positions throughout the swing.*

plished by using the left thumb and the knuckle at the base of the left forefinger. The action is accomplished with the first two fingers and thumb, or the front or fore part of both hands. Do not create a push or downward thrust with the heel of the left hand, nor should you lock the back part of the right hand for then there can be no free movement of the club.

This perfectly natural pull and push action of the hands, which for years has been referred to erroneously as wrist action, permits the power from the body to travel to the club in a perfectly straight line. This incidentally is the only way power or force can be applied—one cannot shoot a gun around the corner. The straight line pull and push just naturally blends and synchronizes with what the body is doing in the swing.

#### **Mannerisms and Antics Prior to a Golf Shot**

Before describing and illustrating the basic positions into which a golf club can be set or positioned, let me comment on some mannerisms I have seen made before a golf shot.

Many experienced golfers make numerous movements prior to going into the swing. They will move the club back and forth, wiggling and wagging to a point where their movements become disturbing not only to themselves but to their playing partners and opponents as well.

These preliminary maneuvers, on some occasions done many times before each shot, are an effort on the part of the player to find himself. First of all, he is seeking the proper sense of balance, so he starts lifting one foot, then

the other foot; as he goes through these maneuvers he seeks to orient the club in his hands.

Between these two efforts, he develops an uncertainty which necessitates more wiggles and waggles before he can finally find that happy combination of balance on his feet plus proper club control.

I mention this very common practice among golfers to point out this fact—*that before a golfer can go into the swing he must be right on his feet and he must have the club in the right position*. Experienced golfers develop an instinctive sense that they can't swing unless they are properly balanced on their feet, and that it does no good to swing the club if it is not in the correct position.

A good friend of mine practically wiggled and waggled himself out of golf. He had such a very successful career as an amateur golfer that he turned professional and sought fame and fortune on the golf circuit. During his first professional year, he just missed winning two major events.

Conscious of the narrow margins by which he lost the two major tournaments, our player was determined that there were to be no careless shots during his second season. With painstaking care and preparation prior to each swing, he broke the course record in the first round of play in the first tournament. In the second round, he came within a stroke of repeating this first-round record score, and at the halfway point in the tournament, our hero had an unbelievable lead of seven strokes over the field.

However, to do this, he had everybody annoyed and upset by the manner of his play. As he took his position to play a shot, he began to wiggle and waggle his club,

not once, not twice, not four times; he wiggled and waggled his club from twenty-two to twenty-four times before he played each shot. On short chip shots, this procedure was most disturbing. His playing partners could not stand it, so complaints were filed as to his method of play.

On top of this, our player was taking so long to play that the entire field of players were held back, so the committee called him in to request that he speed up his play. Being a sportsman and a gentleman, he went out for the third round of play with such speed that he gave the appearance of a fireman rushing to put out the flames. With no delay our player hit his shots from what was almost a running start.

The results were tragic. From the opening round score of 67 and the second round score of 68, our player shot a third round of 81—almost a stroke a hole more. He concluded the tournament with a 77 and finished in seventh place.

If a professional golfer cannot play well without having his balance and his club right before making the swing, how can the average player hope for any success if he overlooks these important preliminary maneuvers?

By no means do I suggest that one should wiggle and waggle to a point of annoyance, but I do contend that a golfer must know how to establish his balance and he must know how to maneuver the club into the right position before the swing is made. I further contend that it is a perfectly simple natural procedure.

Personally, I like to make one preliminary waggle of the club to sense the position of the club. I like to waggle



it a second time to confirm the position, and then on the third time I take off into the swing.

Watch Sam Snead play a shot—this shouldn't be difficult, he is on TV almost every week. You will notice that after Sam assumes his position to the ball, he will do a forward press, a reverse press and then he will cock or flip the club to a 45° point just once. He then returns to his original position, repeats the forward press and the reverse press, and then as the club is cocked into position he sails off smoothly into the swing. It is this simultaneous cocking of the club as the player swings the club up with his body that has eluded the the golf analysts, nor will the camera show what is happening. When two actions are being done simultaneously the camera will show the net result, it will not and cannot separate the actions. The only one who can separate these actions is the player that is aware of them. Let me say further that if the player can't separate these two movements, he may find it difficult to synchronize them.

One more aspect. It is possible to acquire a good golf swing without formal instruction, entirely through imitation. Many of our fine players gained their swings that way. When a new golf champion was asked after a big tournament win what he did to hook or slice, he said: "If I want to hook a ball, I simply think a hook. If I want to slice a ball, I simply think a slice. Golf is entirely mental, and if you want to be a good golfer simply think good golf."

I do not agree with his reasoning, but I must admit that if one acquired the knack of doing a thing as a youngster,

constant repetition would give to that person a certain instinctive ability whereby the performance could be repeated without thinking. However, doing a thing is one matter, and explaining, describing or teaching a thing is something else again.

*So regardless of whether one has acquired the sense of playing through imitation and subsequently plays by ear or by instinct, or whether one has learned to play via a system or a plan as presented in this book, the fact remains that there are certain maneuvers that must be done, and one of the most important things in golf is that the club must be properly positioned or cocked before it is applied to the ball.*

One final illustration in this regard. A pupil of mine had lost all his distance and golf wasn't fun to him any more, so off to the lesson tee we went. After watching him play a few shots, I pointed out that instead of using his body to motivate the club, he was doing it all with his arms. I had him take a very narrow stance and without going into any numbered routine, I did get the player to roll his weight onto his right foot at the outset of the backswing. This helped him get some body action into his swing. He started to hit the ball quite well, but every shot curved off to the right. In short order he complained about this by saying, "I'm sure hitting them better, but what is causing that slice?"

I answered, "Your club is out of position."

"What do you mean?" he asked.

"Well," I responded, "your club is open. The face is turned to the sky. This is caused by the fact that you are

taking the club back with a very stiff-armed movement. Now, if at the very outset of the backswing you will break your wrists—."

He broke into the conversation with this remark, "What do you mean telling me to break my wrists at the start of the backswing. I've been playing golf for years—I always broke my wrist at the top of the backswing—."

I replied, "I understand your situation, but let me advance an argument. You hunt ducks, don't you?"

"Of course," he replied. "You know very well that I hunt ducks."

"Well, when you hunt ducks," I asked, "do you pull the trigger and then aim, or do you aim and then pull the trigger?"

Almost vehemently, he replied, "Just what has that got to do with playing golf?"

And so ended one lesson where I could not prove that a golfer should know what position the club is in before he swings it, rather than swinging it without knowing where it is.

So much for the examples. Let's get down to the business of learning the three positions that a golf club can be set or cocked into at the outset of the backswing, and learning just what results can be expected from each of these three positions.

#### The Three Positions Into Which a Club Can Be Set or Cocked—and the Results Produced Thereby

There are three things that a golfer can do with a golf ball:

- (a) the golfer can curve the ball to the right—this is called a slice or a fade.
- (b) the golfer can curve the ball to the left—this is called a hook or a pull.
- (c) the golfer can drive the ball perfectly straight.

Whether the ball slices to the right or hooks to the left or flies absolutely straight depends, of course, on the position of the club at impact.

It is possible, by using the hands at the outset of the backswing, to consciously set or cock the club into a certain position so that it will automatically be in the desired position at impact. The position into which a golfer sets or cocks his club on the backswing determines just what position the club will be at impact.

The three positions into which the club can be set or cocked are these:

- (a) the open position (this produces a slice)—the face of the club (the part that meets the ball) is turned towards the sky while the shaft of the club is tilted to the outside of the line of flight, away from the right toe. (Illustration 17B) This open face technique is applied whenever one wants a high flying type of shot that stops suddenly on landing; but, of course, if the position is too open the ball will slice or curve to the right. This open position is also used to play shots out of deep sand traps.
- (b) the closed position (this produces a hook)—the face of the club *is* turned towards the ground, while the shaft is tilted to the inside of the line of flight towards the right toe. (Illustration 17A) This closed face technique is used for playing low shots that run—low shots that bore into a head wind. If this position is exaggerated, a hook or curve to the left will occur. This *is* also used for pitch and run.
- (c) the square position (produces straight flying shots)—the

face of the club is kept practically square or at right angles to the line of the shot. However, it is best to keep the shaft of the club tilted slightly to the inside of the line of flight to offset the tremendous inward pull of the left side as the club is brought through the ball. (Illustration 17C)

When a player has taken a position to make a golf shot, he will find himself balanced on his left foot. It therefore becomes necessary for the player to shift his weight to the right foot and this is done through that distinctive one-two movement, the forward press, Step 1, and the reverse press, Step 2. With these two moves, the weight is shifted to the right foot, and the player is set to raise the club to the top of the swing by using his right side—Step 3. At this precise moment the hands must be ready to flip or cock the club into the desired position.

As the right hand applies to the club that sharp pickup action, the left hand must be equally alert to perform its crucial function—that of tilting or setting the club into the desired position. *It is the left hand that determines just how the club is going to be set.*

(a) If the left hand turns inward, towards the body, if the left hand pronates, the player can with this pronating movement cock the club open. He can turn the face of the club to the sky and at the same time tilt the club shaft to the outside of the line of flight. It is this combination that produces the slices, the high flying shots, etc.

(b) If the left hand is turned away from the body—if the left hand supinates, then quite naturally the club face will be closed and turned towards the ground. At the same time the club shaft will be tilted to the inside of the line of flight towards the right toe. It is this combination that produces the hooks, the shots that fly low, the shots that run.

(c) If the left hand steers a middle course and neither pronates nor supinates, then the club face can be squared to the line of the flight, and straight flying shots will result. Note now that in all these positionings of the club that both hands are active. However, the action of the right hand is exactly the same in all three positions, a sharp pickup action of the club. On the other hand, the action of the left hand can be varied: the downward thrust can be an inward move (pronation) or it can be an outward move (supination) or it can be the straight in-between position.

*So the crux of the shot, the position of the club, depends entirely on what the left hand does.*

It is a failure to understand or utilize the left hand properly that makes golf a difficult game for so many. The left hand can work no better or stronger than the right hand allows it. This business of cocking the club into position is definitely a two-handed action, one that really originates in the right hand, but actually depends on the left hand for the final result. It is no wonder then that so much advice and so many suggestions are given in regard to the left hand, but as previously stated it is not a tense, tight position of the left hand that does the job, it is just the opposite—a free, mobile, expansive action.

### Summary

Let me conclude this discussion on club position by repeating that it is the crux of playing golf. The finesse of making a ball run or stop, making a ball fly low or high, making a shot hook or slice, are all dependent on club position.

To use an old expression, "as the twig is bent, so will

the tree incline," and in golf "as the club is set, so will the ball fly/\* I repeat a favorite comment of mine: a runner runs with his feet but it takes a lot of arm and shoulder movement to get those feet going. Likewise, a golfer golfs with his hands—not locked or frozen on the club, but facile, live, mobile, expansive and expressive. But it takes a lot of footwork and body action to keep those hands working all the time.

However, don't deviate from the sequence or routine of action:

- (a) Learn to handle your weight so that
- (b) You can utilize your body to motivate the club and then
- (c) Your hands will be free and ready to fall in line, and they will naturally work together to put and keep that club in line.

*And once you get the ability of cocking the club into position at the outset of the backswing you will find that your hands will become so involved, so interrelated with their job, that the only way to swing the club will be to swing it with your body and that is the only kind of a golf swing that can be powerful or delicate, as required, but at all times consistent.*

# 6

## ***THE NEW CONCEPT OF BODY ACTION IN A GOLF SHOT***

The material in this chapter is one of the real reasons that this golf book is being written.

When golf was first introduced in America, and this was less than 100 years ago, emphasis was placed on the pronation method of play. Under this method, the left hand pronated \* the club away from the ball on the backswing. In the pronation type of golf swing, there was no place for any body action—in fact, the slightest sway with the body took the player out of position and a very stern "hold your head still, don't use your body" policy was established as the correct procedure in golf.

As time went on, there was a letup on this strict rule of

\* Pronation is a medical term which explains the movement of one's hand. If the left hand is turned towards the thumb so that the palm of the left hand is facing down, the left hand is in a prone position, just as a person lying face down would be lying prone.

By comparison, if the left hand were turned in the opposite direction, away from the thumb, away from one's body, so that the hand is facing up, then the left hand would be on its back, so to speak. If one were lying on one's back, his position would be supine, hence such a movement of the hand is supination. The same movements can likewise be done with the right hand.



no body action in a golf shot. It was suggested that on longer shots with the wood clubs there could be a certain amount of body action, but there was a prevailing contention, which still exists in some quarters, that when it came to playing iron shots there was to be no body action. Definitely there was to be no body action on the very short pitch shots (and this, incidentally, is the prime cause of shanking).

When it came to putting there was to be no body action whatsoever. This to my way of thinking is the greatest contributing cause to the difficulties encountered on the putting green. Why a player should lock and freeze himself into a rigor mortis position when he is negotiating the most delicate shot in the game has always disturbed me, but more of putting later.

In recent years, to a very large degree, the above attitudes toward golf have changed, and it is being recognized that there is such a thing as a pivot action of the body. If power is to be developed in a golf shot, it can only be secured through a larger and bigger use of the body. However, in practically all references to using the body in a golf shot, it has always been suggested that there must be a bigger turn. *I myself have been guilty of the same error, and in many of the lessons I have given, and in much of my writings on golf, I too have referred to the action of the body as being a turn.*

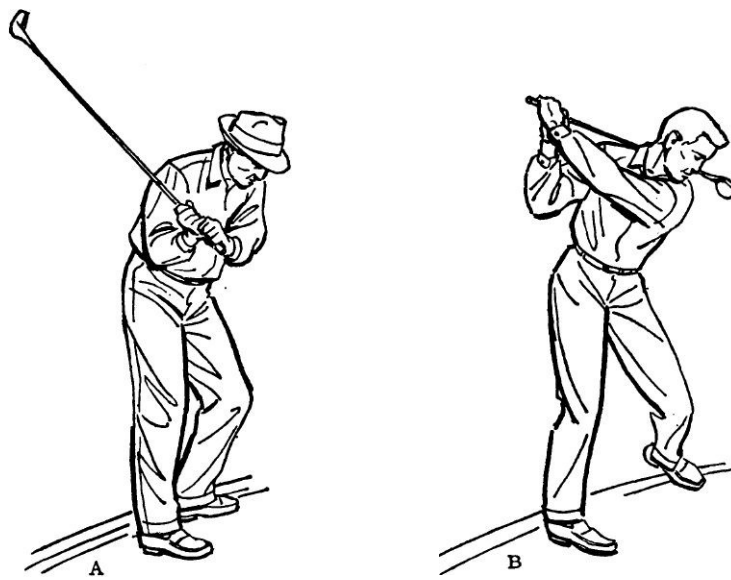
I HEREBY APOLOGIZE FOR THIS MISINFORMATION, AND I'D LIKE TO STATE THAT THE ACTION OF THE BODY IN A GOLF SHOT IS NOT A TURN, IT IS A STRETCH, A DOUBLE-HANDED, TWO-WAY STRETCH ACTION.

What actually happens in the properly executed golf shot is that the body produces or goes into a distinctive, diagonal stretch action—on the upswing and again on the downswing and follow through. This stretch action keeps the player centered on the ball at all times, whereas, a turning action takes the player off the ball on the upswing and throws him out and over the ball on the downswing. No wonder there are so many balls struck with the neck of the club (causing bad shots and broken clubs).

I think I can make myself clear on this subject of stretching versus turning by utilizing a comment made by one of my pupils. The pupil in question had a pretty good sense of footwork, but he had an excessive action with his left side on the upswing—in fact, he turned so much that he actually turned his back on the ball as he took the club away on the backswing. Such an action tended to swing the club low and around his waistline leaving him in a very difficult position from which to hit the ball.

I call his attention to this excessive turn. I pointed out the very low around the waistline position to which he was taking the club, and I also indicated his inclination to swing out and over the ball as he came through. I suggested that instead of turning he should use his body in a diagonal stretch action, which would come quite naturally on the backswing if he would learn to use his right, rather than his left, side. If he did this, the club would travel to a much more upright position and would then be higher and over and around his neck rather than low and around his hips.

Almost before I had completed my explanation, he



8. A) *The incorrect "merry-go-round?" type of swing.*  
 B) *The correct "ferris wheel" type of swing.*

said, "I see, I see—you want me to get off the merry-go-round and get on the ferris wheel."

"Yes," I answered, "that is a very good way to explain the difference between a turning action of the body as compared to a stretching action."

Note in Illustrations 5A and 5B how the turning action throws the player forward onto his toes to an unbalanced position, while the stretch action automatically keeps him back on his heels in a steady, strongly balanced position.

Yes, the action of the body in a golf shot is a stretch, not a turn. The action of the body on the backswing (Step 3) originates in the right hip. As that hip is drawn back, it involves the entire right side from hip to shoulder and it bends and contracts the right arm. At the same

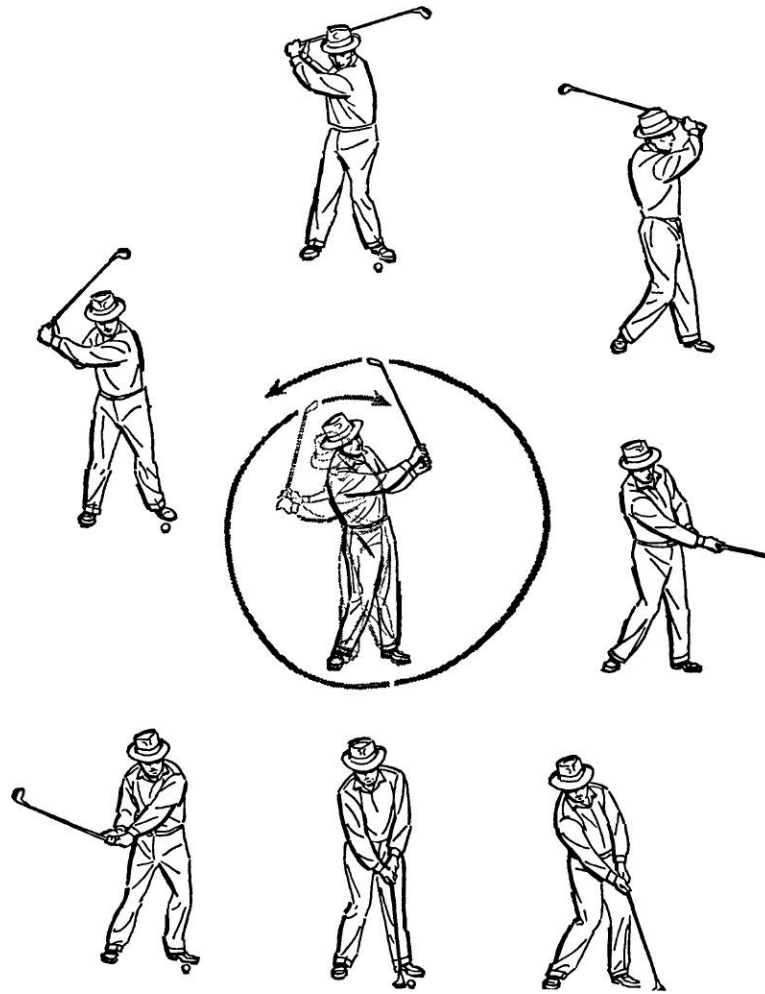
time it kicks and throws the left knee straight forward towards the ball. Much instruction has suggested bending the left knee sideways so that it points sideways toward a spot in front of the right toe, but that is an error and is what happens when one turns too much.

Note again, the correct action of the left knee is a straight forward bend.

On the down swing, Step 4 of the golf swing, the action of the body starts in the left hip. Again there is a backward pull of the left hip which involves the entire left side from hip to shoulder. This creates a diagonal stretch in the body which contracts and bends the left arm very sharply. As this is done, the right knee kicks straight forward again.

This diagonal stretch of the body on the backswing, which gets the right arm and left knee synchronized into a perfectly centered, controlled action, and the reverse stretch of the body which synchronizes the action of the left arm and the right knee on the downswing and follow through can be readily portrayed in the following diagrams. It is this gyroscopic pattern under which all golfers work when they execute the perfect golf swing. Through this gyroscopic action they are centered on the ball at all times. (Illustration 9)

This discussion of the right arm and left knee working together on the backswing and the left arm and right knee working together on the downswing and follow through reminds us again of the comments made earlier about the footwork in the forward press and the reverse press. In that discussion (Chapter Four) we mentioned lefthandedness and righthandedness—and all I want to



9. *The Gyroscope Pattern of the Golf Swing*

emphasize now is that if a player does not have the footwork whereby he can balance himself on his right foot for the backswing, then the ability to make this diagonal stretch is not present. Likewise, if the player does not have the footwork to rebalance himself on the left foot for the downswing, then the diagonal stretch cannot be done.

In other words, if the player does not establish and develop footwork he can never stretch but must always turn—and if he turns *he will always be out of position*.

But if he will follow the simple routine of the double 4, he will always be a balanced player, able to use his body correctly. If that is being accomplished correctly, the hands will come along easily, naturally and strongly to give the golf club that essential guidance which is so important in all golf shots. (See Chapter Five)

I cannot leave this subject of body action in a golf shot without making a few added remarks. It was the recognition that all good players used their body in executing a shot that prompted me to write my first book on golf. In every fine American golfer's style there was that definite body action which was so decried and inhibited on the lesson tees and in the books written on the subject.

But while I recognized the presence of this body action, I myself was not able to portray properly how one should use his body, until I could point out the difference between turning and stretching. I hope I have made this distinction adequately, because it is the difference between *inconsistency* and *accuracy* in golf.

I would like to conclude this chapter by pointing out that the stretching action prescribed is a perfectly natural action—muscularly, it is possible to do but two things:

- (a) one can contract one's muscles, or,
- (b) one can relax one's muscles.

Contracting your muscles can be a measured, controlled action. For example, you can contract your arm to a certain point and then hold the position at that point, but when you relax your muscles it is generally a complete release.

It becomes apparent then that when one learns to regulate the swing of a golf club with the perfectly natural diagonal stretch action, the club can be controlled and regulated for a full swing, a 3/4 swing, a 1/2 swing or even to a lesser degree as the shot requires.

One final comment on body action in a golf swing, and again I must give credit to an unknown ten-year-old girl for a very interesting but most truthful observation, to wit, that the action of the body in a golf shot is always reflected in the knees—in other words, as the body operates so the knees reflect.

In my first position as a golf professional (many, many years ago in Helena, Montana), at the dedication ceremonies to commemorate the introduction of golf in this far western community, I was prevailed upon to give a driving exhibition. Everybody crowded around the first tee in a semi-circle and the youngsters, of course, took first row seats on the ground. This was quite an occasion for the community. For many people and certainly for the youngsters it was their first glimpse of someone driving a golf ball.

As I let go on the first shot, from this little ten-year-old girl came a surprising remark, "Oh, look, he does it all with his knees."

The remark was not directed to me—it was simply thrown out into the open air, but it was a remark that I have always remembered—and the more I studied golf and golfers, the more I realized that the knees do play an important part in the correct golf swing. They always indicate exactly how the body is being used. If the body action *is* correct, then the knees travel straight forward on both the up and the downswing, but if one goes into a body turn then the knees start going sideways.



# 7

## ***FOOTWORK —THE KEY TO GOOD GOLF***

The swinging of a golf club is a double-handed, ambidextrous motion which completely involves the player from toes to fingers. It is this all encompassing involvement of the player in a properly executed golf swing that gives a golfer that completeness of ease, grace and rhythm.

Being the two-legged creatures we are, it is understandable that to swing the club up and to the right we should balance ourselves on the right foot, and to swing the club down and to the left, we should rebalance ourselves on the left foot. However, at the very outset of the golf swing a quandary is presented.

In assuming the initial position from which to start the swing, the natural position for the hands on the club places the right hand in the lower position on the club handle. This invariably causes the player to relax the right knee slightly and by so doing the player finds himself balanced on the left foot. As long as he remains bal-

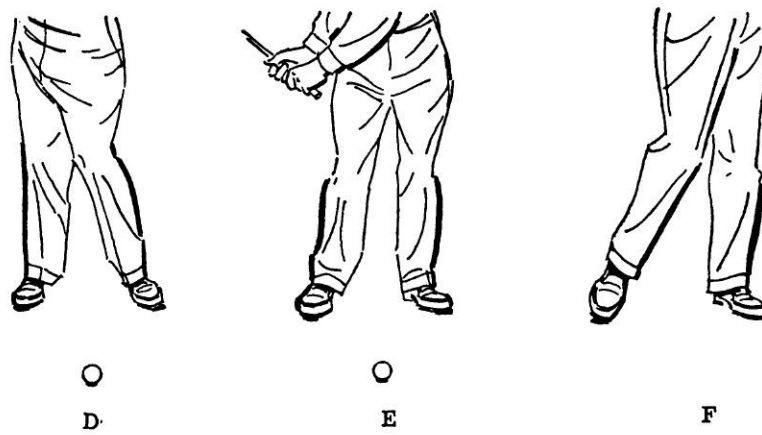
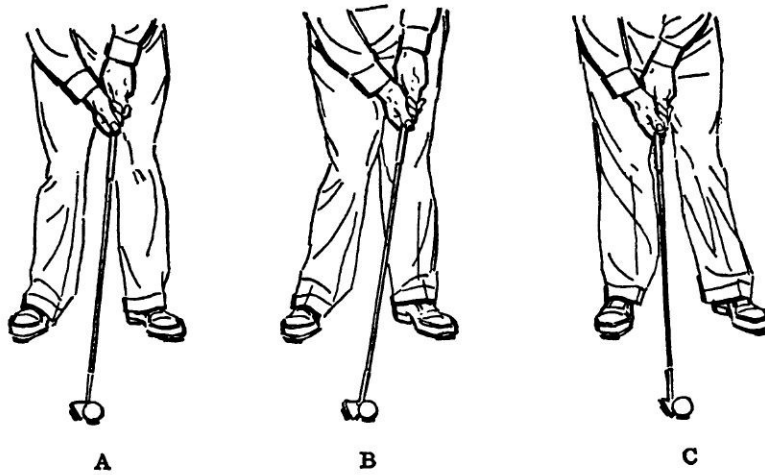
anced on the left foot, it is unnatural to move the club from the ball.

However, through the simple process of the forward press, a slightly added forward movement of the right knee, the player can make a complete change of knee positions and balance himself on his right foot. Thus he can use his entire right side from hip to shoulder to lead his body into the diagonal stretch action, whereby the club can easily and naturally be raised to the top of the swing.

This handling of the knees—the forward press and the reverse press that are Steps 1 and 2 of the golf stroke—leaves the player so balanced when the top of the swing is reached, that it is possible to reverse the knee positions and thus rebalance the player on his left toe. The entire left side from hip to shoulder can then be used to lead the body into the diagonal stretch action to the left, so that the club can be brought down into and through the ball with a full, free, powerful movement.

There is no shortcut to this one-two action of the forward press and the reverse press and it will set the body up so that it can follow in perfect timing with the three-four movement of the up and down swing.

In addition to balancing the player so that he is ready bodywise to go into the swing, the one-two of the forward press and reverse press accomplishes one other thing. It moves the hands in a slight forward movement on Step 1 and carries the hands back on Step 2. It thus places them in a perfect position so that the hands can set or cock the club into position, in harmony with the upswing action of the body on Step 3. (See illustration 3)



**JO. The Footwork in a Golf Swing**

- |                             |                              |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| A) <i>Starting Position</i> | D) <i>Top of Swing</i>       |
| B) <i>The Forward Press</i> | E) <i>Just Before Impact</i> |
| C) <i>The Reverse Press</i> | F) <i>Follow Through</i>     |

There is no shortcut to this one-two action of the forward press and the reverse press. Not only will the body be set up so it can swing the club up on the inside, but the hands will be put in a position where their action of cocking the club into position can be synchronized with the action of the body on movement 3.

Incidentally, it is this four movement rhythm which made Bobby Jones a golfing master and which keeps Samuel Jackson Snead still going at top form.

I could go on with countless examples of great players who use this one-two forward press and reverse press to start their swing. Gary Player, the great South African champion, says: "I feel strongly that one's weight should shift to the right foot on the backswing and to the left on the downswing."

Just after winning the Masters Championship at Augusta in 1950, Jimmy Demaret was interviewed about his golf during the event. Jimmy made this statement: "I have always used a forward press, but this week I used a triple press." He didn't discuss the matter any further but apparently prior to every shot he made triple sure that he was properly balanced for the shot.

About the same time, Sam Snead appeared as the golfer of the year before the annual meeting of the Professional Golfers Association at the Southern Pines Golf Club in Pinehurst, North Carolina. As is customary for persons in that role, Snead related his golfing experiences, and after his talk agreed to answer any questions. Not surprisingly, the first question asked was: "Just now do you <sup>star^</sup> y<sup>our</sup> swing? What is the very first thing you do when you make a golf shot?"



11. In these illustrations, note the diagonal stretch of the right side on the upswing, the free right arm and right elbow position at the top of the swing and the straight forward kick of the left knee on the upswing.

Snead's answer was, "I always make a forward press and then I make sure that I get back onto my left foot before the club meets the ball."

I cite these comments by these three great golfers to point out that uppermost in their minds when they are playing golf is the matter of balance and footwork.

I view unhappily the present day theory of the one-piece swing and those who say you must hold your left heel on the ground as you make the backswing. In the latter instance, I should say that the most common fault in golf is turning too much with the entire left side as the backswing is made. Such an action tends to throw the player too far forward on his left toe as the backswing is made and consequently he must lose his balance, which, of course, would minimize his power.

This excessive use of the left side on the backswing would produce a very flat, much too low, around the waistline movement of the club. However, by making the player hold his left heel on the ground as the backswing is made, the entire left side is arrested. To get any action or movement of the club, the player would be forced to pull back with his right side.

I can't quarrel with the idea of using the right side to take the club away on the upswing, but to accomplish this by holding the left heel on the ground is to my way of thinking a reverse method of doing things. However, for players who have never raised the club to the top of the swing correctly, this may be the exact thing they need—but I feel that it is correcting one fault by introducing another.

In regard to the one-piece swing theory, I contend



*12. In this series of drawings of various golfers, note the diagonal stretch of the left side, the straight forward position of the right knee, the steady "centered on the ball" position of the players and the close-in, inside of the right elbow.*

there is no such thing. Being the two-legged humans we are, faced with the necessity of making an upswing and a downswing, it stands to reason that one couldn't have much motion if he stood flatfooted. To change from foot to foot as the action requires, there naturally has to be more than a one-piece movement.

This reminds me of the case of a very fine player who had within a period of ten days made successive scores of 68-66-69-67. At this point he began doing some experimenting with his swing, a swing which I had always considered perfect, and which was substantiated by his scores.

"How can you possibly improve on your swing?" I argued, and I must say he had about as nice and smooth a four movement rhythm as any golfer would like.

"Oh, there is a lot for me to learn about golf," was his answer.

I insisted on knowing exactly what he was trying to do, and he told me that he felt his swing was too loose and relaxed and that he should develop a one-piece swing.

I begged him not to experiment with anything, but to retain and maintain his present swing.

Within a period of three or four months, the player developed a strain in his left knee. A little bit later he began to have strains in his left hip, and in a short time he developed a back injury which kept him out of golf for over a year.

I cite this specific case to illustrate the fact that if one does not learn to handle his weight correctly in a golf swing, it is possible to develop serious sacroiliac problems. Without a transfer of weight to the right foot it is



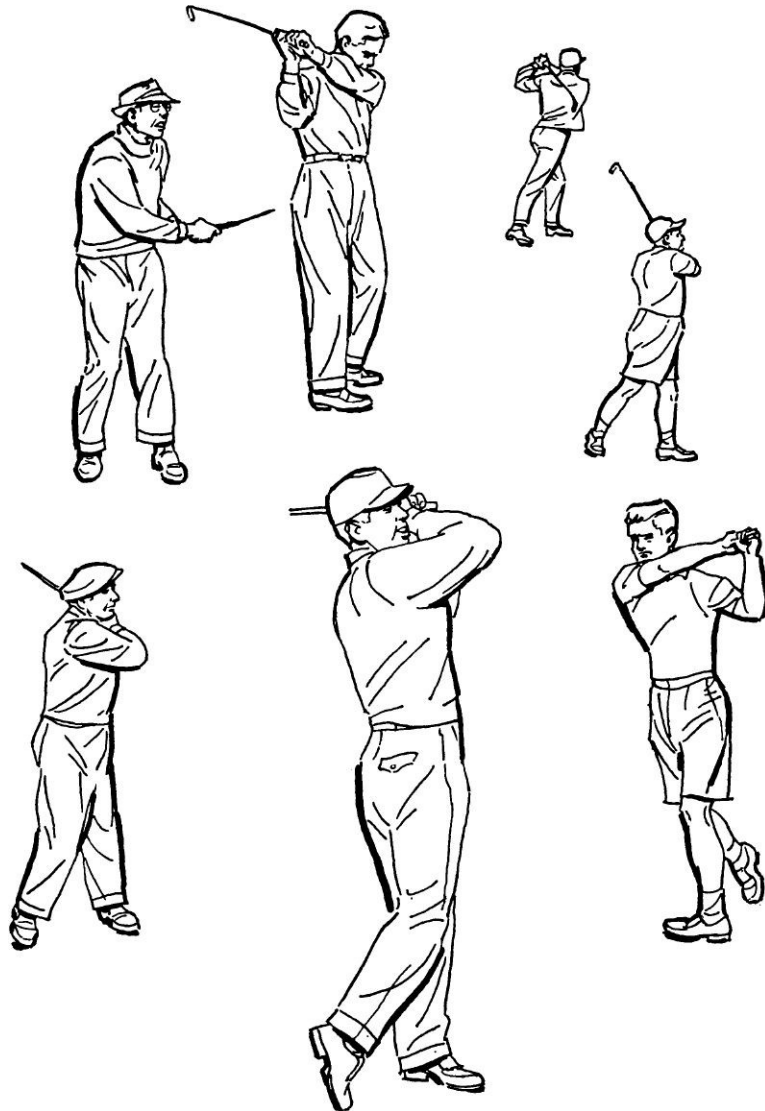


13. These drawings show the diagonal stretch action of the left side and the full free action of the left arm and left elbow on the follow through.

easy to see that the left shoulder must be brought over and around so that this shoulder is being forced towards and against a fixed right side. Consequently, a severe strain is placed on the spine—a strain which tends to twist the spinal discs at the base. Result—strained sacroiliac.

So, if for no other reason, learn to handle your weight so that there will be no physical strain from your golf swing. Let me repeat that when a golf swing is made correctly there is no strain whatsoever.

If you have any problems in this regard, consult your PGA professional immediately, and he will quickly help you overcome your difficulties.



*14. High handicap golfers demonstrate their off-center, unbalanced positions caused by improper body action. Such distortions throw the club out of position. The results are inaccuracy and a lack of power.*

# 8

## ***HOW TO RATE YOURSELF, OR OTHERS, AT GOLF***

Throughout this book, it has been contended that there is no short cut to good golf—there is no way to do the three things that constitute a golf swing:

- (a) weight shift or footwork, for balance
- (b) body action, for swing and power
- (c) hand action, for club position and club control,

without going through the complete sequence of the four moves that has become standard performance by good golfers for years. Any short cut, any omission, takes something out of the shot, or it causes a warped action which produces a distorted effect.

Recently I was asked why a certain golf professional on the tournament circuit was not performing according to advance predictions. It must be admitted that in all fields of endeavor, fame and fortune fail to land where many feel they should land, but in this particular case I felt that the player in question just didn't have the correct golfing technique and therefore could not produce the expected victories.

I answered the query by saying, "He is a one-three-four swinger."

"What does that mean?" I was asked.

"It means that the player leaves out Step 2 of the swing. He always does Step 1, the forward press, shifting all his weight onto his left foot; but then, without reshifting his weight to the right foot, he immediately goes into his backswing (Step 3) and then completes the shot with Step 4.

"Because he omits Step 2, this player has to whirl and turn his body almost violently in order to get the club to the top of the swing—but this whirling, turning movement generally produces that low flat type of backswing which in turn produces a similar whirling motion as the club comes through the ball."

"This one-three-four type of golfer is generally a long ball hitter, because the whirling turning action of his swing causes a lot of hooked shots, so that the player has to constantly make an allowance or compensate for these 'bended to the left' shots. Furthermore, all shots hit with such an action are a low-flying, long-running type of shot which is difficult to gauge or control on approaching the green."

On another occasion I was intrigued with comments of a Bel-Air member who stated he had just seen a competitor with the simplest swing in golf—"a swing which," he said, "would never go wrong." His views were supported by golf authorities who predicted a great future for this phenomenon.

And from the way this newcomer launched his golfing career, it appeared that the above comments were justi-

fled, because the player being discussed, Gene Littler, had just won seven tournaments in a row—two of these seven wins were against professionals, and the prize of the lot was the U.S. Amateur Championship.

I was curious to see this simple swing, because throughout my teaching career it has been my purpose and my goal to simplify golf and golf instruction, and I became more interested because of the statements attributed to Littler. He was reported as saying that he played golf differently than anybody else. I was skeptical. All golfers must of necessity do the best they can with the tools they have, to wit, their feet, their body and their hands, but I was anxious to analyze and study this new golf star.

This is what I saw.

I watched a player who did not assume the conventional position in addressing the ball. He did not have his right knee relaxed which would place his weight on his left foot, in fact he assumed a reverse position.

His knees were reversed.

His right knee was straighter than his left although both were bent slightly, and this put his weight on his right foot.

His hands were not opposite his left knee; instead, they were moved over to a point opposite the middle of his body, more to the right of a center position.

He didn't do a forward press.

He didn't do a reverse press, because he assumed what amounted to the exact position a player would reach at the end of Step 2. All he did was to raise the club on the backswing and then bring it down again and on through the ball—a three-four swing.

No wonder the swing looked simple to my reporter. It had only two movements, an upswing and a downswing, Steps 3 and 4.

As the record shows, Littler made a great bid for the U.S. Open on his very first try, in fact he almost won it, but then his game seemed to fall apart and Littler went into a long slump.

Of course, starting his swing from that dead still position, there was very little chance to work his hands into the backswing, but the real difficulty Littler encountered was that from this position he began turning too much on his shots. As previously noted, this excessive turning action of the body produces a much too low backswing from which hooking and smothering the shots is almost unavoidable.

Prior to a recent Los Angeles Open, I observed Littler on the practice tee and noticed he was employing a forward press and a subsequent reverse press action prior to going into his swing. I thought at the time that if Littler retained the forward press and the reverse press it would rectify the faulty body action, in addition to giving him a chance to work his hands and wrists early into the backswing. He would then have a positive control over the club as it was swung.

Two weeks later Littler won the Phoenix Open and the Tucson Open in succession and during the summer won three more tournaments.

Throughout the golfing world the big question was how did Littler get back on his game. A short time later, credit was given to Paul Runyan of La Jolla, California.

If ever there was an exponent of the one-two-three-four rhythm that I have been advocating, the honor must go to Paul Runyan, because he has a most emphatic, in fact, almost exaggerated application of the four movement rhythm. It has done well for Paul Runyan, a star player on the circuit in the early 30's, twice winner of the PGA Championship, U.S. Senior and World's Senior Champion in 1961-62.

It occurred to me that some of this rhythm must have rubbed off on Littler, but when Runyan explained how he got Littler out of his slump, I was personally disappointed. Runyan stated that all he did was to shift Littler's right hand position on the club—he made Littler bring his right hand to an on the top of the shaft position and this cured his hook.

Littler is a great golfer—his record proves it, but it is my contention that if he would employ the forward press and the reverse press his record would be even more impressive.

So just as Gene Littler's swing is subject to an analysis, and a subsequent rating, so is your swing subject to a rating.

In my book, Bobby Jones and Sam Snead get the highest rating—their forward press and reverse press have been the most consistent and most uniform. With this fine one-two start, they balanced themselves perfectly for a full free action bodywise, but their one-two action also led their hands to a point where they could easily and naturally apply over the club the perfect positional control. To do this hand action and body movement from a dead



still start puts a great burden on the player. It isn't as easy to get the needed rhythm, the body and hand action that a golf shot requires.

It is my observation that perhaps as a result of the one-piece swing theory (a fallacious idea that is supposed to simplify play), many newcomers on the tournament circuit are using this style. However, it is also noticeable that even though they assume this dead still position as they address the ball, many of them do a series of preliminary movements before coming back to the dead still position from which they start their shot. In effect *they do what amounts to the one-two action*, but they do it quite separately from the three-four style of the swing they employ.

Among women golfers, Patty Berg and Louise Suggs get a very high rating—they apply the four movement rhythm most effectively.

At the next professional tournament you attend, make a rating chart on each player and watch for the final results. You will find players who do no more than a three-four swing. Then you will find players who do a two-three-four swing—these players start their club away from the ball with a sort of drag action, but with this style they must also give their body a rather severe twist or turn to get the club to the top of the swing. This excessive turn or twist action often puts a severe strain on the left knee.

Then you will find many, many golfers who have that distinctive one-three-four swing we discussed earlier.

However, when you find the golfer who does the complete four movement rhythm, you will likely find the class

of the field, and the most probable winner of the tournament. In that one-two-three-four rhythm you will see the golfer who has the best footwork, is always balanced for a full free swing, and has the best chance to use his hands to properly guide and steer the club.

I have personally conducted ratings of players in many tournaments, and the four movement player always proves to be the most reliable in all departments of the game. Here are the results of a national professional tournament survey. It was a match play tournament with 97 entries, and the players' styles were as follows:

In the one-two-three-four category there were 55 players. In the one-three-four category there were 27 players. In the two-three-four category there were 5 players. In the three-four category there were 10 players.

In qualifying for the 64 places on the match play sheet the results were as follows:

73% of the one-two-three-four players or 40 out of 55 qualified  
59% of the one-three-four players or 16 out of 27 qualified  
80% of the two-three-four players or 4 out of 5 qualified  
40% of the three-four players or 4 out of 10 qualified.

As the elimination took place during the match play, the record showed that the first category of players to bow out were the three-four players, that the next category to disappear were the two-three-four players, the next category to disappear were the one-three-four players, and the ultimate winner was of course a one-two-three-four player. However, most convincing as to the efficiency of the four movement style of golf was the fact that all four semi-finalists were one-two-three-four play-

ers—in other words, each one of them proved to be the superior player in his bracket of the draw.

This analysis of players can increase your interest at a tournament, it will improve your own concept and understanding of golf, and it will improve your own performance on the course.

Use the one-two-three-four analysis to see just how the players

- (a) handle their weight
- (b) utilize their body
- (c) work their hands, and the more you study and review the four movement rhythm, the more automatic your own performance will become.

# 9

## **EXPLANATION OF SOME BASIC IDEAS**

### *Body action in a golf swing*

The use of the body in a golf shot has been the basis of all of my teachings in golf.

One time while teaching a man who took up the game after he was 50 years of age, I was taken to task by one of the better players at the club who was and is a very good friend of mine.

"What are you trying to do with Arkell," he asked. "You have him swaying and moving all over the place. Don't you think you should teach him to hold his body still?"

"No," I answered, "I want him to learn to play golf, and the only way to play golf is to learn to use one's body. I must admit that at the moment Arkell is a bit awkward and he is inclined to exaggerate. (At this time I didn't know the difference between turning and stretching, and that could have been of some help.) But, please let him alone and I'm sure he will come through. However, since

you brought the subject up let me say that I think you should do some revising in regard to your own game. You and I have different views on the matter of golf. You hold your body entirely too still as you play, and this rigid body position that you insist on is the prime reason why you often shank your shots."

Within a period of three years, my pupil won the Bel-Air Country Club Championship. On the other hand my friend's game became gradually worse and his 4 handicap slid to a 24 handicap, but he stubbornly kept to his idea of no body action. It was really sad to see him whaling away at the ball without being able to drive it much more than 100 yards, and all because he tried to make his golf swing entirely with his arms.

*Action of knees during the swing*

The action of a golfer's knees reflects the type of body action the player is using. Despite a preponderance of suggestions to the contrary, I have always insisted that the knees (the left one on the upswing, and the right one on the downswing) should both kick straight forward, and not sideways.

My good friend, Horton Smith, known as the Joplin Ghost when he played so well on the tournament circuit, was a most emphatic example of the knee action I prescribe.

Note in the pictures the steady, powerful, well-balanced appearance of the players whose knees are going straight forward, then notice the weak, wobbly, off-center, unbalanced positions of the players whose knees go sideways. (Illustrations 11 and 14)

*Position of the right elbow at top of the swing*

A majority opinion in golf is that the right elbow should be tucked in close to the right side as the backswing is made. In many cases pupils have been asked to place a handkerchief on their right side and told to hold it there by pressing their right elbow against it. The players are then asked to prevent the handkerchief from falling out during the swing.

Such practice tightens and tenses the player bodywise, and forces him into an excessive body turn.

In all golf swings done correctly the left knee kicks straight forward and as this is done the right elbow kicks straight back, all of which provides a very balanced position. As the right elbow kicks back it naturally bends and the elbow goes free of the body—in fact, it is this bending of the elbow and the contraction of the right arm that actually raises the club to the top of the swing so naturally.

This act of letting the right elbow go free on the backswing is of great value in ultimately developing the proper hitting position of the hands at the time of impact with the ball.

With the right elbow going free and away from the body on the backswing, it becomes possible for the right elbow to drop straight down as the downswing starts. This permits the right hand to remain on an inside position on the downswing, and from this inside position, the right hand creates a strong base against which the left hand and left arm can pull the club into the ball. This combination of the right hand being on the inside as the hands come into the hitting area helps to naturally

produce a powerful one-two action of the hands as the ball is contacted. As a result, the natural hit from the inside ability that has been so strongly and properly urged throughout the years occurs quite readily. This is, of course, the hand action that all big hitters in golf acquire; in fact, it is the only way for the hands to work.

On the other hand, if the right elbow is locked tight against the right side on the backswing, a whirling, twisting body turn must result. Of course, from such a backswing there is bound to be that all too early hit with the right hand, which will throw the club to the outside of the line of flight and only an outside-in hit can be executed.

While on the subject of elbows, let me say that emphasis on the straight left arm has caused many bad shots in golf. As a matter of fact, only persons with a distinctive muscular setup can really hold their left arm straight throughout the swing. Walter Hagen, golfs most exciting champion, never did really straighten his left arm during his play. And my cigar-smoking pal, Billie Burke, won the U.S. Open Championship with a decidedly crooked left arm. Another winner of the U.S. Open crown was Ed Furgol, a most effective golfer even though a physical mishap prevented him from ever straightening his left arm.

I must report that too much emphasis has been placed on keeping the left arm straight, and if one holds the left arm too straight after impact, a low shot off to the left may result. There might also be a few sickly smothered hooks.

In the correct swing, the right arm should act and bend freely on the backswing. And as the right arm bends and

contracts, there will develop in the left arm a natural sense of opposition and through this sense of opposition the left arm will naturally straighten and extend itself.

On the downswing and follow through, the reverse action takes place in the arms. The left arm must at some time bend and contract, and as it does so, help send the right arm into an active extension—a natural thrust of power at the precise moment of impact.

Note in these pictures of golf stars in action the free right arm position at the top of the swing, and the comfortable contracted but free position of the left arm at the finish. (Illustrations 11, 12 and 13)

*The early wrist break on the backswing*

This subject I discussed at length in Chapter Five. However, as stated then, and I'll repeat it again, the action of the hands in a golf shot is the crux of the situation in golf.

With the hands, the player determines just what position he will put the club into, and from this position the player determines just what kind of a golf shot he will make: will it be a high fade, a shot that will stop dead, or will it be a low hook, a long rolling shot or a perfectly straight shot. It all depends on what the hands will do, and the time for them to do their job is at the outset of the backswing.

The picture from which the accompanying outline was made is one of my prized possessions. It was given to me by that uncrowned champion of golf, MacDonald Smith. When he gave me the picture he said, "*Joe*, here is one of the best pictures I've ever seen—it is right here at this



precise point in the swing where I really get the feel of the club. This gives me the confidence I need to go full tilt into the swing."

Notice the early wrist break in the accompanying pictures. (Illustration 15)

*Relaxed position of the hands at the top of the swing*

Throughout all my writings on golf, I have stressed the importance of hand action. I have stated that the hands really have a triple duty:

- (a) that of cocking or setting the club into a desired position
- (b) keeping the club in that position throughout the swing
- (c) imparting to the club the power that the body generates.

However, this is all accomplished in a perfectly natural pull and push action.

On the backswing, the right hand pulls, while the left hand pushes, and on the downswing, the left hand pulls and the right hand pushes.

Now under no conditions should there be any undue tension or tightness in the back part of the hands, or it will be difficult to maneuver the club correctly. As the hands go into their pull and push action on the upswing, not only do they spread and separate, they actually expand and relax to a point where the thumbs come in for a most important requirement, that of keeping the club steady and under control, particularly at the top of the swing.

Then, as the swing is reversed, and the club is brought

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down into and through the ball, from their expanded relaxed position there is produced a contraction of the hands. As the left hand pulls and the right hand pushes, the hands close strongly on the club so that at impact there is a firm steady position of the hands on the club.

During this pull and push on the downswing and follow through the thumbs again are of utmost importance. They act as fulcrum points against which the club can be levered into the ball.

At all times and at every point throughout the swing the hands must work in perfect unison and harmony.

Golf is definitely a double-fisted, two-handed operation wherein expansion of the hands must be developed on the way up so that there can be contraction and clubhead speed on the way through the ball.

Notice in these pictures of the club at the top of the swing how important the thumb positions are and how relaxed the hands are.

*Holding the head still*

At no time throughout my years of instruction do I remember consciously asking a pupil to keep his eye on the ball. I feel that the player will naturally look at the ball because that is his target, so why bother telling him to do it. Of course, the real reason so much stress is placed on keeping your eye on the ball is that your head will stay still. I disagree with this suggestion, because if one holds his head extremely still he restricts and inhibits a nice free action in his body.

In the natural course of movement in a golf swing, the act of shifting one's weight to the right foot does



15. Note the prominence of thumb positions at the top of the swing. The hands are relaxed and expanded at the top of the swing, but contracted and tight at impact.

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straighten that knee. As the diagonal stretch action of the body is used to raise the club to the top of the swing there is an added straightening of the entire right side. In other words, the combination of shifting the weight to the right foot plus using the right side of the body to carry the club to the top of the swing, automatically produces a certain erectness or straightening of the entire right side. Under the influence of this action the head position is raised as the backswing is made. Then as the weight shifts to the left foot, there is a momentary drop of the entire body position, and consequently the head naturally lowers slightly. However, after the weight moves to the left foot and the left side is used to bring the club through, there is a decided straightening of the left side and again the head is raised slightly.

In other words, the head goes higher as the backswing is made, temporarily drops to a slightly lower position as the downswing starts, but again raises as the swing is completed. *Any attempt to hold the head absolutely still restricts this natural body action.* Hence I have never asked a pupil to hold his head still.

The most outstanding exponent of this perfectly natural rise and fall action of a golf shot was Byron Nelson, who carved a record in professional golf contests that will be difficult to match.

Another exponent of this natural rise and fall action of the correct golf swing is Cary Middlecoff, all-time money winner in professional golf.

After a period away from competition, it was quite noticeable that Middlecoff's swing was tense and restricted due to a very fixed head position, but in a short

time he got into the rhythm of his swing and the slight rise and fall of his head position during the swing was readily noticeable again. Therefore, don't freeze and tighten up your swing by trying to hold your head still. If the action of your body is correct it will operate within the gyroscopic pattern of the two-way diagonal stretch that all good golfers acquire. If you are within that pattern you won't have to worry about holding your head still. *Don't do anything to disturb a natural body action.*

# 10

## ***WHEN TO GO OUT ON THE GOLF COURSE***

On numerous occasions pupils express a desire to be taken on the golf course where they feel they will learn more quickly.

This is a snare and a delusion. It is absolutely essential that a reasonably good swing be developed before the pupil be permitted on the golf course. A natural question at this point would be "what is meant by a reasonably good swing?" It simply means that the pupil should be well grounded in the three fundamental actions that constitute a golf swing.

The pupil should be able:

- (a) to handle his weight so he can properly balance himself on his right foot, from which point the upswing is made. He should be able to rebalance himself on his left foot so that he can make the downswing and follow through.
- (b) he should have a thorough understanding of how to cock or set the club into any of the three positions; in other words, he should have a sense of how the two hands work together to accomplish this important mat-

ter of club position, which is the basis of directional control in golf shots (See Chapter Five). (c) the player should have the sense and ability of utilizing his body as the swing medium—using his body in that natural self-centering action—that two-way stretch which never takes one off the ball and gives the player the ability to make long powerful drives or short delicate chip shots and putts.

These three fundamental actions can only be developed by practice. The practice must be systematic and positive, and have a definite plan that will be stuck to without experiment or change.

Practice this plan—repeat it over and over until (a) footwork, (b) hand action, and (c) body action are synchronized into a smooth continuous action—an action in which you will have a definite idea of (a) where the club is, and (b) how forcibly or how delicately it is being applied to the ball.

Once a degree of proficiency is developed there is no club or department of the game that can give you any problems; golf can be an easy game because you will be the master in control of the club as you swing it.

Then and only then are you ready to go out on the course to play. Just as it takes practice to develop, create and establish a swing, it will require added practice to maintain and retain a satisfactory performance.

# 11

## ***GOLF CLUBS AND THE THREE DEPARTMENTS OF PLAY***

Golf is easy to play because the club does the work.

The first officially recognized set of golf clubs consisted of four clubs:

- (1) a driver, for the long distance shots from the tee
- (2) a brassie, so called because of a protective brass plate on the bottom of the club was used for distance shots from the fairway
- (3) a baffie, a club with considerable loft on the face so that it raised the ball high into the air—this club was used for approach shots to the green
- (4) a putter, designed to roll the ball on the ground and used to roll the ball into the cup.

An interesting thing about these first golf clubs is that they were made of wood, but all in one piece, much like a hockey stick.

As the game developed and one-piece models became difficult to supply, there was ingeniously conceived the splice model club with its head and shaft glued together on an angle (or a splice) and the joining wrapped with strong waxed cord.



Next came the socket model where the shaft was joined to the head by being inserted into a bore—and this type of construction prevails today.

Then came a great invention—a curious soul discovered that instead of using a bulky wood head at the end of the shaft, the ball would stop quickly if the end of the club was an iron blade. Thus were introduced into golf the irons, which stopped the ball as against the woods which ran the ball.

So for distance shots, the woods or drivers continued to be used.

For stopping the ball, as needed on approach shots to the green, the irons were employed, and then for the *coup-de-grace*, getting the ball into the cup, the putter was used. These three types of clubs, drivers, irons and putters, exemplify the three departments of play in the game of golf, and to play the game a player would have to have these three basic clubs: a driver for the distance shots, an iron for the approach shots and a putter to complete the job.

But golfers are not satisfied with one driver, one iron and one putter; they get a set of three or four or even five drivers. Likewise they equip themselves with six or eight or even ten irons, and on top of this they may even have two or more putters. In fact, as the game of golf became popular in America and attractive purses were being put up for professional golfers, it was discovered that players were going to tournaments with as many as 22 or 23 clubs in their golf bags. Some of these were extra drivers and extra putters, but the United States Golf Association

felt that this large number of clubs was not needed and such an array of equipment would tend to discourage those who might be interested in taking up the game. A rule was passed that a player could not have more than 14 clubs in his golf bag, and that is the rule today. A standard set of clubs now consists of four drivers, numbered 1, 2, 3, 4; eight irons numbered 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9; a heavily weighted club called a sand wedge and a putter.

The only difference between the four woods is the degree of loft on the face of the club, which tends to elevate or drive the ball on a higher angle of flight or trajectory.

The same thing is true of the irons, and sketch 2F illustrates the respective angle of trajectory which each iron produces.

So the drivers in a set of woods, and the irons in a set of irons are each but a cog or a niche in that set—each designed to produce a certain angle of flight or trajectory, all of which emphasizes this important fact: *that the clubs will not produce the respective effect for which they were designed unless they are all swung and applied to the ball in the same way.*

In short, a golfer does not purchase a set of golf clubs to make the game more difficult, he does it to make the game easier, and it is easy if he will use the same swing on all clubs.

#### *Clubs for beginners*

Modern manufacturing methods produce golf clubs that are uniform as to weight, balance, grip and shaft tension. Clubs are available in various price ranges and can

be secured in sets of lesser numbers than the 14 permitted by the rules.

The advice of a member of the Professional Golfers Association would be invaluable in selecting the proper clubs, but if such services are not available, avoid clubs that are too heavy, also avoid clubs with extra stiff shafts.

An ideal balanced club for the average man is a D2 swing weight and the shaft should be of medium tension.

For the average woman the clubs should balance at C7 and the shaft should have a flex tension.

Beginners can operate capably with an abbreviated set—two drivers, preferably the #2 and #4 woods, four irons, preferably #3, 5, 7, 9, a sand wedge and a putter. Such a half set will provide a complete range of shots, and the omitted clubs can be added later.

#### *Tips on driving, approaching and putting*

The theme and the scheme of this book is to prove that the "swing is the thing." In all shots, whether long or short, be it a drive, an approach or a putt, the technique and the procedure is always the same because in every shot in golf the objective is the same: the golfer is striving to propel the ball to a certain spot or to a certain goal. To accomplish this he must be able to control two things:

- (a) the direction of the shot
- (b) the distance it travels.

This book provides the double 4 outline which will train the player to rely on his body for the *power*, and on his hands for the club positioning which will determine the *direction*. So in all shots, be they drives, approaches,

or putts, this same objective, distance and direction, must be governed.

As previously suggested, practice *is* the only answer. Practice the form until the swing can be expanded to provide power plus drive, then practice again to reduce the form to the delicate touch that is required on the putting green.

There are, however, a few suggestions that may aid in the various shots.

#### *Driving*

Even though distance is always desired on tee shots, train yourself not to force or press—the added length of the shaft automatically develops more power through the increased leverage this extra length provides. Remember, however, that the extra length of the driver will require extra time for it to reach the top of the swing and extra time to get back to the ball, so learn to cultivate a lazy type of rhythm when using your driver.

If you are out of practice, keep your #1 driver in the bag, and use your #2 driver for your tee shots. The added loft of the #2 club will absorb slight errors of mistiming that could prove disastrous with a #1 driver.

Beginners are advised to use the more lofted drivers first. As your swing improves, you can move forward to the less lofted clubs.

In striving for distance, take care not to grip the club too tightly as this will destroy the needed hand action. Also, don't spread your feet and take too wide a stance, because that will destroy footwork and without footwork there can be no balance, hence no power.

*Iron shots*

Again, the first thing that comes to mind is "*Dont Press.*" Be sure to select the club that will secure the distance needed. All good golfers play within themselves, which gives them that extra added punch if the occasion requires it.

This recalls a game played with Bobby Jones—as the match progressed I was impressed with the fact that he didn't seem to be trying. Upon checking his score after twelve holes of play, I realized that he was even par, just coasting along, keeping the ball in play, but always having that extra reserve when the situation required it.

That's the attitude to acquire when playing your irons—use a strong enough club, but never force the shot.

The matter of avoiding a tense tight grip must be remembered. Adopt a narrow stance to permit an easy shift of weight, so that the body can be used to give power and punch to the shots.

*Putting*

It is one thing to drive well, another thing to approach well, and important as these two departments are in golf, the real object of the game is to get the ball into the cup. Volumes have been written about driving and approaching, but there has been too much insistence that putters are born and not made, and that putting is something that cannot be taught.

I strongly disagree with such a contention.

It cannot be denied that the power required for a putting stroke can be provided in any number of ways. Con-

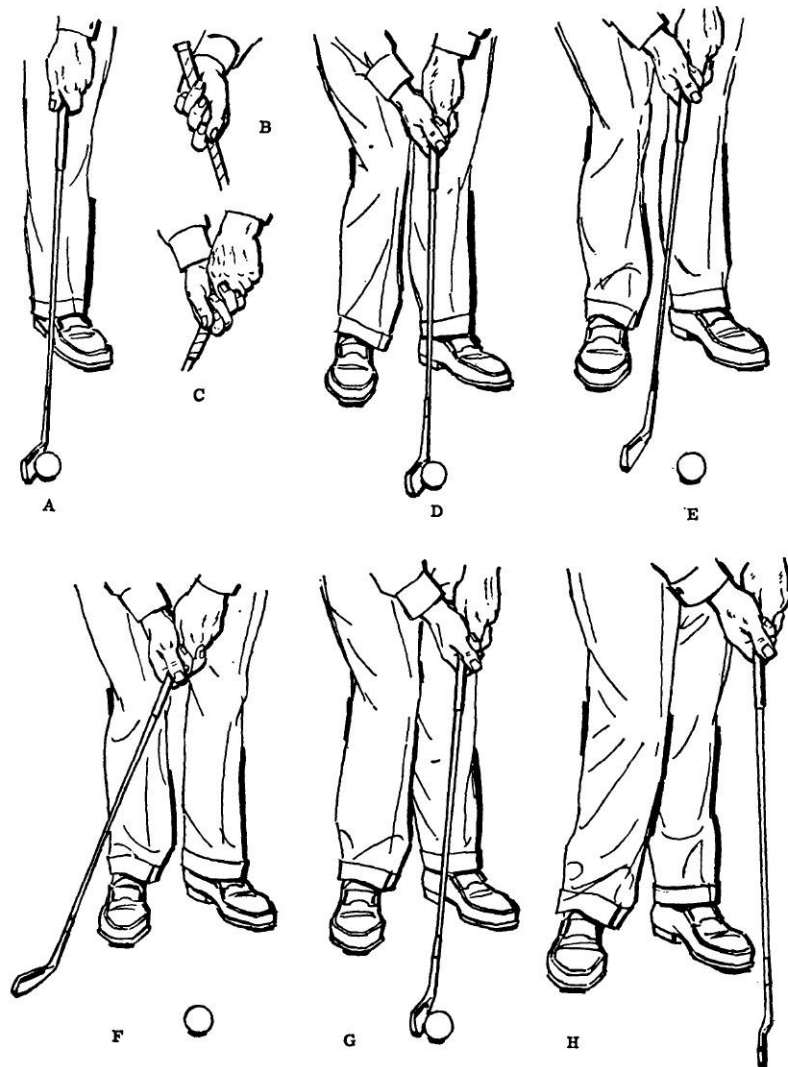
sequently there are numerous effective styles of putting. One I dislike very much is the croquet style of putting approved by the U.S.G.A. I'll never understand this ruling because in most games players have a certain position in which they must remain. They must stay in the box, so to speak, and they should in golf.

So while there are numerous putting styles, there is a classic style that all great golfers employ in driving shots, fairway shots and long irons—emanating from the fact that the power necessary to make a perfect drive or a long iron shot can only come from one source and that is the *body*.

Once a player learns to use his body correctly, his hands fall into line to give him a natural sense of guidance and control over the club. It is this combination of body for power plus hands for club control that produces the long straight drives, the booming fairway woods and the accurate iron shots.

Now if a certain technique provides control and accuracy at a range from 200 to 250 yards, shouldn't that technique provide a more certain control and greater accuracy at a two or four or ten-foot range?

What I am trying to point out is that the same requirements of distance and direction are needed on every putt, and if a certain technique gives you that control on your long shots then you should apply that same style and technique to your short shots. Personally, I learned this the hard way—playing in the finals of a tournament that I was most anxious to win. On the difficult San Francisco Golf and Country Club, a course that had 210 traps on it at the time, I managed for the first round of a 36-hole



16. *The Double Overlap Putting Grip*

- |                                                   |                                     |
|---------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| A) <i>Left hand on the club</i>                   | E) <i>The putter cocked and set</i> |
| B) <i>Side view of undercurl of little finger</i> | F) <i>The backswing</i>             |
| C) <i>Double overlap with right hand</i>          | G) <i>Impact</i>                    |
| D) <i>Completed position</i>                      | H) <i>Follow through</i>            |

match to hit the fairway and green with ease. But after getting onto the putting green, I failed to sink even one of the ten putts, none of which were more than eight feet long. As a consequence, I finished the first 18 holes with a 74, two over par, and I was two down to my opponent, Harold Clark, when I felt that I should be at least two up. When I four-putted the 19th hole from a distance of 25 feet, I had had it, and needless to say I was severely trounced in that match.

I returned to the Berkeley Country Club where I was professional at the time, and analyzed the game I had played. The drives had been fine, the iron shots were dead straight, *but I couldn't sink a three foot putt*. Of course when I putted I deliberately used the reverse overlap grip, held my body still as I made the stroke and putted entirely with my right hand. And when I putted using this style I had no idea of direction and no sense of distance.

Reviewing the accuracy of my drives and the precision of my iron shots, I came to the conclusion that what works at 200 yards should certainly work at ten feet. More clearly I realized that the objective in putting was the same as the objective in any other shot—distance plus direction.

So I adopted the double 4 technique for putting. I learned to use my body as the swinging medium and that left my hands free to guide and steady the club throughout the stroke. As a consequence, I became a fine putter, and I boast I am a good putter for the simple reason that I know just how my putter is pointed (this gives me directional control) and that I know just how hard I am going



to swing the putter (this gives me a sense of distance). I use the same complete double 4 routine that I use on all my other shots in golf—why change when you come to the most delicate shot in the game?

I cannot recommend this plan too strongly because I know it works.

This may startle some old-school golfers, but the way to swing a putter is with a definite body control. Analyze the two-way diagonal stretch action of the body as it is used in golf shots, analyze the natural gyroscopic action of the body as described in Chapter Six, and you will find that a perfect pendulum action swing will be produced.

Two very famous and very successful golfers indirectly support me on this body-type action, putting stroke. Bobby Jones in discussing putting made this statement: "If there is any inclination for your body to move during the putting stroke, let it move." Personally, I would have preferred it if Bobby Jones had said that the body action was the controlling factor in swinging the putter.

Incidentally, on a par 72 course, par allows 36 putts on the green. Statistics show that players who score in the 80's use from 34 to 40 putts per round, and the golfer who scores 100 uses from 40 to 50 putts per round. Bobby Jones felt that he was putting badly any time he took more than 30 putts per round.

Another supporter of the body style putting stroke was that exciting golfer, Leo Diegel, twice PGA champion. Leo developed the miseries on the putting green and finally adopted a style where he held both hands tightly against his chest—arms akimbo. As a consequence all he

could do then was to execute a perfect pendulum stroke using his body to do it.

In contrast to this relaxed style that leaves the hands free to steady and guide the club, the average golfer goes into a rigid, rigor mortis position from which there is little control over direction and less understanding or feel as to the distance of the putt.

Incidentally, a most important thing in putting is the ability to gauge the speed of the green. It isn't often that a putt is driven off line. Trouble usually develops when a putt falls short by six feet, then overshoots the cup by four feet on the next stroke. This should not happen if you use the double 4 routine to establish the body control type of putting stroke.

There is one added feature to the putting stroke that I would like to suggest. In order to avoid any tension in the hands, I recommend a change of grip or hand position. Use the regular Vardon style overlap grip but overlap with two fingers rather than only one. To further eliminate tension in the left hand, take the little finger off the club, in fact, curl it under. This position of the hands will bring them close together and a smooth, delicate leverage action will be created that will readily synchronize with the pendulum effect of the body action.

*Some putting tips*

*The wheel idea.* Imagine that the ball is a wheel and you are going to use the putter to roll the ball as you would roll a wheel.

*Three foot target on long putts.* In playing long ap-

proach putts, imagine a three foot circle around the cup, then plan to play the ball into that circle.

*Side hill putts.* On side hill putts, remember that the ball will travel straight for the first part of the putt and then as the speed of the ball dies down, it will drift or break on the slope. Learn the point at which the ball will start to break, aim for that point and let the ball float in from there. The breaking point will be naturally late in an uphill putt and early in a downhill putt, but learn to putt for that breaking point.

*How to avoid hooking short putts.* Most short putts that are missed, invariably wind up on the left side of the cup—this is caused because the player holds his body still and as the hands swing past the body, there is a natural tendency for them to turn and roll the putter blade to the left. To conquer this fault, learn to pull the club across the line of the putt from outside in. Draw the club across the ball as if trying to produce a slice and actually cut across the ball.

This cut across the line of the shot will actually keep the putter blade square to the line of the shot. Try it on short two foot putts first and then try it on longer putts. It is surprising how square the putter blade will stay.

More about this cut across action of a golf club in Chapter Sixteen.

# 12

## ***SLICING AND HOOKING***

I consider a discussion on slicing and hooking to be of prime importance. It deals with the art of playing golf, "stick handling"—it deals with the crux and essence of every golf shot, the positioning of the club (a subject thoroughly discussed in Chapter Five, but I deem it to be of sufficient importance to bear repeating).

It took me many years of experimenting, many hours of practice, many exhibitions of trick shots before I learned the respective effects and influence that the body and the hands had in regard to power and direction in golf.

Furthermore, the gamut of golf shots is contained in this slicing and hooking technique. Only when a player fully understands these two extremes can he consistently thread that middle route down the fairways, because then he knows just what to avoid.

A well constructed golf course always rewards the good shots—however, each course has its hazards, its side hill lies, its up and down hill lies, its trees and its bunkers and sandtraps—and no matter how well one plays, he is

bound to find himself in difficulties at times. In such cases, proper selection of the club to do the job may solve the problem. An extremely low flying shot can be produced with a driver or a #2 iron, and an extremely high shot can be produced with a #9 iron.

However, there are situations which require that the ball be purposely curved to the right or brought around to the left, and an attempt will be made here to show how easily this can be done if the player has developed the basic form.

To repeat, once again, the theme of this book, *Golf Can Be An Easy Game*, is based on the fact that golfers are equipped with various clubs which automatically produce the shot required.

The driver drives the ball.

The iron lofts or lifts the ball.

The putter rolls the ball.

*All the player has to do is to swing the club.*

In each and every shot from driver to and including the putter, the same four movement routine is used in establishing the starting position, and the same four movement routine is used in making the swing. It is simply a case of applying the form to an extended degree for the long shots and reducing it to a modified degree for the short shots.

Applying the double 4 pattern on every shot will organize the golfer so that the directional control will be regulated and determined by the manner in which the player cocks or sets his club at the outset of the backswing, at the outset of Step 3. Once that is determined,

the only thing the player has to concentrate on is how much energy or power he is going to create and generate with his body action.

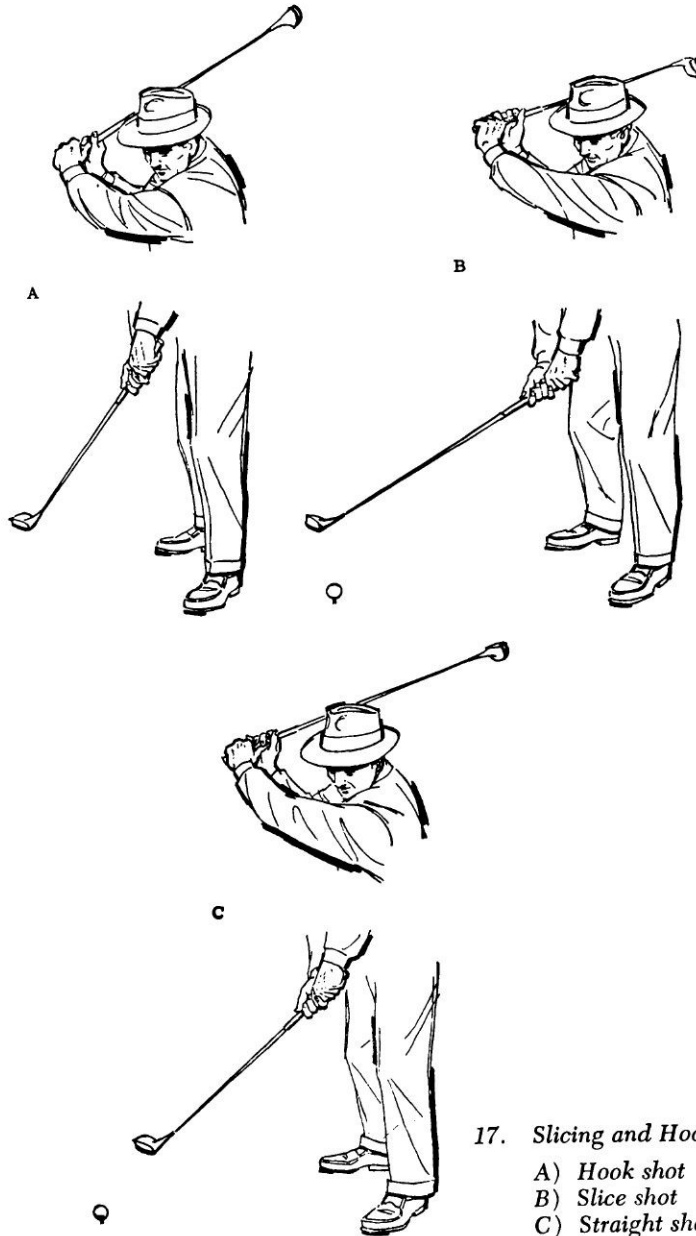
Because there are two swings, an upswing and a downswing, because the action of the body is rightsided going up, and leftsided coming through, there is of necessity an underlying weight shift so that the action of the body can be properly executed. There is no short cut to this three-point plan—in every shot from drive to putt there must be:

- (a) Footwork for balance
- (b) Hand action for club position
- (c) Body action for power.

There is only one way to shift the weight and there is only one way to use the body, but the player can set his club in any of three basic positions, and each position will produce a different sort of an effect on the ball.

The three positions into which the club can be set or cocked at the outset of the backswing are as follows:

- (a) An open face position—in this position the club face is deliberately turned so that it faces the sky, and the shaft of the club is tilted to the outside of the line of flight, away from the right toe. Both the open face position of the club and the tilt of the shaft to the outside "are readily accomplished through the simple process of pronation with the left hand, an inward, towards the body turn of the left hand and wrist. Pronation is best accomplished if the hands are placed so that the left hand is more in front of the club shaft, rather than on top of the shaft, and the right hand is brought up on top of the shaft,



### *Slicing and Hooking*

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rather than being behind or under the club shaft.

This is the technique that is used when it becomes necessary to curve or slice a ball to the right.

This is the technique that is used to bring a ball up very sharply out of a deep sandtrap.

This is the technique that is used to stop an iron shot on a green.

There is one thing that will make the execution of this slice shot more certain, and that is for the player to assume an open stance. An open stance is one where the left foot is drawn away from the line of flight, and the right foot is placed nearer the line of flight. The player's body would thus be turned so that his body would be actually facing slightly towards the line of flight. Such a foot and body position would enable the player to more readily bring the club sharply across the ball from outside in at impact. (See the three pictures of stance, grip and foot positions for slice, hook and straight shot.)

One thing must be carefully guarded in playing this open face shot. You should be certain that the club is kept in that open position throughout the swing. There is a great tendency when trying to play this slice shot for the club to roll into a low position as the top of the swing is reached. If the club does fall into this low position at that point, the right hand is apt to suddenly snap out at the start of the downswing, and instead of a slice shot being produced, an extreme hook, a smothered shot or even a topped shot may result. This happens many times when players use this technique in a sandtrap—this sudden forward lurch of the right hand completely destroys the shot and half tops



the ball, sending it scoting across the green generally into more trouble on the other side, (b) In order to produce the reverse effect of a slice, the player must use the closed face technique. In this position the face of the club is turned towards the ground, and at the same time the shaft of the club must be tilted to the inside of the line of flight, towards and closer to the right toe. Both the face towards the ground position of the club and the inside tilt of the club shaft are readily accomplished through the simple process of supination with the left hand (an outward, away from the body turn of the left hand and left wrist). Supination can best be accomplished if the hands are placed so that the left hand is well on top of the shaft, at least three knuckles showing and the right hand is well under the shaft.

I would like to inject at this point that pronation can be accomplished with a very tight hold on the club with the entire left hand. Supination requires a sense of freedom in the back part of the left hand, because the butt end of the club must be thrown out, away from the body, instead of towards the body as in the slice technique. The closed face technique is used when the player wants to hook or bend the ball to the left.

This is the technique that is used to produce low flying shots—especially useful when playing into the wind, and it is the technique that is used to produce distance and running shots.

As in the case of the slice shot, this closed face or hook shot technique can be aided if the player will assume a closed stance position of the feet. In the

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closed stance, the right foot is withdrawn from the line of flight, drawn farther away from the ball, and the left foot is placed closer to the line of flight. Such a foot position would turn the player's body away from the line of the shot. His body would be turned slightly to the right so that his back would be turned towards the line of the shot.

This foot and body action would enable the player to swing from the inside out much more readily, and this of course is essential in producing a hook shot.

I trust that in explaining the technique of slicing and hooking I have clearly indicated that the real crux of the matter is the position of the club as created by the hands, and that the action of the body simply aids the desired application of the club. In other words, the closed stance and the open stance are simply an aid and an influence, but are not the basic cause of slicing or hooking.

A golfer can still hook from an open stance and still slice from a closed stance, if the club position is so set. However, it is better to be cooperative with one's stance rather than contrary.

- (c) The third position that the club can be set in is the square position. In this position the club face is kept square to the line of the shot and is neither open nor closed, but the shaft of the club is tilted slightly to the inside of the line of flight.

This technique is used to produce the perfectly straight flying shot, a technique where the club is played for its true worth. In this shot the player should assume the square stance, both toes on a line

parallel to the line of the shot. The player's body from such a stance would be squarely facing the ball; in other words, everything—club face, stance and body position—are done on a square.

The position that has just been described, the square position, is more ideal than practical.

It will be found that in the game of golf the object of the game is to drive the ball. Power and force are essential; therefore, it is practical to lean towards the closed face technique of play rather than towards the open face technique wherein power is lost and dissipated by cutting across the ball.

# 13

## **UNUSUAL SHOTS IN GOLF**

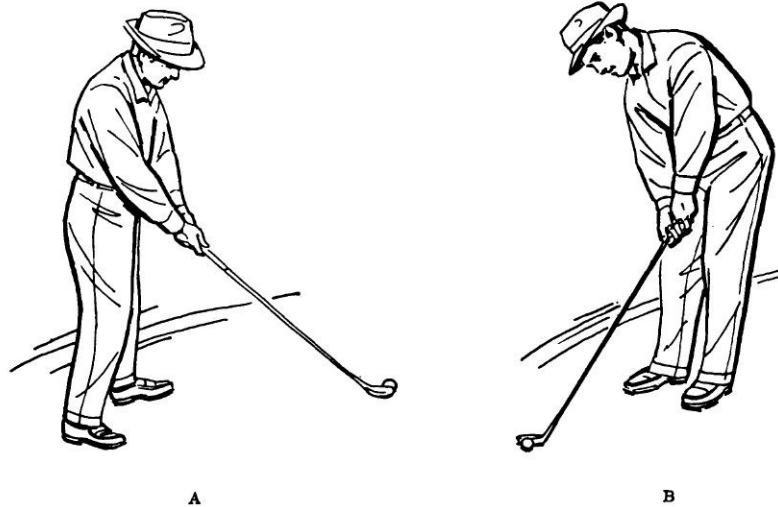
### *Side hill shots*

From a position on a side hill, where the player's foot position is lower than the spot where the ball lies, there will always be a tendency for an extremely flat swing. A hook shot will naturally result from this situation. If it is practical to utilize a hook effect, by all means allow for it, and play the shot naturally.

However, if a hooked shot would put the player in trouble, then he can and must offset the hook effect by consciously setting his club in an open position. The final result will neither be a slice nor a hook, but a straight shot.

If the player is standing on ground that is higher than the ball, there will always be a tendency to slice. If it is practical to utilize a slice effect, by all means play the shot naturally and allow for the slice.

Again, however, if the slice will put the player in trouble, then the player must offset the slice effect by setting or cocking his club into a closed position. The result will



18. *Side hill shot*  
 A) *Player below ball*  
 B) *Player above ball*

not be a hook, but a perfectly straight shot because of the downhill effect.

In such side hill shots there always must be the basic footwork, the body action and the specific club positioning. But because the player is on a side hill and the stance is more or less insecure, it is advisable to utilize a stronger club if the lie permits it. Then the player can use a shorter swing with which there is no danger of losing one's balance and thereby missing the shot completely.

#### *Up and down hill lies*

Where the ball is on a downhill lie, it is helpful if the ball is not played directly opposite the left heel. A stance should be taken where the ball is opposite a point nearer the center of the body.

Playing the ball back, nearer the point opposite the right foot, is an automatic method of contacting the ball on the downswing. This will actually make the ball climb or rise more in its flight.

Curiously, uphill lies should also be played from this same back near center position—the reason being that from such a position there is a difficulty of reshifted weight back to the left foot. So the more effective contact point is suggested.

*Trouble shots—sandtraps, grassy lies, cuppy lies, shots into the wind, chip shots.*

The above five categories of shots are listed under this heading because there is one simple remedy which will help the player in all the above circumstances.

Early in this book, it was emphatically stated that in all shots the ball should be played at a point opposite the inside part of the left heel. As you recall, the reason for so doing is that on the backswing the weight is shifted to the right foot; but in order for the player to make the downswing and follow through the weight must be re-shifted to the left foot. At impact the weight is on the left foot, consequently the swing centers opposite that point, *which is where the ball should be played.*

However, when the ball is in a cuppy lie, or when it is deep in the grass, it becomes necessary to lower the contact point. This can be accomplished by moving the ball back—playing at a point opposite the right heel if the situation requires it. In other words, the deeper the ball is embedded, the further back opposite the right heel it must be played *with the club in a slightly closed position.*

Naturally, the further back it is played the more lofted the club must be, and it is this exception to the rule that the ball must be played opposite the left heel, that has given rise to that fallacious theory that each club must be played from a different position. That is all tommyrot—every club from driver to wedge should be played opposite the left heel—the natural contact point in the correct swing.

But when you get into trouble and you have to dig the ball out, then the ball must be played back. Use a club that is practical for the point to which the ball is positioned between your feet.

So if you have a cuppy lie, play it back, nearer the right foot, and it will be amazing how readily a spoon shot can be picked off a hard surface, how readily a ball will come out of deep grass or how easily it will come out of a cuppy lie.

#### *Shots into the wind*

Using a straightfaced iron in this same manner (back off the right foot) will produce a low, powerful shot. This technique has often been referred to as being a push shot, one that only expert golfers can execute. But if you are topping the ball or failing to pick it up on fairway lies, just move the ball back towards your right heel and your troubles may disappear.

#### *Sandtrap shots*

If the ball is not buried in the sand and if it is not necessary to loft the ball sharply, there is no more reliable shot than the one just described. By playing the ball back op-



A



B



19. *Trouble shots*  
A) *Ball in deep grass*  
B) *Ball in sand*



posite the right foot, a clean contact can be made with the ball—actually the ball will be on its way before the club encounters the sand. It is a reliable way of getting out of a sandtrap.

However, if it is necessary to raise the ball quickly, then instead of playing the ball opposite the right heel *with the club in a closed position*, it becomes necessary to play the ball opposite the left heel *with the club in an open position*. Be sure to keep the club in this open position throughout the swing.

With this technique it will be possible to actually fluff the ball out of the sand and drop it onto the green with no more roll than an Easter egg.

Gene Sarazen, winner of the U. S. Open, the P.G.A., the British Open and the Masters Championship, once played a course with extremely hard fairways and many bad lies. He deliberately aimed for the sandtraps around the greens, so that he could "explode" the ball next to the cup with a definite control.

### *Chip shots*

On the short shots just off the edge of the green it is absolutely essential that this technique of playing the ball back opposite the right heel be employed. It will insure getting under the ball properly—it will avoid contacting the ball with the edge of the club and skating the ball across the green as if it were a scared rabbit.

But chip shots are easy to play if the player understands

( a ) that the body action provides the power and then (b) the hands are free to determine direction and/or stop effect from an open face club position, or roll or run

effect from a closed face club position. In other words, we come again face to face with the importance of how the club is cocked or set for the shot.

Of course, on chip shots, a player may use a lofted club such as a #9 iron to automatically put a stop on the ball, or the player may use a #4 or even a #3 iron, to automatically put a roll on the ball.

However, there is a certain extra control that can be added to these shots if the player is properly trained in the matter of deliberately playing the club open when a sharp stop is necessary on a chip shot. Again, if a roll or run shot is desired this can be easily accomplished if the player has the ability to set or cock the club into a closed position as the shot is being played.

From a practical standpoint, the best way to play chip shots is to always play them with a closed face position of the club. Use a club that will drop the ball on the smooth putting surface, and then have it run or roll up to the cup.

To facilitate this pitch and run effect, it will be helpful to play the ball off the right foot instead of opposite the left heel.

# 14

## ***LEFTHANDED GOLF***

There is no reason why golf cannot be played left-handed just as well and efficiently as it can be played righthanded.

We have emphasized the fact that a golf stroke is an ambidextrous action—that the first lesson in golf, footwork, is a lesson that will teach a person to become right-handed. He must learn to balance himself on his right foot so that he can raise the club using the right side and the right arm. To bring the club through he has to train himself to become lefthanded, to shift his weight to his left foot, so that he can use his left side and his right arm to bring the club down and through the ball.

Actually a good golf swing requires an equal ability on both sides of the body. There are switch hitters in baseball like Mickey Mantle, and there could be switch hitters in golf. But everybody does not feel this way about lefthanded golf.

Some years ago while visiting in a neighboring city, a friend of mine and I, dressed in street clothes, found ourselves in front of a golf school. It was a canvas, tent-like

enclosure where golf was taught by driving the balls from cocoa-mats against a loose canvas backdrop.

"Let's go in," I suggested.

Upon entering we were cordially greeted, whereupon I said, "I'm sorry, I guess we got into the wrong place. We thought this was a tent show of some sort."

"This is no show," came back the answer, "this is a golf school."

With that I picked up a righthanded #5 iron and approached a ball on the mat with a lefthanded stance. As I placed the back edge of the righthanded club to the ball, I said, "This is about the most awkward tool I ever saw—how can anybody play with this thing?"

"You are going at it incorrectly," volunteered the instructor. "You are going at it lefthanded, and that can't be done."

"What do you mean that can't be done, this is the only way I could play," was my response.

"Well, it's wrong," said the instructor, "you can't play golf lefthanded."

"What do you mean, I can't play lefthanded?" I asked. "Why can't I play lefthanded?"

"It just can't be done," the instructor replied, "because golf courses are not built for lefthanded players."

With that remark I turned the club upside down (I made a lefthanded club out of a righthanded one), I raised the club with my left side and I smacked the ball against the canvas with a resounding bang.

I placed the club back in the rack and we left without saying a word.

Incidentally, this trick of making a lefthanded club out

of a righthanded one is very useful should you get up against a tree or a fence from where you must play lefthanded. Curiously, each iron as it is turned upside down provides exactly the same angle of loft as it does in its righthanded position.

There are many stories of players who started playing golf lefthanded and improved their game after they changed and played righthanded. This is understandable. In fact, in righthanded golf a good strong active lefthand and arm are most necessary—and in lefthanded golf a good strong right arm and right hand are most helpful, but in each case both hands must be used. There is, in other words, an ambidexterity that must be developed in both instances, in righthanded or in lefthanded golf.

A most remarkable performer in this respect is my long-time friend, Johnny Bulla, of Phoenix, Arizona. Bulla started as a lefthanded player but was persuaded that golf should be played righthanded, so he switched sides.

And he played it well. Competing in the Los Angeles Open, Bulla once registered an unbelievable score of 29, seven under par for the first 9 holes on the difficult Riviera Golf Course. He started this round with 5 straight threes, and finished the 9 holes with 7 threes showing on his card.

Bulla is now playing golf lefthanded again. Recently he turned in a remarkable performance at the Paradise Valley Golf Club in Phoenix, Arizona. Playing righthanded, he established a new course record of 60, and shortly thereafter, playing lefthanded, he scored a 64.

Who says you can't switch hit in golf?

Early in this book we indicated that ambidexterity was the exception rather than the rule, and that the average person was more or less physically lopsided—he was either predominantly righthanded or predominantly lefthanded. Medical authorities confirm this fact; however, there is nothing serious or detrimental about this situation. Everyone has the latent ability to be ambidextrous, but the inclination or tendency is to the contrary. In many cases simple exercises will rectify and cure this tendency or condition, and there is no finer exercise than a golf stroke that is properly executed to cure this lopsidedness.

For this reason, I recommend and urge most strongly junior golf activities and junior golf instruction. Properly coached, the junior golfer will develop a balanced physical set-up, one in which he will be able to use his right hand as well as the left or vice versa, an ability that will be most helpful in any game and all future activities.

In the junior golf classes which I conduct at Bel Air, after teaching the youngsters the double 4 routine of the golf swing, I make them do it lefthanded.

This is done long before they are permitted to hit golf balls. The purpose, of course, is to have them actually know the golf swing, and be able to do it forwards and backwards—just as is often done in school when learning the alphabet.

To return to the original discussion, I would again like to state that golf can be played righthanded or it can be played lefthanded, but whatever way you play, don't try to do it one-handed—learn to use both hands—it will be easier, more effective and more fun!

# 15

## **WOMEN'S GOLF**

Country club and golf club operations are being adjusted and changed to take care of a new field of activity—women's golf. The increase in women's golf has been so great that in a short time the number of lady players will equal the men. Everything should be done to encourage women to play golf, because from health, social and recreational standpoints, golf is of greater importance and value to the woman than it is to the man.

There is nothing new or special to suggest to women golfers—in order to produce a good golf shot they are bound by the same three requirements that any good golfer must develop. There must be

- (a) Footwork, for balance and poise
- (b) Body action, for power and a graceful swing
- (c) Hand action, for club position and control.

There is no short cut or special treatment for the ladies. To coordinate the above three operations into one smooth flowing action the same double 4 routine must be learned, practiced and followed.

However, some instructors have made a very detri-

mental suggestion to women golfers, and the main purpose of this chapter is to combat its harmful effects. I am referring in particular to the idea that because the average woman's hands are not so powerful, they should adopt and use the so-called baseball grip, or full four-finger position of both hands on the club.

Earlier in this book a special chapter was devoted entirely to hand action. Later in the book, in discussing hooks and slices, the matter of hand action was again thoroughly discussed and reviewed. I do not intend to review hand action again, but I want to stress one point—if one's hands are weak, then they must rigidly adhere to the basic requirements of correct grip and hand placement on the club.

Any tension whatsoever in the back part of either hand on a golf club is detrimental not only to the positioning of the club on the backswing, but also to the proper raising of the club on the backswing. A baseball grip or a full finger grip is therefore harmful to a player with weak hands. The only truly effective grip in golf is the overlapping grip, and it has become universal in golf not because Harry Vardon popularized it, but because it is the most effective way to handle a golf club.

If a player's hands are so weak that the overlapping grip does not provide sufficient control, then only two things can be done—

- (a) first be certain that the clubs being used are not too heavy—your PGA professional can immediately determine and advise you in this latter regard
- (b) then practice until sufficient strength is developed in your hands.



# 16

## ***THE MOST COMMON FAULTS IN GOLF***

Some golfing faults are due to erroneous concepts, but most are the direct result of an omission—a failure to do some essential maneuver of part of the swing. As a consequence, the player is forced into a distortion which develops an error that the player neither intended nor is at all conscious of doing. In such a situation, professional guidance and advice can be most helpful.

### *Failure to shift weight*

The most common fault, by far, is the failure to shift one's weight properly. Only one out of ten pupils seems to have any sense of footwork or any understanding of its importance. Carrying out this 10% average to the 200 or 300 golfers who constitute an average country club, you will find 20 or 30 golfers there who possess the quality of footwork that is the basic requisite for good golf.

These 20 or 30 golfers can, as a result of this footwork ability, maneuver themselves into a position where they can utilize their bodies in making golf shots. They will

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have a natural sense of power and consistency to enable them to score in the 70's or 80's. The remaining 90% of the players in the club will be

- (a) plagued with a loss of distance so that they cannot possibly reach the greens in two shots—they take three shots, sometimes four to get on the green, so their scores automatically go into the 90 and over range.
- (b) players without any sense of club control, a class of golfers who not only lack power but also clubhead control, so the ball goes hither and yon. In this category we have the golfers who score in the high 90's and over 100.

I hope this analysis will explain why certain scores happen. I further hope that it will arouse sufficient interest so that players recognizing these deficiencies will seek advice on correcting them.

*Incorrect use of the body*

Players are told if they want to get more power into their shots they must turn more. This is harmful because turning more can only lead to a low flat swinging action on the backswing which absolutely prevents the player from coming through correctly.

The only naturally accurate, efficient body action is the *two-way diagonal stretch*, the gyroscopic pattern of body action described in Chapter Six. Such an action provides power without effort and without danger of doing oneself bodily harm, such as a lame back or a twisted left knee.

Failure to handle one's weight properly forces the player to turn, but the added preponderance of advice telling golfers that they *should* turn (and the advice tell-

ing golfers that they should use their left side to take the club away from the ball on the backswing) are things that throw the player out of position, and off balance.

I hope these comments will alert the players struggling under these erroneous concepts and that the suggestions offered will put them on the right track.

*Erroneous motions of grip and hand action*

Almost all players are told to hold the club tightly in the last three fingers of the left hand. In fact, special gloves are designed to aid in producing a firmer grip with the left hand. And I must admit that if one wishes to play every shot with a cut, a fade or a slice action, then such a tight lock in the left-hand grip is proper.

However, when it comes to playing a pitch and run shot, or when it comes to playing a hook or even when it comes to playing a perfectly straight shot, then there must be some sense of freedom in the back of the left hand, otherwise it is impossible to set or cock the club into a square or closed position on the backswing. With a tense tight grip in the back of the left hand, there is no way to get the club on the inside on the backswing, so players using this grip are denied the ability to play certain shots in golf.

Earlier I commented on statements by Bobby Jones and by Bobby Locke, where both of them stressed an extremely light grip on the club so that it could be maneuvered into the proper hitting position at the top of the swing. On the other hand, I can name many more star players who insist that there must be a solid, firm grip with the left hand. It just happens that several of our

star golfers happen to be double-jointed, and it is this condition that enables them to perform under difficult and tight situations where the individual with average muscles cannot respond. At any rate, a golfer who is double-jointed is going to have a naturally full free swing which will give him a great deal of speed in swinging the club. It is easy to understand that such a golfer could readily feel he must hold the club firmly or it might get away from him.

However, in the case of the ordinary person, tightness and tenseness in the left hand prohibits such players from ever improving beyond a certain point.

Any person who has read this book will readily know the importance that I attach to hand action and its ultimate club positioning technique. I could not complete this book without commenting again in regard to this one matter that stifles the game for so many.

In closing this subject, let me urge using the overlapping grip to make golf a lot more fun.

### *Shanking*

I don't think any golf book would be complete without some comment about shanking. This dreaded fault, when the ball literally squirts off the club at a 90° angle, petrifies many golfers. Shanking generally occurs on short approach shots of 90 yards or less. On such shots a player will very often determine there is no need for any body action, and this concept plus an extra tight grip with the left hand *will cause* shanking.

If the player decides he is not going to use his body in the shot, he will invariably force the club to the outside

of the line of the shot on the backswing. Add a tight grip with the left hand and the club will automatically roll into an open face position. With this open face position and an outside of the line of flight movement of the club, there is an added tendency for the weight to sink heavily onto the left foot. This combination—(a) club in an open position, (b) club to the outside of the line of flight, (c) weight heavily sunk onto the left foot—is a sure way to shank. As the downswing starts, the club will naturally swing even more to the outside of the line of flight, forcing the player to pull the club sharply across the ball from the outside in. The player will then meet the ball with the heel of the club and away it squirts.

The shot just described—club face open, club to the outside of the line of flight, weight sunk onto the left foot—is nothing more or less than an extremely exaggerated slice shot technique. And that is what shanking is, an exaggerated slice action.

There are many short cut tips on how to cure shanking, but the simplest way to cure it is to reverse the form and apply the hook shot technique. Here is how that is done: assume a closed stance position of the feet and when gripping the club, place the left hand well on top so that three knuckles are definitely showing. Place the right hand well under the shaft. Then do Step 1, a forward press, Step 2, a reverse press which will shift the weight to the right foot, and then as Step 3 is started, cock the club into an exaggerated closed position (face turned down towards the ground and club shaft tilted to the inside of the line towards the right toe). Maintain the club in that position as it is raised to the top of the swing

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and then bring it down and through on Step 4. The shanking will disappear.

A continued exaggeration of this technique may produce some hook shots and in that case there will have to be a modification of the form.

***ANALYSIS OF UCLA GOLF RESEARCH***

The first report of an extensive study on the golf swing was just released, so that an analysis can be presented here. The report is of particular importance because it confirms the material presented in the last two chapters.

The research in question is being conducted by Dr. Raymond Snyder, head of Physical Education at UCLA, and his assistant in the same work, Mrs. Nanette McIntyre. Dr. Snyder and Mrs. McIntyre are both golfers and they wanted to clarify certain theories about the golf swing.

They were ably assisted by touring professionals who willingly placed their swings "on the scale" and in front of an accurate background.

An ingenious arrangement of two scales, arranged so that the player had one foot on each scale, was placed in front of a cross-lined background. Motion pictures taken at 64 frames per second registered every motion of the player, every position of the club, and disposition of the weight from the start to the finish of the golf stroke.

The first point of the investigation was to determine whether golfers did shift their weight during a golf swing, and, if so, how much.

The findings were that each and every one of the players shifted his weight to the right foot for the backswing and reshifted his weight to the left foot for the downswing and follow through. And what might be a most surprising thing to many golfers is the fact that the same consistency of weight shift took place when these golfers each played three shots with a #8 iron.

A rather startling claim was made in presenting this report: that while all the golfers eventually wound up on their left foot at the end of the stroke, the greater percentage—

28 out of 42 on the wood shots 33  
out of 42 on the iron shots

showed more weight on their right foot at the point of impact with the ball.

This piece of information was heralded as a major discovery, so to speak—that the players did not conform to the principles of weight shift that have been advocated for years.

In view of my own findings on how a golfer uses his body in a golf swing, I cannot agree with the above contention.

It was definitely established:

- A. That in every instance all players had the biggest portion of their weight on the right foot at the top of the swing; and
- B. In every instance every player had the majority of their weight on their left foot at the conclusion of the swing.



However, in reading the report of the researchers, one could easily get the idea that the weight was held back on the right foot as the ball was actually being hit.

I cannot agree with the idea that our players let either all or part of their weight remain on their right foot as they hit the ball, and then dragged the rest of the weight over after the ball was hit.

Present-day golfers don't play golf that way. They do not hold back as they hit the ball; they let go and they give it the full treatment.

It is my contention that good golfers start their downswing with a positive shift of weight to the left foot, and after a point of balance is established on the left foot, they are in a position to use their left sides to pull the club down into and through the ball. This is the only way the body can be utilized in a golf swing—with the diagonal stretch action as described in Chapter Six. But this diagonal stretch action with the left side can never be executed unless and until there is a point of balance established on the left foot. It is my contention that this point of balance in the early part of the downswing is placed on the toe of the left foot and eventually winds up on the left heel.

Only if and when this point of balance is established on the left toe can the diagonal stretch with the left side be initiated or executed. And as this diagonal stretch is made a pressure is exerted against and on the right foot, and the harder one swings or the harder one hits the ball, the greater the pressure against the right foot.

So, the scales would register more weight on the right foot *at* impact, but this is after the point of balance has been established on the left foot. The only way that this

could be done is to shift the weight from the right foot to the left foot.

However, this registration of weight on the right foot at impact is but a fleeting thing. This diagonal stretch action of the left side is a quick, speedy action—it has to be in order to put into the motion of the downswing the power that is needed to drive a golf ball.

This sensation of a pressure on the right foot as the ball is being hit is nothing new. In many cases players have stated that they push themselves off the right foot as they hit the ball. But this same kind of push action can be felt on the left foot as the backswing is made.

However, there is no great force being extended or applied as the club is being raised to the top of the swing. Hence the pressure on the left foot as the diagonal stretch of the right side is being made on the backswing is not very intense. But when the ball is being hit, the diagonal stretch of the body with the left side is a powerful, forceful move. Consequently, not only is that pressure actually felt in hitting the golf ball, but it would register emphatically on the scale setup on which the UCLA tests were conducted.

In conclusion, I must say that I personally am pleased with the report that the team of Snyder and McIntyre made in regard to the weight shift. I think that once and for all they have settled this matter of weight shift. They definitely proved that in driver and iron shots there was a definite shift of the weight to the right for the backswing, and there was a definite reshift of the weight to the left foot for the downswing and follow through.

However, there was evidence of a style which I per-

sonally disapprove of, a style to which I have personally objected.

In 20 cases out of 84, the players addressed the ball with more weight on their right foot than on the left.

In the wood shots, 9 players had more weight on the right foot at the address, and 17 players made no forward press action (25 players did make a forward press).

With the irons, 11 players at address had more weight on the right foot; 12 players did not make a forward press, but 30 players did make a forward press.

As previously reported, this balancing oneself on the right foot at address, and the tendency to eliminate the forward press, is encouraged by the suggestion of simplifying golf through the one-piece golf swing theory.

But this type of golf play is very apt to cause a twisting body action which in turn can produce twisted knees and sacroiliac disturbances.

As also stated in this book, the elimination of the forward press destroys the opportunity of injecting into the backswing that very necessary cocking of the club. And if the player does not have a sense of where and how the club is cocked, there is no point in swinging it.

I must say that many players do play that way, but I also say that they would be better players if they did use the forward press.

Anyway, Dr. Snyder and Mrs. McIntyre should be congratulated for their fine and valuable report. They are working on other aspects of the golf swing and will soon come forth with other interesting conclusions.

# 18

## ***A MOST HARMFUL GOLF THEORY***

Without a doubt the most common fault in golf is slicing. But as most players do not understand the need or the mechanics of shifting their weight, they are forced to use their left side in a sort of turning motion to take the club away on the backswing. This left side action of the body carries the club to the outside of the line of flight.

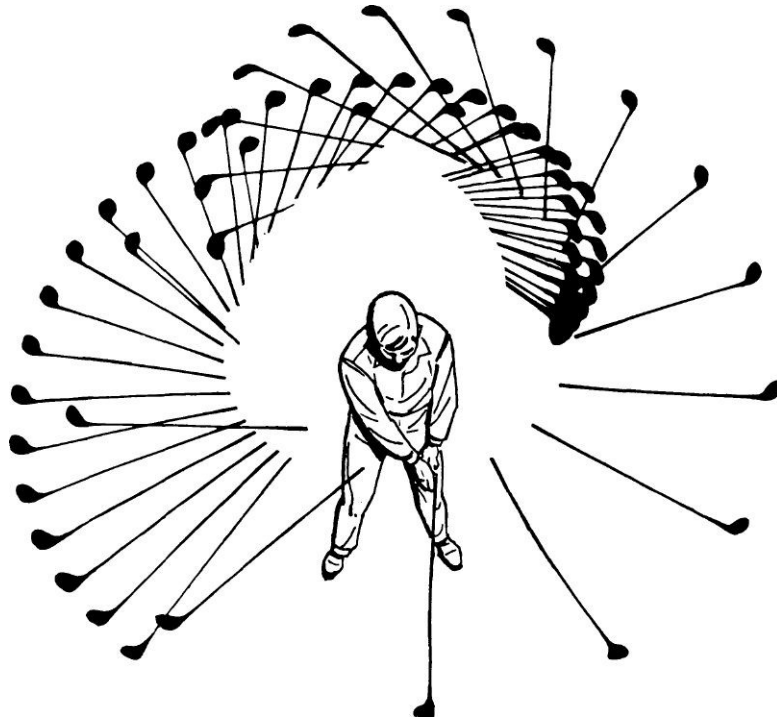
Add to this the common suggestion of a tight grip with the last three fingers of the left hand and you have a hand action which will throw the face of the club open. What can the player do but pull the club across the line of flight as the club is brought into the ball? After one or two such slices, everybody in the foursome becomes a coach and the routine advice offered is this: "You are pulling your club from the outside in—you are coming across the ball from outside in—now what you must do is to swing from the inside out." They continue: "Imagine that the ball is sitting on home plate and you are driving it to second base—but don't try to swing straight through the second base, swing from inside out—swing out towards first base."

And I see many golfers doing exactly this—and they have cured their slice but they have the most annoying, sickening hook you ever saw because they just replace one error with another error.

All this brings up the subject of just where the club does go as it travels from the ball to the top of the swing and down again into the ball and the follow through. Many golfers feel that the club should go back and forth on exactly the same path. Whether it goes back and forth on the same line has been the subject of many debates.

I remember many, many years ago, a British golf magazine relating the story of such a discussion. To prove how the club actually traveled a flaming material was attached to the clubhead and pictures of this flamed path were taken in the darkness of night. I vividly recall the utterly black background with a picture of the club's lighted path. The club did not go back and forth on the same line.

About the time that Bobby Jones was at the peak of his game, high speed motion picture cameras were being improved and perfected. One company, anxious to demonstrate the efficiency of its product, took pictures of everything that traveled at high speed and eventually they came around to Bobby Jones' golf swing. With this high speed camera they had pictures of the club at every point of the swing, so they charted the path of the club. Much to their surprise they discovered that Bobby Jones' golf club did not go back and forth on the same line—as a matter of fact, it did a decided loop. The club traveled inwardly at the start of the backswing, then straight up,



20. *This drawing is from a photo taken of Bobby Jones and is presented by courtesy of Mr. Jones and A. G. Spalding Bros. It proves that the club does not go back and forth on the same path. The club travels on an inside path on the upswing, and an outside path on the downswing.*

and as it reached the top of the swing it went to the outside slightly. As the downswing started, the club dropped to the inside again and it remained on that path until the ball was met. At this point it went straight up and over—the club actually traveled through a figure eight pattern. The evidence was undeniable.

In presenting the pictures to the public a great hurrah was raised to the effect that Bobby Jones, the peerless champion, had a flaw in his swing. No one wanted to study a defect, so there was no interest in the films.

It is regrettable that the pictures were not regarded for their true worth. Subsequent study of the golf swing has proven that the club cannot and does not travel back and forth on the same line.

As emphasized in this book, there are two swings to a golf stroke—there is an upswing during which the player is balanced on his right foot, and the axis upon which the body is being utilized causes the club to travel on a certain path. Then as the downswing and follow through is made, the player has shifted his weight to his left foot—his body now is functioning on a different axis and the club is coming down and through on an entirely different path. The club, in other words, does a loop during the course of the swing, and this loop action naturally instills in the golf swing a natural whip or snap action.

By comparison a club going back and forth on the same line would tend to create a "stiff-arm dead stick" effect.

Recently a certain group conducted extensive studies of the various aspects of a golf swing with a series of motion pictures taken against a square-lined background. Towards the end of the research it was discovered that

the path of the club could be traced against this lined background, and the club did not go back and forth on the same path.

In Chapter Six, when explaining the new concept of body action in a golf swing, I stated that a turning action with the body produced a low flat around the belt line type of swing. By comparison, the correct action of the body, the diagonal stretch action, produced a more upright type of swing that traveled higher and more around the head and neck of the player.

I'd like to present a further comparison of these two swings.

In the low flat type of swing, caused by the faulty turning action, the club actually travels on a convex arc as it goes back, and on a similar convex arc as it goes through the ball. Traveling thus, all the force of the swing is thrown out and beyond the ball.

However, in the correct swing, which is produced by the diagonal stretch action of the body, the club travels on a concave arc on the backswing. It comes in sharply, then goes up straight and arches out slightly, then on the downswing and follow through it again travels concavely. As the left side pulls the club into the ball it draws it inward so that the left and right hands can be applied squarely to the ball. The club can be held in that square position until the ball has been dispatched, at which point the club turns over into the follow through.

If a player deliberately followed the convex pattern of swinging, there would be an excessive turning action which would be constantly rolling the player onto his toes and off balance. On the other hand, if the player



deliberately applied the concave pattern of swinging, there would be a controlled body action on the upswing as well as a similar controlled body action on the follow through. The player would find himself solidly balanced on the right heel as the backswing was made and solidly balanced on the left heel as the downswing and follow through were made. Try this in practicing your swing-it is a helpful, relaxing routine.

To return to the subject originally discussed, if you are slicing don't start to swing from the inside out, because that will only be a temporary cure for your slice. It is bound to lead you to more difficulties later. It is far better to correct that faulty backswing and that erroneous club position on the backswing, so that you can bring the club through naturally and squarely to the ball.

# 19

## **THE MENTAL SIDE OF GOLF**

The game of golf is a perfectly natural one to play. Unfortunately, many people make golf difficult to learn, principally through their failure to understand the procedures used. Most often, the inability to succeed in golf stems from a lack of comprehension rather than from a lack of the proper physical equipment in the player. For example, people who excel in other sports do not always perform well on the golf course.

Perhaps the failure to understand golf can be blamed on the players, who may be unable to make the necessary effort to learn, or perhaps it can be that the game is presented to them in a confusing manner—but none of this will be discussed here. The author will simply try to clear away some of the cobwebs to help lead the reader to a more understandable and more enjoyable game.

### *Understanding the game*

As a rule, men are inclined to create problems for themselves on the golf course. The average male becomes egotistical because of the success he has attained in

mastering the complexities of life's battle. He has had to work hard to attain his position, so when it comes to golf, he is inclined to want to take it in his stride. Why should he stop to make a problem of the simple matter of playing a game, particularly something as simple as hitting a ball with a stick? Many a strong, virile, brilliant man has become fouled up on a golf course to a point where disappointment, irritation and confusion cause him to give up the game in disgust. This is one of the reasons for their failure to make good pupils. Knowledge of a few elementary facts could have prevented this situation.

Women players, on the other hand, are inclined to depend too much on others for guidance, and they fail to work out in their own minds an aggressive plan of action, so necessary in the game of golf. Because women are good pupils, however, they do develop good form and golf style, and they become comparatively better players than their male competitors.

Because of its very nature, golf demands understanding on the part of the player. As we noted in an earlier chapter, golf is unlike most games in that it is played with a stationary ball. In practically every other game, the ball is put into motion, usually with intentional deception. Consider, for example, the serve in tennis, the pitch in baseball, or the pass in football. In these sports, if the player does not have the intuition to sense the play or the instinctive ability to get into position for the play, he soon finds himself sitting on the sidelines.

There is no deceptive delivery in golf, and there is no opposing player to interfere with the play. The ball is on the ground, waiting for the player to act, and the player

can take as long as he wants, use whatever club he desires, and follow any method or style he chooses.

So, why shouldn't golf be easy? As it turns out, this free choice of time, equipment, and style is the very thing that proves so often to be the undoing of the golfer. Uncertain of the club selected, and perhaps a bit more uncertain of the manner in which he is going to use it, the player has a tendency to become deliberate and doubtful. In short, he develops a mental block and a physical tension which destroys his confidence and his ability to execute the shot.

Because golf is played with a still ball, it requires a definite plan and style of action on the part of the player. Although the lie or position of the ball does not always find it setting on top of a nice tuft of turf, at least it is stationary and in relatively the same position to the player on every shot. In games other than golf, the ball is not always in the same relation to the player, and he must act instinctively for this reason. But in golf, the player trains himself to act routinely. He develops a style, a definite plan of action, and he needs this plan to start and finish each shot consistently.

No one should rush into golf. A plan should be worked out, and when this is done, an understanding of what to do and how to do it soon develops the confidence essential to good performance. By placing himself under the guidance of PGA professionals, a player will hasten results and guarantee performance.

*Confidence and relaxation*

A most important necessity in any undertaking is an attitude of confidence. This is particularly true in golf,

because the player must depend on his own efforts to produce a desired result or effect. Confidence is not something that can be assumed. It is not something a person can wrap around himself as he would a cloak.

Confidence is a state of mind that can only be developed through thought and study. When someone thinks a thing through, so that he thoroughly understands it from every angle, then he has gained a knowledge of that thing. It is a knowledge of what is required, how to do what is required, and most important, that he himself can perform what is required. Once this is accomplished, confidence is his. Demonstrations of his ability to produce the desired results will cultivate more confidence in the person, and therefore it can be retained indefinitely.

Confidence, therefore, is the result of knowledge, and knowledge, as far as golf is concerned, is of three phases—what to do, how to do it, and proving to yourself that you can consistently produce the desired result. Until you prove it to yourself, you can never have the confidence necessary for a good performance. In this respect, you can fool a lot of people, but you can't fool yourself. The only way confidence can be acquired is through thought, study and practice.

Once confidence is developed, relaxation is a natural consequence of it. Relaxation is a prime requisite in any physical endeavor, but it comes only through confidence. In a game such as golf, where judgment, direction, a delicacy of swing on short shots, and a speed of motion on power shots are necessary, the successful performer must always be at ease and relaxed.

There are two types of relaxation in golf. One is the strictly muscular type, the kind that depends upon the mechanics of the physical movements that constitute the swing. The other is mental relaxation, the proper frame of mind, and it develops from the confidence we have been discussing. Of course, if the physical mechanics are incorrect, no amount of urging, no amount of practice, is going to do any good. But when one knows what to do and how to do it, and when the physical aspects of the swing are correct, then progress can be made.

In all physical performances, there are certain levels of learning, just as there are grades in school. It is the same in golf. Each phase is a natural, orderly sequence of development. Confidence and relaxation are two things all good golfers must acquire.

#### *Teaching to two*

Whenever it is possible or practical, I prefer to teach two people at the same time, with one pupil sitting on the bench and listening to what is being said. This gives each pupil a chance to work the pattern out thoroughly in his mind before trying to execute something he does not understand clearly. That is one of the problems encountered in teaching golf. People are out trying to do something before they know thoroughly what they are supposed to do. It is no wonder that they get all fouled up in their movements and develop so many bad habits that the game becomes difficult or unnatural. Practice is of no value unless the player understands what he is to do. A little guidance from a professional can be very helpful in this respect.

*The mental side of learning*

The author is reminded of a certain lady who, because she was lefthanded, felt that golf lessons would not do her any good and that she just had to work it out for herself. She practiced for hours at a time, and one day after a lengthy practice session, the lady returned to the clubhouse completely exhausted. From her appearance it was evident she was having difficulties. Hoping to give her some encouragement, I asked how her practice had developed.

"Well, Joe," she replied, "I accomplished one thing today for sure. I've reached a definite conclusion. I'm convinced that my clubs have rubber handles and I'm playing with an iron ball."

Here we have one mental aspect that can be developed in golf. This lefthanded lady golfer is not alone with the idea that it is the clubs and the ball that are wrong, not the player.

Another peculiar quirk was related by a national golf champion when he, among many others, was asked to submit a series of questions and answers on the game. A national newspaper service used the results in a syndicated column. The question of playing a fade was brought up—fade being the technical term for a shot in which the ball is deliberately curved to the right. A fade is employed to curve the ball around an obstacle such as a tree, and it is a shot that stops very quickly on landing.

The description this national champion gave on how to play a fade shot was interesting. "When I want to play a fade," he wrote, "I simply *think* a fade. Furthermore,"

he continued, "if I want to play a hook (curving the ball to the left), I simply *think* a hook. That proves to me," he concluded, "that golf is entirely mental. So if you want to play a good game of golf, simply have confidence in yourself and go to it."

On first analysis, this idea may appear rather weird, but here are the facts in the case. This golfer started to play the game as a youngster, and like a lot of other players, he acquired the knack of hitting a golf ball entirely by imitation. He actually did not learn to play golf—he just grew up with it. He was accustomed, no doubt, to handling and swinging a golf club for many hours each day. As a consequence, he developed a sense and feel of the club, and from experience he learned that a certain way of handling the club produced a slice and another maneuver resulted in a hook. It was second nature for him to move the club to the position which would give him the desired result each time. For this golfer, the game really was entirely mental. He played by habit pattern, and did not try to explain how he positioned the club to get a slice or a hook. With no lessons or instructions, he acquired a golf game entirely through imitation, and executed his good golf shots completely by instinct.

This method of learning golf is not available to everyone. It is possible to acquire the knack of a golf swing through imitation, but this ability to imitate generally is restricted to youngsters, for it takes a long time to learn the game this way. In addition, if the knack gained through imitation is lost, it is quite easy to become confused and never regain proficiency.



*The positive formula*

A 13-year-old girl who took lessons was taught what to do and how to do it, and after several instruction periods she began to hit the ball naturally and quite well for a novice. During one of these lessons, she played a drive that sliced to the right quite badly.

"Well, what happened there?" I asked.

"Oh, my club just got off the beam," she replied. "Please let me have another ball."

This incident proves the value of having a plan and understanding that plan. Here was a girl who did not get upset because she happened to miss a shot. She knew exactly what caused the error, and all she wanted was another ball to prove that she could drive a straight shot. This attitude in golf can be developed only when the person has a positive approach to the game.

My advice to anyone who is a newcomer to golf is this: Don't rush your way into the game. Golf is a game that you can play and enjoy all your life, but you must take a little time to learn the few things that one must know. There really is so little to learn that it's a shame to miss the boat. Don't get all bound up physically and wound up mentally, because golf is not that difficult.

*How to practice*

After you have clearly acquired an understanding of what to do and how to do it, the next thing is to put what you have learned into practice. Therefore, the golfer should go to a practice area and start getting the form he has studied into effect. This should be done on a small

scale at first, the player starting off with a #7 iron and playing short shots to a distance of from 30 to 50 yards.

When the weight shift, hand action, and body pivot can be executed successfully, longer shots may be attempted. As the results obtained become consistent, the player should gradually work his way up the scale of clubs, practicing with a #5 iron, then a #3, and so on. In starting to work with the woods, he should be sure to start with the #4 wood, taking the #3 next, and gradually working up to the #1 wood, the driver.

The reason for starting with the more lofted clubs is that it gives the player a chance to perfect the footwork and weight shift operations first, then the body pivot, and finally the hand action. With the less lofted clubs, a #2 iron or a #1 wood, for example, the field of operation as far as the hands are concerned is very limited. What might produce a fair result with a more lofted club often results in a complete miss with the less lofted club. For this reason, it is wiser to use the more lofted clubs in learning. As satisfactory results are produced, confidence is developed and progress becomes faster.

On the tournament circuit, the professionals practice from one to two hours daily. They hit between 100 and 200 shots before actually going to the first tee to begin their game.

#### *The Bobby Jones practice plan*

Bobby Jones, the Grand Slam Champion, who earned the title by winning both the amateur and open championships of the United States and Great Britain within a one-year period, had a unique practice plan that got

results. Jones started his practice session by hitting a few balls with the #9 iron. Then he concentrated on hitting two perfect shots in succession with this club, and when that was done he put the club back into the bag. He continued this pattern, taking a few shots with the #8 iron and then concentrating on hitting two perfect shots in succession with that club. This procedure was followed with every club in the set.

You could say that the purpose of this plan was to give confidence as well as practice. Regardless of what club Jones decided to use for a certain situation during the game, he remembered that the last two shots he played with that club were perfect shots. This gave him every confidence that the club was all right and working well.

Consider what may have happened if the situation was reversed. Suppose Jones missed several shots with each of his clubs. Obviously, the clubs would not feel right, because when shots are being missed the club is definitely out of position. If it felt out of balance and awkward, such a club would not be the one to use when the going was tough.

The player should go to the practice tee and get acquainted with his clubs, practicing with them and getting used to them. By doing this before each game, he will make better scores and enjoy his game more.

Remember that the golfer who learns what to do, how to do it, and then proves to himself that he can produce the desired results consistently, is the one least likely to encounter the mental hazards which plague so many players.

I would like to include in this discussion the story of

a man who constantly developed problems for himself on the golf course. He went out of his way to find trouble. On a certain occasion his caddie, anxious to do well by his player, ran forward so that he could observe just where the ball would go. The caddie was well off to the left, entirely out of range, but in a spot from which he could easily watch where the ball would land. As the player got ready to hit the ball, he took a sharp look at the caddie, made a couple of waggles with his club and took another stern look at the caddie; he then proceeded to play his shot and made a most miserable effort. In fact, he almost fanned the ball, just barely contacting the extreme top, and it popped into the air three or four feet and stopped about ten feet away from the player. Immediately the player glared at the caddie and practically yelled at him saying, "Caddie, why in blazes did you move?" The caddie, frightened out of his skin, whimpered back, "Me ... I didn't move." "Well," yelled the player, "you were going to move."

I cite this example only to show that the failure to reach a conclusion on how the shot is going to be played, a failure to have a routine pattern to follow on each shot, leaves the player open to any and all distractions.

In this particular case the player actually had *to* wrack his brain to create a distraction, one that never really existed, except in his own mind.

Of course this player was a victim of the custom and convention that there should be no movement or no noise as a golf shot is being played. I just can't agree with this idea that the whole universe should come to a standstill while a golf shot is being played. The universe won't

stop, so you might just as well learn and train yourself to play under any and all conditions. I direct this latter remark particularly to the younger players on the tournament circuit—don't let outside distractions spoil your play and rob you of victory.

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