

SOME THOUGHTS ON TEACHING

by

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THESIS

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of the Requirements
for

MASTER PROFESSIONAL

INTRODUCTION

I have been a teacher since 1943. My teaching career began as a flying instructor in the Royal Canadian Air Force and continued on in golf.

I was exposed to many poor flying instructors in the R.C.A.F. and when I had the opportunity to teach golf, I was determined to be one of the best. My teaching experience in the Air Force accelerated by progress as a golf teacher and these are some of my basic thoughts on golf instruction.

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Teaching Methods I Know and Use

My Personal Method

A practical method used to produce scoring results and based on years of personal observation, teaching and playing.

The U.S.P.G.A. took almost twenty years to publish their teaching manual and I was fortunate enough to be able to associate with many of the fine professionals who assisted in its development. Irv Schloss and many others at Dunedin, Florida were pioneers in the field of teaching and the best sources for producing the P.G.A. teaching reference book.

Right Side Control

Contrary to the left side dominance of most teachings, there are successful teachers who teach "right side control". Bobby Cruikshank and Ed Furgol are two of these people although each uses the right side for different reasons.

Bobby, at the age of 78, can still shoot par and hit the ball a good distance. He turns the right side away in the backswing and through on the forward swing. Bobby believes if you have a strong right side you should control it, not subdue it, as some teachers do.

Henry Cotton also believes in this method.⁴

Counter Clockwise

Frank Walsh is a fine old golf professional who believes⁵ in a counter clockwise move of the club face on the take away, backswing and downswing. He can prove to his own satisfaction that all great players and strikers of the ball, play this way.

His teachings were a forerunner in the controversial Square to Square Golf Swing. A most interesting method, but not the entire answer for everyone.

Irv Schloss Method

Irv's fine camera work tends to substantiate most of his teachings and he has many outstanding pupils. He is a most sincere and dedicated man.

Bill Strausbaugh

Bill has done much good work for the U.S.P.G.A., one example is shown in The Methods of Teaching published by the U.S.P.G.A.

A very hard P.G.A. worker and a dedicated teacher.

The Square to Square Golf Swing

Dick Aultman and Jim Flick did an excellent job on this book. Some of their thoughts regarding the backswing have now changed but it makes a great reference book. Many good players have been hurt using this method because they thought it was the answer to all their swing problems.

This only proved, once again, that there is no "one" method.

Paul Bertholy

Paul is used by the U.S.P.G.A. at many of their teaching seminars. He has an interesting method, uses exercise routines and has an abundance of enthusiasm. He deserves much credit for his originality.

Chick Harbert

Chick Harbert's method does not have as much to do with swinging the club as it does with advancing the ball into the hole. He is an inspirational teacher who stresses scoring.

Paul Runyan

This "hall of fame" player has the reputation of being a fine teacher.

His method is well thought out and is based on a great deal of research done at California universities.

Paul's outstanding tour pupils are Gene Littler and Phil Rodgers. His Book for Senior Golfers is an outstanding work.

Ernest Jones

One of the greatest golf teachers the game has ever known. He teaches a simple action based on swinging the club head.

His books Swinging into Golf and Swing the Clubhead are necessary reading for all teachers.

This man deserves to be in the golf Hall of Fame.

Ben Hogan's Five Lessons

This is another of the all time great golf books.

Hogan laid down one of the best and most advanced methods of the swing that has ever been written. It is of tremendous help to good players who are athletically inclined.

The Search for the Perfect Swing

This book will give the studious reader the best scientific method of play ever recorded. It is an excellent book and a must to have in the teacher's library.

The Touch System for Better Golf

Bob Toski teaches "feel and imagery". I like this book and it relates in part to the Ernest Jones books. Toski's writing really rings a bell with golfers of all handicaps.

Open to Shut Teaching Method

This is taught by all the teachers, to all the pupils and has been used by everyone since the game started.

The club face opens naturally on the backswing and squares again through the shot. It allows a proper hinging of the

wrists. It requires good timing but this method is the one method that goes on and on.

There are so many methods of teaching, as you must realize, and just as many reference books to help the teacher.

All the methods serve a purpose and some portions of them will be used as long as golf is taught. There is no standardized method of instruction that will fit all the needs of the different pupils.

The good instructor analyzes his pupil's needs, feeds the problem into his "personal computer" and out comes the answer.

It is not important which method is used, just that the result is satisfactory.

Preliminary Lesson Procedure

The proper tone of the lesson is set by the teacher--not the pupil. It is important to take charge on the lesson tee as soon as the pupil arrives.

I control all action on the tee and believe in a simple approach to the swing problems. "Action before thought is the ruination of most lessons." One great asset I have always possessed as a teacher and that I never had as a player, is patience. I never lose my temper on the lesson tee and I am proud of this.

I teach each pupil differently but the general procedure pattern remains the same.

I discreetly check the clubs my pupils use as I am putting them at ease and discussing their golf problems.

If I discover that their equipment does not suit them I do not hesitate to suggest a change. It is difficult to properly teach a small lady who is trying to swing her husband's clubs, and this happens. I have also had male pupils come to me for lessons after purchasing ladies' clubs in a store.

The professional is aware of the importance of proper equipment and should also make his pupil aware of the benefits

of proper club fitting.

I often lend my pupils clubs so they can feel the difference for themselves. Eventually, when they are ready, they will purchase a well fitted set of clubs.

After the preliminary discussions, I get right down to by basic lesson procedure which I never vary.

Procedure: a) grip
b) stance and aim
c) setup
d) takeaway
e) top of swing
f) downswing

The Grip

I have grown up through several generations of golfers and observed many fine players using different grips.

The Vardon Grip - Hands are joined together, left thumb inside palm of right hand and little finger on right hand overlaps forefinger of left hand.

This is the most commonly used grip.

Interlock - Hands are very close together, left thumb on the shaft and little finger on the right hand interlocks with the forefinger of the left hand. This grip is for players with small hands or short thick fingers. Jack Nicklaus uses this interlock grip.

Double Interlock - The grip is the same as the interlock except the left thumb is off the shaft and behind the right hand. Chick Harbert, James Johnstone and Bill Ezinicki use the double interlock grip.

Bill Ezinicki broke his left thumb when he played 6 National League hockey and the pain was too much when he used a regular grip. He moved his thumb off the shaft, interlocked, and was very successful in the New England area. The grip provides more wrist and hand action than normal.

The Grip

(1) Extend your left hand (palm facing away from the target) and place it on the grip of the club below the cap. Make sure the clubhead is grounded and the clubface is squarely aligned with your target.

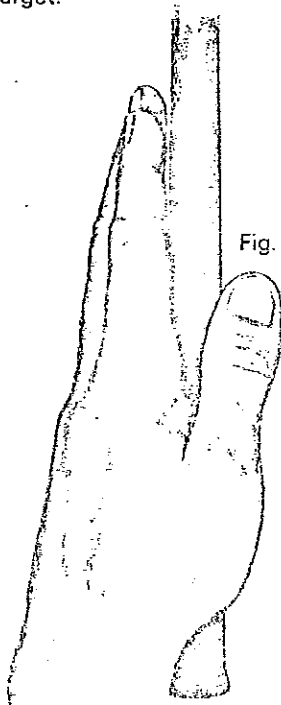


Fig. 16

(2) Close your fingers so that the shaft lies diagonally across the second joint of the index finger, in order to form a combination finger-and-palm grip.

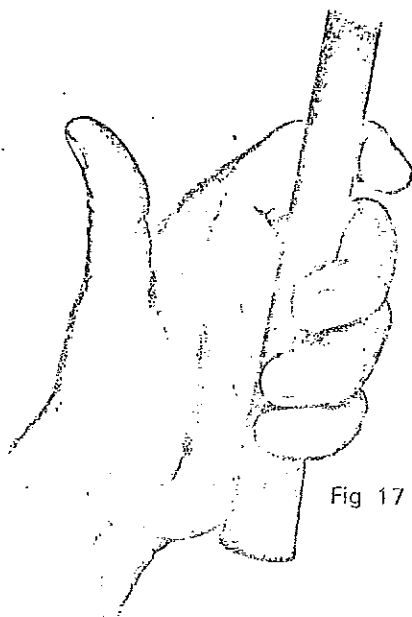


Fig. 17

(3) Close your hand with thumb positioned slightly to the right of the top of the shaft, and the index finger as though it were pulling a trigger.

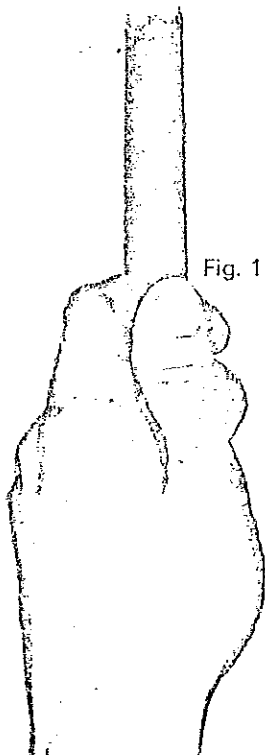


Fig. 18

(4) Move your right hand over to the shaft, palm squarely facing the target, as shown.

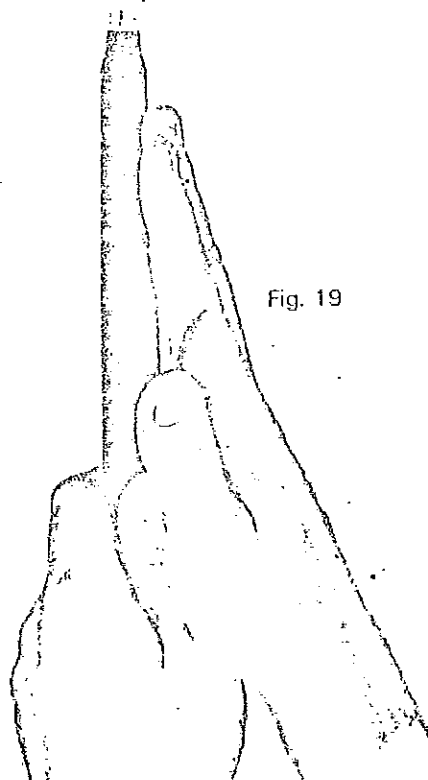


Fig. 19

(5) Close your fingers around the shaft so that the little finger will touch the index finger of the left hand. The palm will rest slightly to the right of the shaft and then will cover the left thumb. This is called the *natural* grip (Fig. 20). In the *overlapping* grip (Fig. 21) used by

the majority of professionals, the little finger of your right hand will overlap the index finger of your left, thus placing your hands closer together. In the *interlocking* grip (Fig. 22), the little finger of the right hand interlocks the index finger of the left removing the left forefinger from the shaft.

Fig. 20

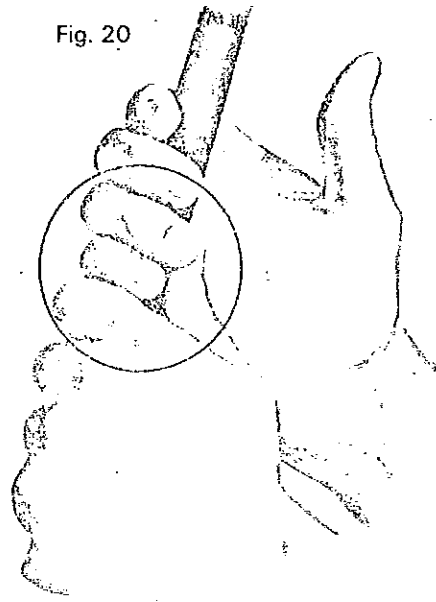


Fig. 21

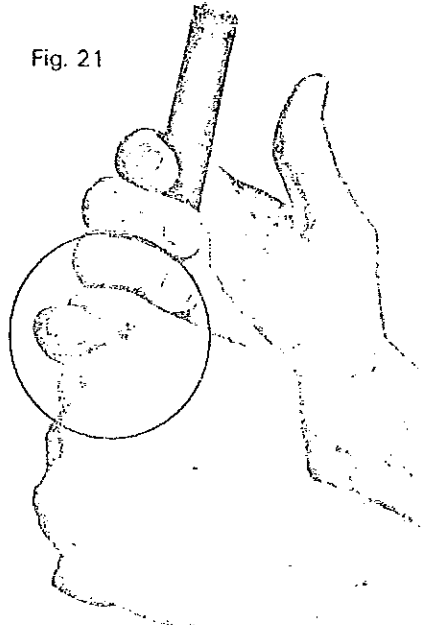
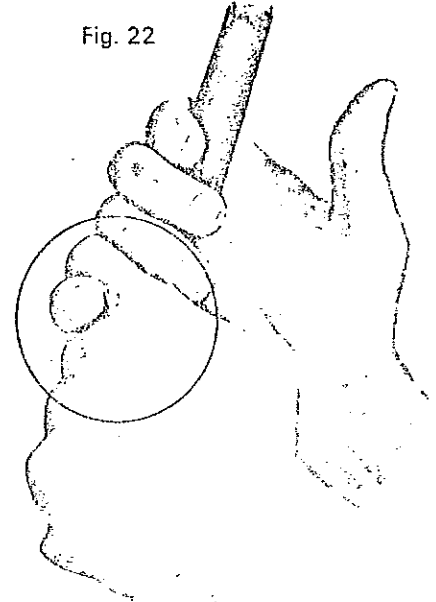
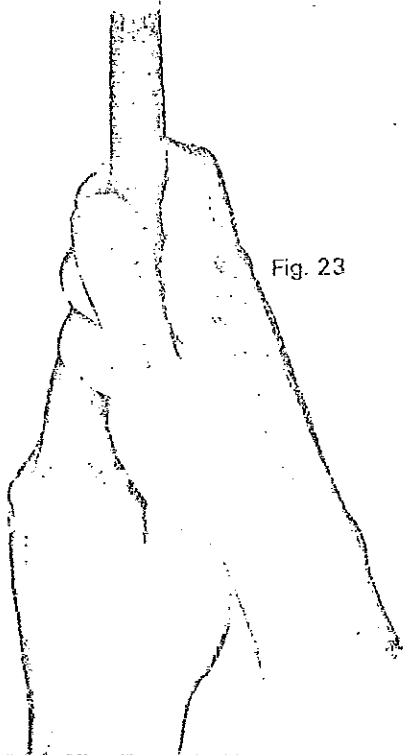


Fig. 22



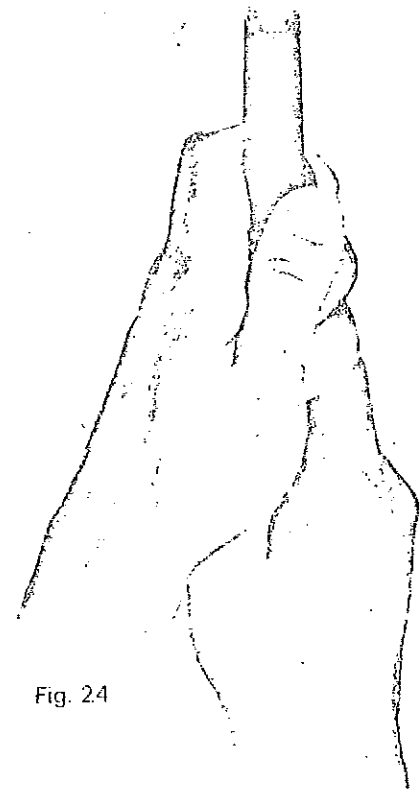
No matter which grip you use, keep your hands firmly together, though not rigid, and properly aligned with the clubface.

Fig. 23



Pictured below is a left hander's *overlapping* grip showing proper hand placements.

Fig. 24



The Address Routine

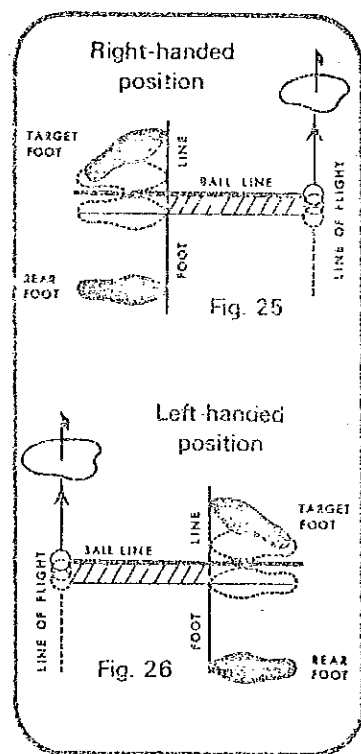
Take your stance in relation to your target. Start by imagining a straight *line of flight* from target to ball, and a *foot line*, parallel to this—the distance between lines determined by the length of club selected. Then imagine a perpendicular *ball line* connecting the two. Using the stance diagram as a guide, let's set our feet (Fig. 25 or 26).

Start with feet together as indicated by dotted lines. Ball line

perpendicular to the line of flight. These moves will automatically position the ball forward of center and form a *square stance*. Let your instructor recommend changes in the ball position and the use of open and closed stances.

For your full swing, separate your feet approximately shoulder

width apart. A stance that is too wide will restrict a proper body turn; and one too narrow will result in a loss of balance. Complete your address position by extending your arms, keeping your back straight, bending at the hips, and then flexing your knees slightly. Your body has now assumed a "ready" position (Fig. 27 or 28).



bisects the feet, and toes touch the foot line. Move the target foot a short distance toward the target as shown by the solid footprint. Turn the toes slightly outward. Then move your rear foot a greater distance away from the target placing it parallel with the ball line perpen-

STANCE POSITION

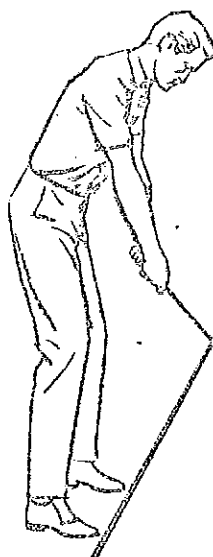


Fig. 27

RIGHT-HANDED
PLAYERS



Fig. 28

LEFT-HANDED
PLAYERS

DON'T SWING AT A MOVING TARGET

BY JACK NICKLAUS

Golf becomes easier whenever you can eliminate any variable that pertains to the swing, yet the classic methods of teaching involved some complex changes in ball positioning. The traditional theory for hitting irons stated that as the loft of the club is increased, the position of the ball at address shifted to the right and the stance became more and more open. Every club, therefore, required its own stance. The system I use - as do most of today's touring pros - is much simpler. The right foot is moved closer to the left as the loft of the club increases, and the ball is positioned slightly closer to the golfer, because the shaft of the club is shorter. But regardless of the club being used, the stance always is kept square to the line of flight and the ball is always played off the left heel.

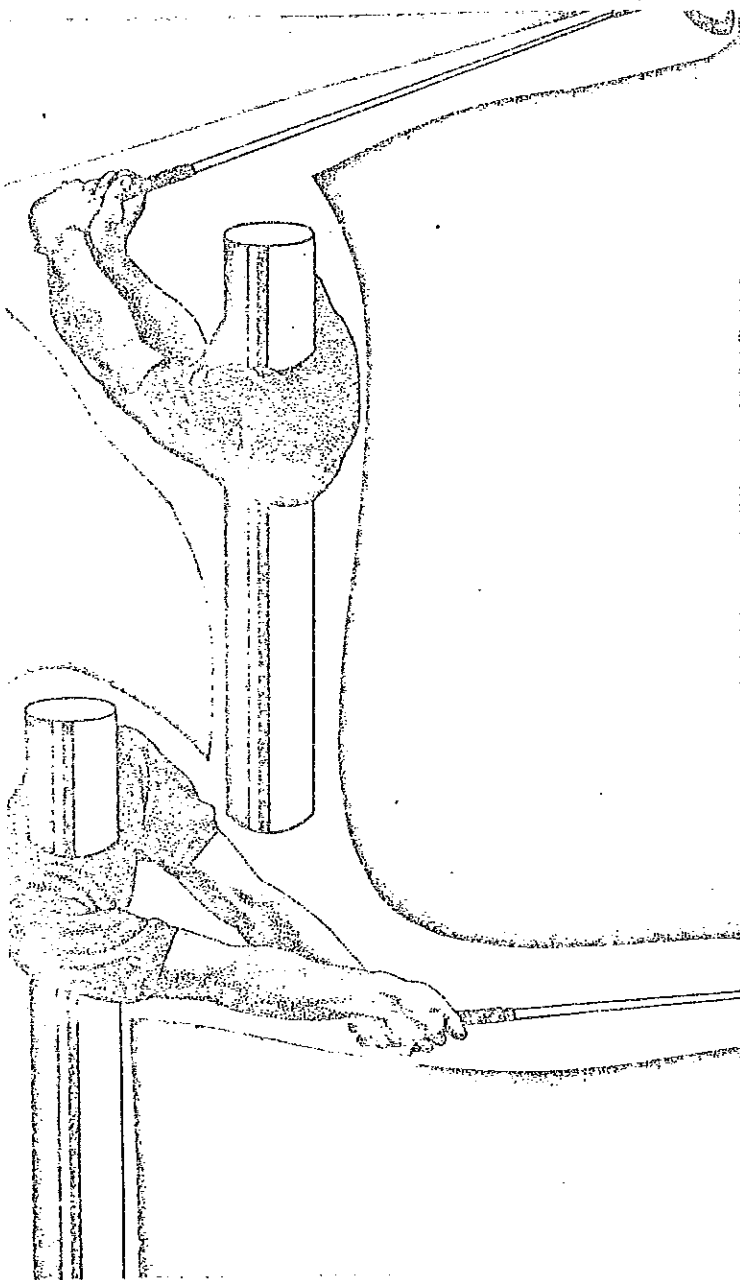
Whether the shot is a short iron or a long one, the ball should be played off the left heel.



Taken from "Golf", 1963.

ROTATE SHOULDERS AROUND A CENTRAL POINT

BY LOU STRONG



For maximum power and accuracy in your golf swing, your shoulders should revolve around a central point. Imagine the upper part of your spine as being the hub or fulcrum point, which should remain in a stable position throughout your swing. Think of your spine as an axle around which your shoulders revolve (see diagram).

Using the upper part of your spine as the central point for your shoulders to revolve around helps keep you in good balance and provides for a full coiling of your muscles for a dynamic release of power during impact.

By revolving your shoulders around a central point, you will avoid swaying to the right on your backswing. Swaying destroys balance and disallows a full coiling of your muscles.

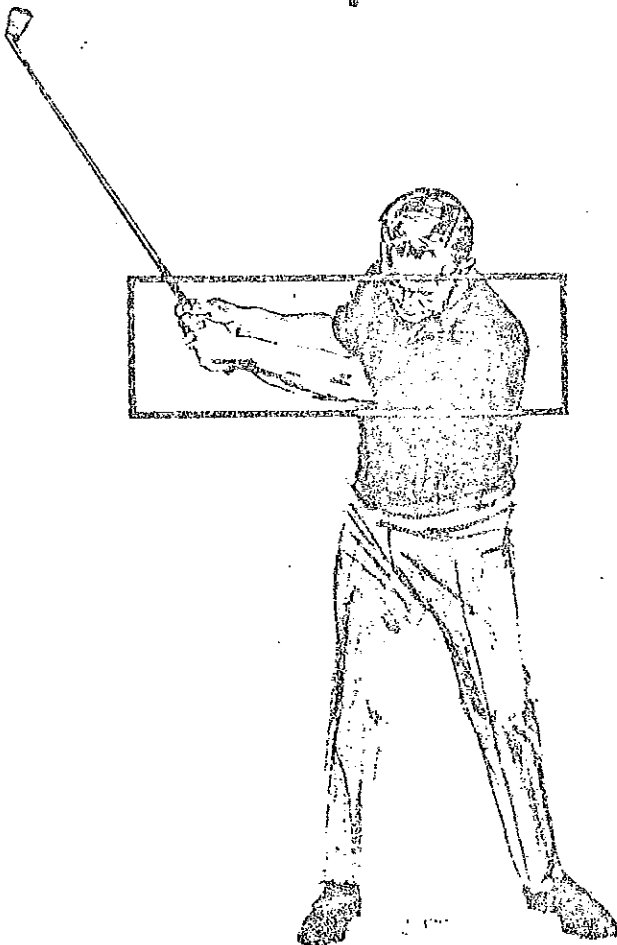
By the same token, revolving around the central point will prevent your body (upper) from moving toward the target on the downswing, which usually results in shots to the right. Your body will then properly stay behind the ball at impact.

BE A WRIST WATCHER

BY JACK NICKLAUS



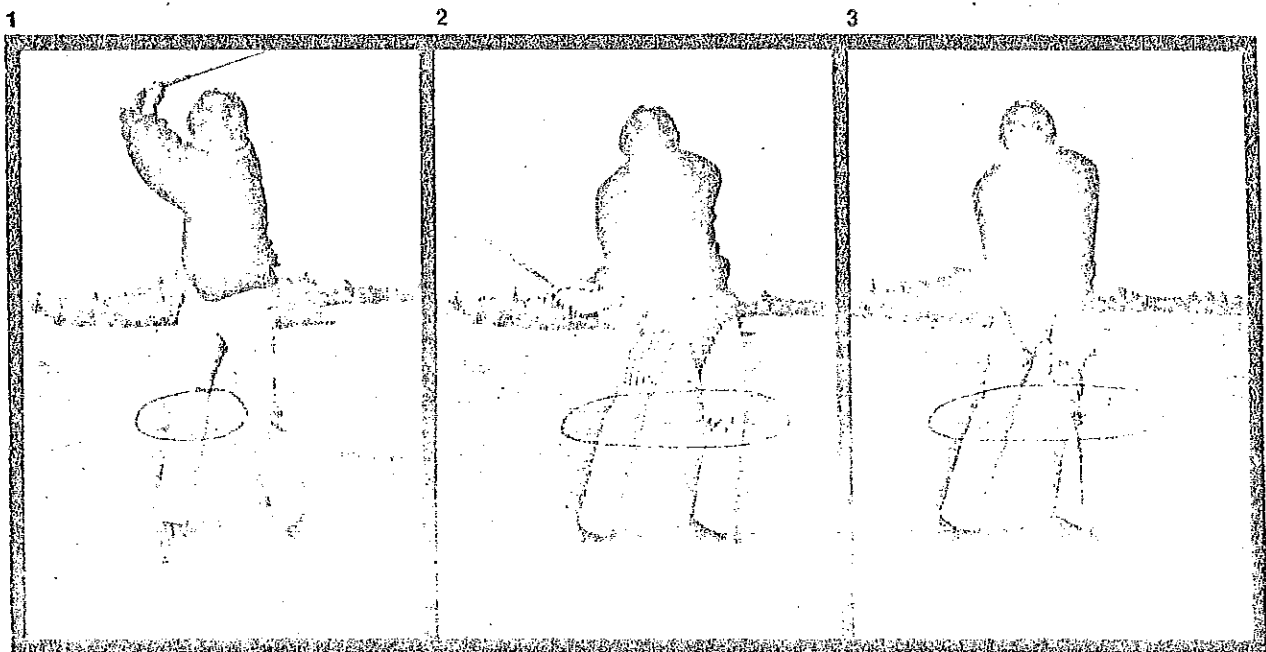
These three illustrations show the positions your wrists must be in as they work the club to the complete cocking position at the top of the backswing. Some golfers tend to cock their wrists before they reach the top. When they do this they destroy the timing of the swing and generate far less power at impact. Let's study these three illustrations. Starting at left, the wrists are in the same relative position they were in at address. Right now, as they move past my right side, they begin to break naturally. Below left, my arms and hands are extended as far as they can, which guarantees a very long arc. That is what I want. My wrists are beginning to cock as they reach a level with my shoulders. Below, at the height of my backswing, my wrists have cocked completely. They remain at this position for a fraction of a second, while the club head moves to the left to create the pause at the top. Now I am ready to start the club back down into the ball.



COIL LEG MUSCLES FOR MORE POWER

BY BARRIE McQUA

Using the legs properly is an integral part of initiating a sound golf swing. You cannot hit the ball far or straight by standing flat-footed and waving at it with your arms and hands. When you hear someone complain that he has lost distance, you can be sure that it's probably because he's not using his legs properly. Good use starts with the right setup (photo 1). The legs should be in a "coiled" position, with muscle tension to the inside of the legs, allowing for more control. The second movement (photo 2) is a sliding one through the swing as you shift your weight from the right to left foot. Keep the knees forward to avoid any swaying action. In photo 3, the knees are leading the hands and the power is unleashed at the moment of the hit as the muscles uncoil at impact. Practice your leg-work and see how it will work for you.



Taken from "Golf Canada", April, 1972, page 24.

THE THREE MOST POPULAR GRIPS AND
ONE OF THE MOST UNUSUAL.



← THE TEN FINGER GRIP - USED BY
ART WALL AND BOB ROSBURGH.

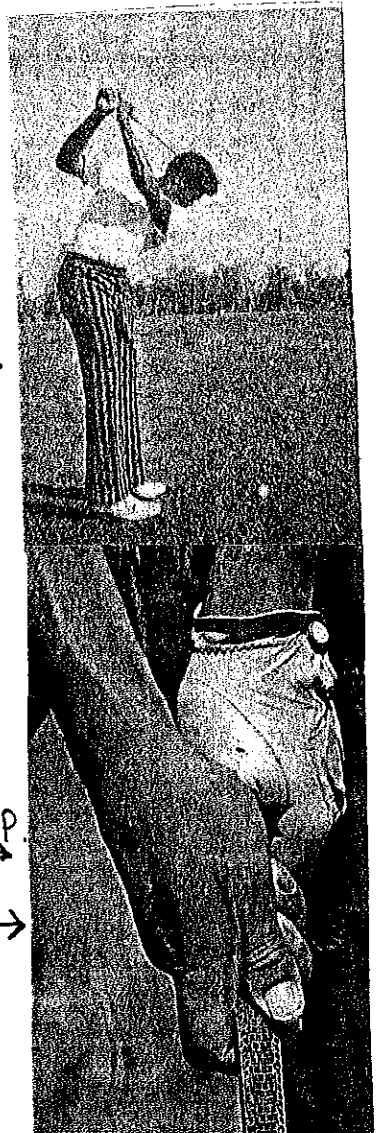
UNUSUAL GRIP CROSS HAND - THUMB OUTSIDE



← THE INTERLOCK,
USED BY JACK NICKLAUS.



← THE VARDON GRIP.
← THE MOST COMMON GRIP →



Double Overlap - This is the same as the Vardon grip except the last two fingers of the right hand overlap the first two fingers of the left. This gives more left hand control.

Triple Overlap - The last three fingers of the right hand overlap the first fingers on the left hand. This is used by Ryder Cup and World Cup winner, Harry Bradshaw.

Ten Finger - In this grip both thumbs and all fingers are on the club. This is used by Art Wall and Bob Rosburg.

The size of the pupils hand must be taken into consideration and the size of the grip should be altered to fit the hand.

There are many pressure points in the fingers and pupils must learn the difference between a "short" left thumb and a "long" left thumb.

The greatest chapter on gripping the club is in the book Ben Hogan's Five Lessons. I recommend this chapter as must reading for the golf teacher.

I believe a glove should be worn because it provides a firmer grip and prevents soreness and blistering of the left hand.

When I consider the grip satisfactory, we are ready to move into the stance.

THE GRIP

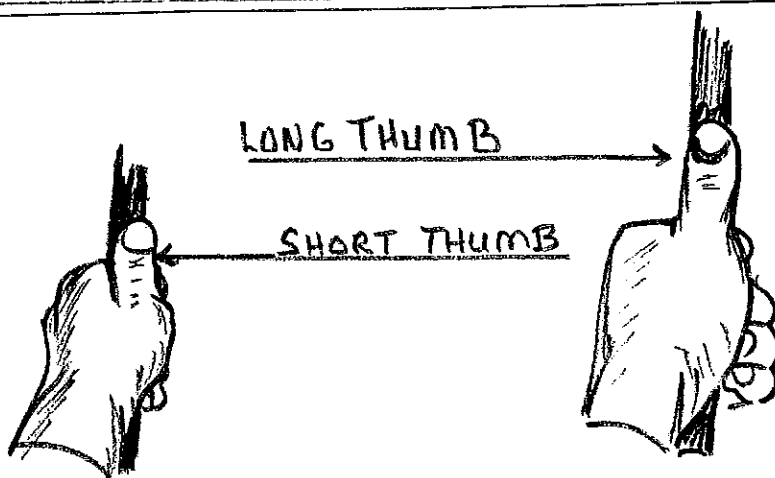


DOUBLE INTERLOCK-Thumb
OUTSIDE SHAFT.



BILL EZINICKI- DOUBLE
INTERLOCK- THUMB OUTSIDE.

"CHICK" HARBERT - P.G.A. CHAMPION AND RYDER CUP PLAYER.



DIFFERENCES IN THUMB POSITION AFFECT LENGTH
OF SWING AND THE FLIGHT OF THE BALL.

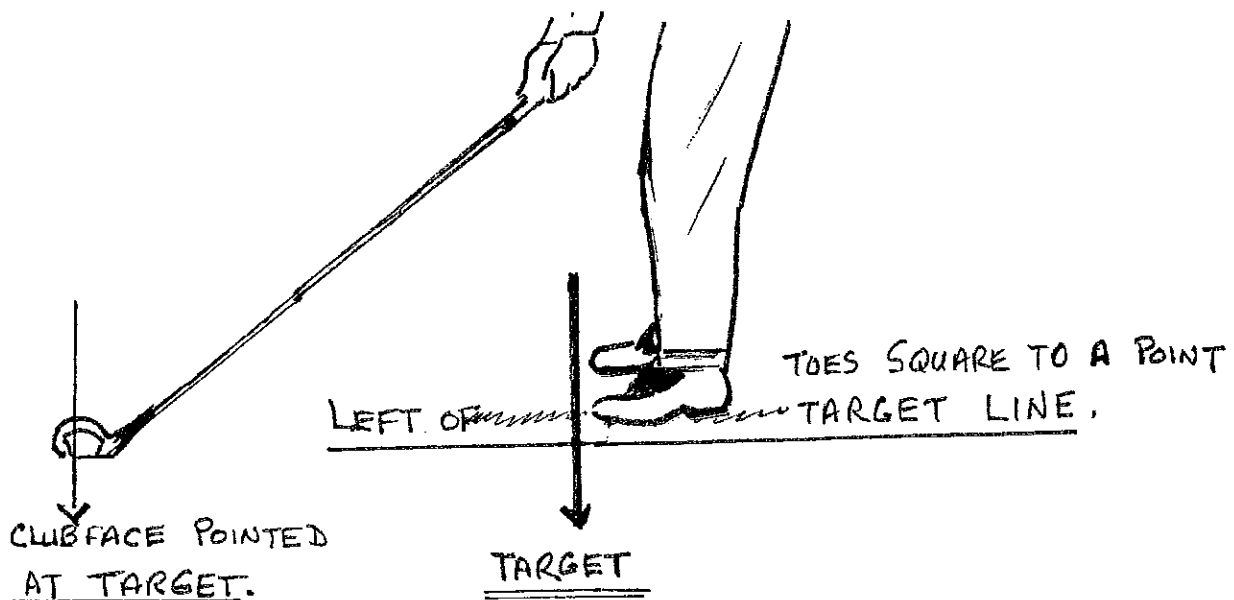
The Stance

The stance of course, is part of the setup and I fit a stance to the pupil. It is necessary to decide the proper width of the stance, whether it is square or open and to use a club on the ground for alignment. I like a stance with the right toe pointed out slightly to assist the hip turn on the backswing.

There are several ways to take your stance and certain pressure points in your feet. The weight should be evenly balanced on the feet in most cases, the knees flexed slightly like a skier, toes lined up on a line pointing slightly left of the target and with the club face pointing right at the target.

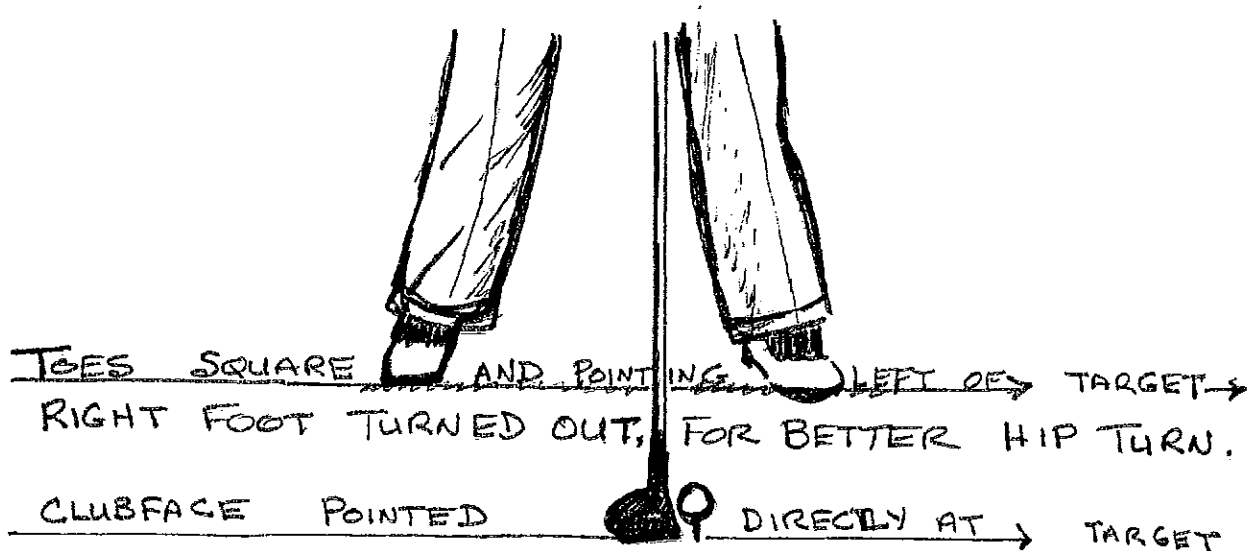
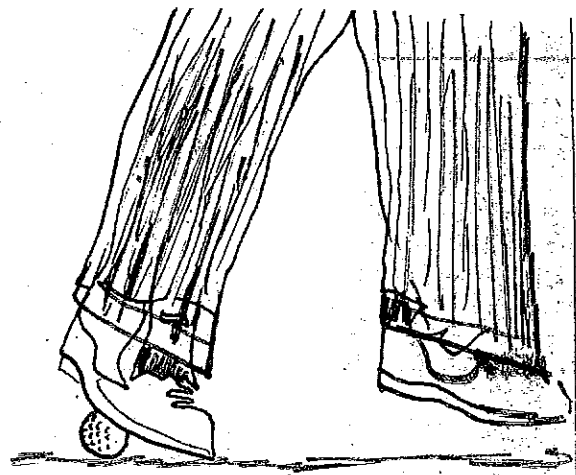
The weight moves back to the inside of the right foot and forward to the outside of the left during the swing.

NORMAL STANCE - ALIGNMENT, AND SETUP.



By MURRAY TUCKER
Board of Trade C.C., Toronto

Practice good balance by placing a golf ball under your right instep and press it lightly into the turf as you take your stance. This will give you the feel of your right foot as it should be when you go into your backswing. The pressure is on the inside of your foot, pressing into the turf. It will also give you the feel you should have in your right leg, braced solidly against the ground with the knee turned slightly in to prevent that swayback feeling. It's a wonderful practice aid, but don't try it when you're playing — it's against the rules.



The Setup

The setup is the most important part of the swing and covers grip, stance, foot alignment, ball position, balance, head position, hip and shoulder alignment, posture etc.

I can look at the setup objectively after my preliminary discussion about the pupil's problems.

My reference check is done in seconds by a quick glance, but the glance systematically covers:

1. grip
2. stance in relation to flight path
3. ball position
4. weight distribution
5. hip and shoulder alignment
6. straightness of left arm, softness of right
7. head position
8. right knee position
9. overall posture

If any part of the setup is wrong, we stop, I explain, and then have the pupil start over. These moves eventually blend in and become automatic but I consistently drill the pupil in these basics until they are correct.

1973's TWO BEST GOLFERS AND THEIR SETUPS

RIGHT EYE OVER
RIGHT KNEE

LEFT KNEE OUTSIDE
LEFT SHOULDER.

RIGHT SHOULDER,
HIP, KNEE,
LOWER THAN LEFT.

TOM
NICKLAUS



↑ NICKLAUS IN A CLASSIC
MODERN SETUP WITH MARKER
POINTING AT THE TARGET.
WEIGHT EVENLY BALANCED.

← WEIGHT TOWARD INSIDE
OF RIGHT FOOT.

Takeaway

Between the setup and takeaway, there must be some time spent on aim and mental thought about where the pupil wishes the ball to fly.

The club face should be set square to the target line with the toes, left shoulder and hip pointing slightly left of the target.

I use several methods in club takeaway depending on the pupil's ability to move.

The forward press of either hands or right knee is most often used and a combination of both in the more static pupil.

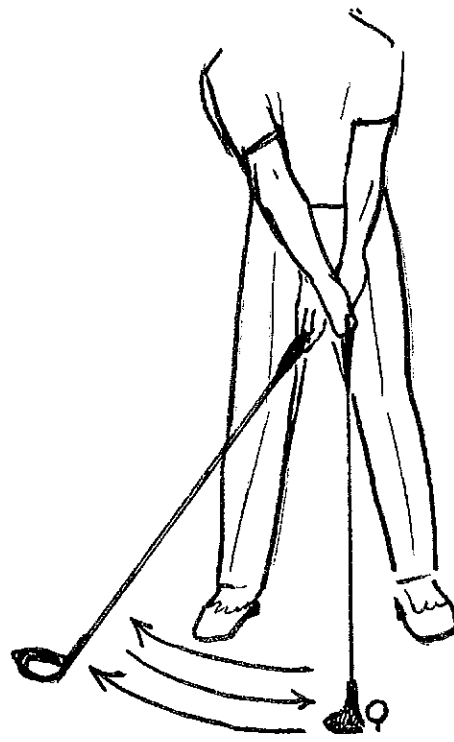
Not soling the club head at address is another method that assists some players to a smooth start.

I like to keep the pupil moving so that they won't freeze over the ball and I believe that the waggle is a miniature golf swing.

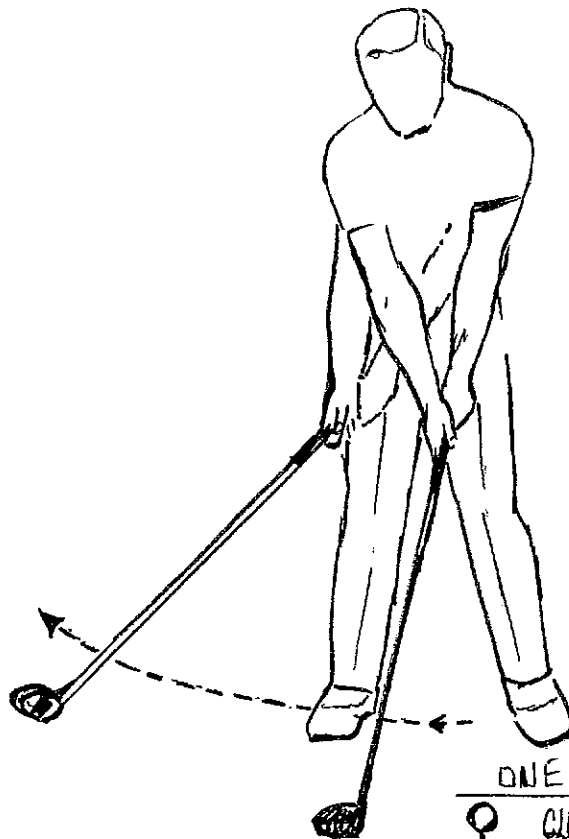
The club should be started smoothly back along the line for a foot or so and then will work in and up with the turn.

I teach a one piece swing right to the top but some pupils

THE
TAKEAWAY



WAGGLE BACK AND FORTH
TO ELIMINATE TENSION.



ONE PIECE TAKEAWAY.

♣ CLUBHEAD, SHAFT, ARM
AND SHOULDER ALL MOVE
BACK TOGETHER.

need assistance half way back when they wander off their proper swing plane.

I like a full shoulder turn on all but the short shots and as this is achieved, I have the pupil keep the right leg in its address position.

I am not worried about the takeaway if the pupil can finally get to the top properly.

While teaching the full smooth swing and takeaway, attention has to be given to foot work.

Jack Burke summed it up perfectly when he said "feet - motor⁷ of the golf swing".

Top of Backswing

Balance and club position are most important here.

I also check 1. shoulder turn

2. left arm and wrist position

3. club face & position in relation to target

4. grip

5. right knee position

6. coiling of left side

If any of these positions are wrong, I move back to the setup, give an explanation, and then have the pupil swing up again.

We work hard to attain a good position with a minimum of effort.

If the pupil can swing it to the top correctly I do not worry unduly about the details.

A good position at the top, with proper balance, gives the player an opportunity to hit a good shot.

While some players can recover from a poor top of the swing position, it means extra motion and a more complicated swing.

I never worry about the left heel at the top of the swing as long as it doesn't swing around. If the heel leaves the ground fine, or stays down, fine, it is not that important.

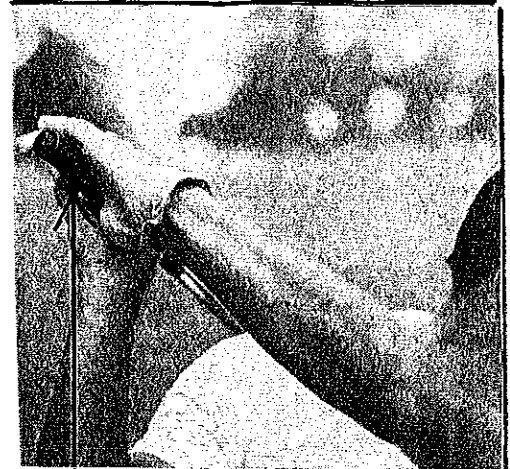
In my opinion however, it helps when the heel moves off the ground slightly, this assists rythmn.

TOP OF SWING CORRECTION

Set your club 'on track'

At the top of the backswing, your clubshaft should align more or less parallel with your target line. It should not point across the line to the right, or away from the line to the left. Imagine that your target line forms the right rail, and your clubshaft the left rail, of a set of tracks.

↑
AT ADDRESS THE CLUBFACE POINTS AT THE TARGET. AT THE TOP OF THE SWING THE SHAFT POINTS ON A LINE THAT IS SLIGHTLY LEFT.



LEFT HAND OPEN AT TOP.



← WEAK
LEFT HAND.

CORRECTION -

YOU MUST EXERCISE YOUR LEFT HAND-AND GRIP MORE FIRMLY WITH THE LAST THREE FINGERS

GOOD FIRM GRIP AT TOP.

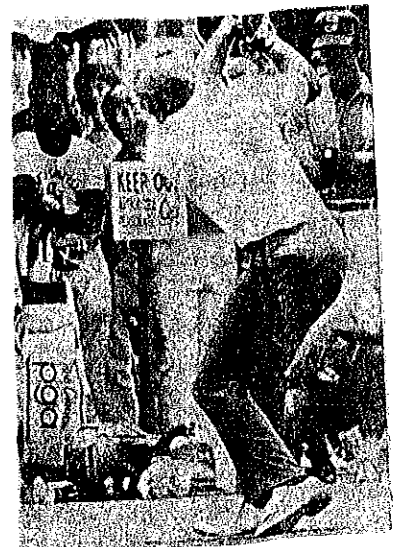




TREVINO - 3/4 SWING
HEEL DOWN.



BALDING - FULL SWING
HEEL UP.



NICKLAUS - PAST HORIZONTAL
HEEL WELL OFF GROUND.

TOP OF SWING POSITIONS - 3/4 - FULL - PAST HORIZONTAL.



3/4 SWING - FOOT ROLLED



PLAYER - PAST HORIZONTAL - HEEL DOWN

Downswing

I teach the downswing based on the ability of the pupil to be in proper position at the top of the swing and his ability to relate to his left side.

I try to get the hips sliding slightly and the left foot planted properly at the beginning of the downswing.

This can be done by thinking of the left hip slide and pivot.

Some players can achieve much the same result with a pull of the left hand and arm which pushes them left.

Pupils who lift the left heel merely slap the heel down with a co-ordinated hip slide.

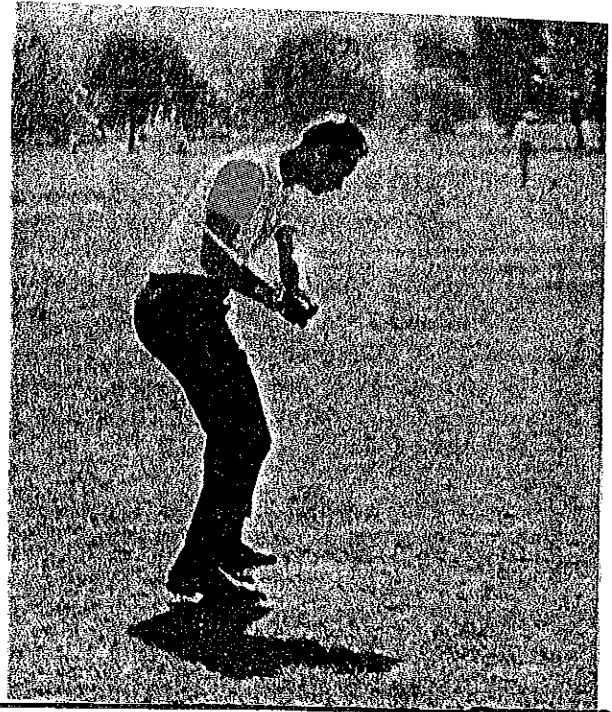
Coupled with this first move, which brings the player half way down and into the hitting position, is time spent on the feeling of maintaining the cocked wrist position.

The wrist cock position must be retained until half way down then the pupil can let the wrists uncock naturally. The knees move left and the hips pivot, causing the left leg to wind into a firmly braced position although the legs should not straighten.

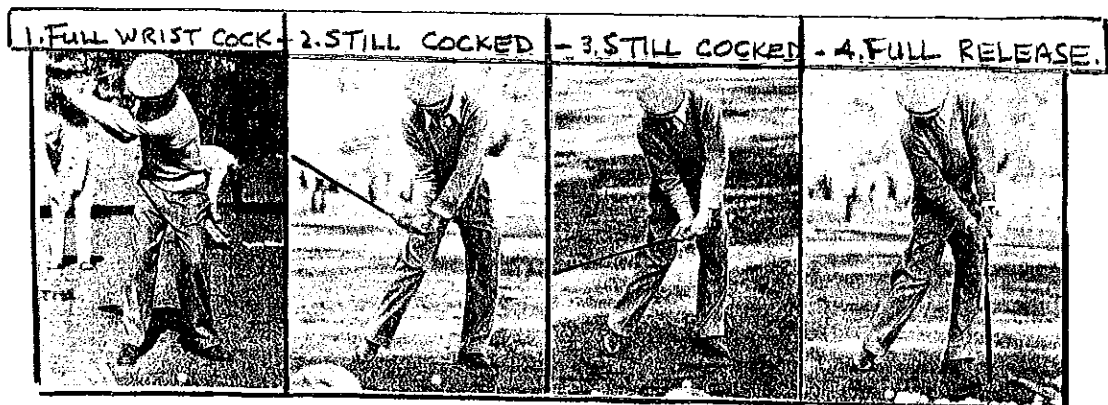
THE DOWNSWING



TONY LEMA AT THE TOP OF HIS SWING - HEEL UP - WRISTS COCKED



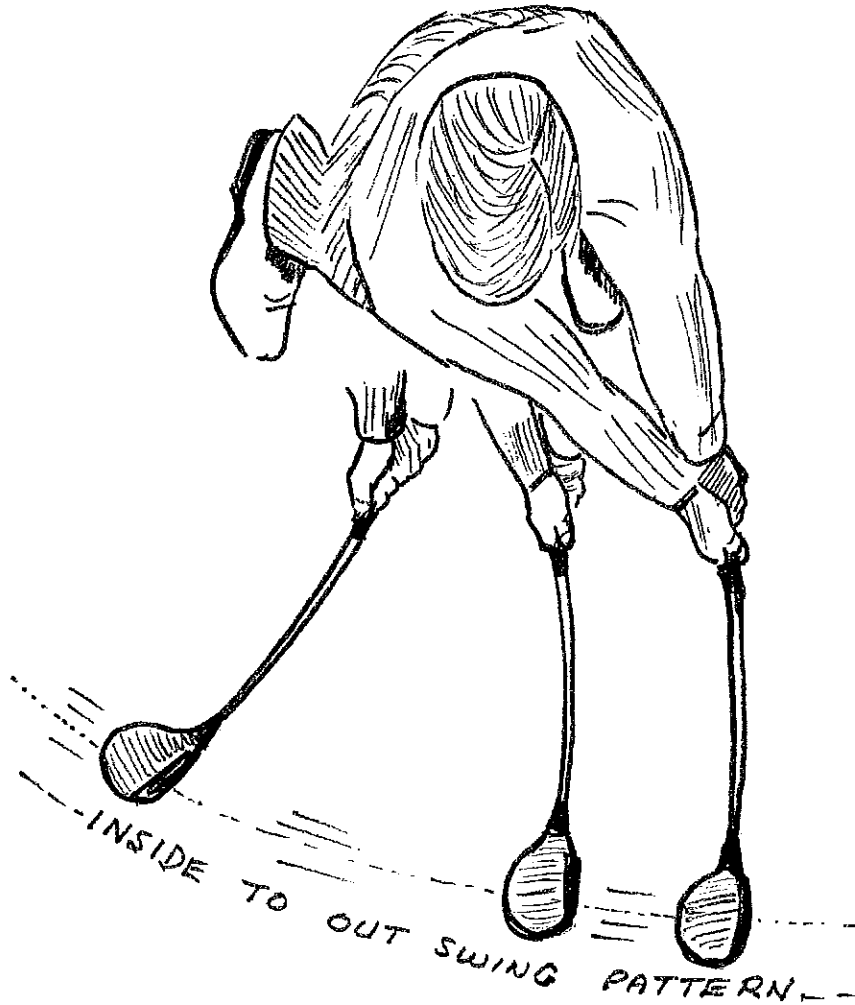
FIRST MOVE ON THE DOWNSWING IS TO PLANT LEFT HEEL FIRMLY AND START HIP PIVOT - WRISTS STILL FULLY COCKED.



THE IMMORTAL BEN HOGAN ON THE DOWNSWING.

Follow Through Thoughts

The clubhead, in most cases, has to be released on an inside-out swing pattern so the pupil can avoid slicing.



I teach the mental thought of swinging through the ball not at it.

This gives full clubhead extension and the follow through is automatic.

Falling back at impact is corrected by walking through the shot like Sam Snead.

BEN HOGAN - PERFECT BALANCE AND POSITION
AT IMPACT. RELEASE THEN RESULTS IN FOLLOW THROUGH,
WITH PERFECT BALANCE.



Methods Employed with Beginners

Naturally, when teaching beginners, the methods would vary slightly, depending upon his age and whether he was an adult or child, male or female.

Pupil enjoyment is my theme. I am very careful with beginners and work doubly hard to make their lessons pleasant.

The concensus of opinion among all teachers is that the lessons should be started with a medium to short iron. Some professionals, however, use a lofted wood and still others start on irons, but all shots can be teed up in the initial stages.

There is a book by Reg Knight, Learn Golf Backwards, in which he stresses working from the green back to the tee. Most teachers agree the driver should be taught last.

I inform the pupil that it will take several lessons to achieve a level of competence. Most teachers agree that no one should be allowed on the golf course unless they have had at least six lessons.

The first thing taught should be the grip. Next, the pupil is shown how to square the clubface to the target, an explanation of how the ball will fly toward the target is given

/

and then the stance is shown.

I work on only one phase of the swing at a time.

I talk in very simple golf terms and if I detect that they do not understand my "golf language", I explain in another way.

I demonstrate continually, ask the pupil to watch, ask questions, then have them attempt the moves. The swing is taught in a flowing motion, back and forth.

Once the grip and stance are learned properly, turn, balance and tempo receive the greatest attention.

I keep the pupil turning and swinging, making small adjustments in the swing but keeping it simple.

When we have little rest breaks in the lesson, I discuss etiquette on the course and playing procedures.

I finally summarize for the pupil what we have worked on that day, write it down and give it to him for future reference.

Even minor details such as how to tee up the ball etc. take up a part of the lesson.

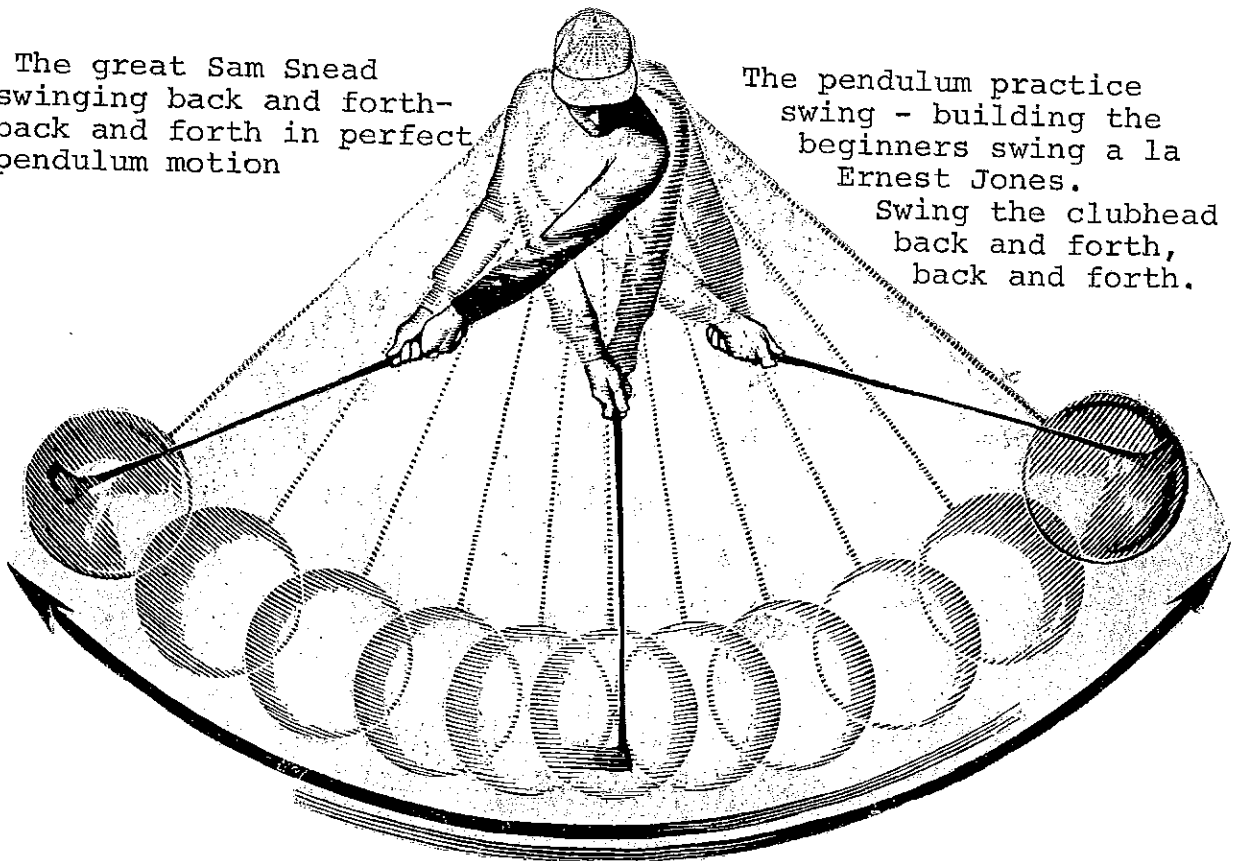
BUILDING TEMPO AND RHYTHM



The great Sam Snead swinging back and forth - back and forth in perfect pendulum motion

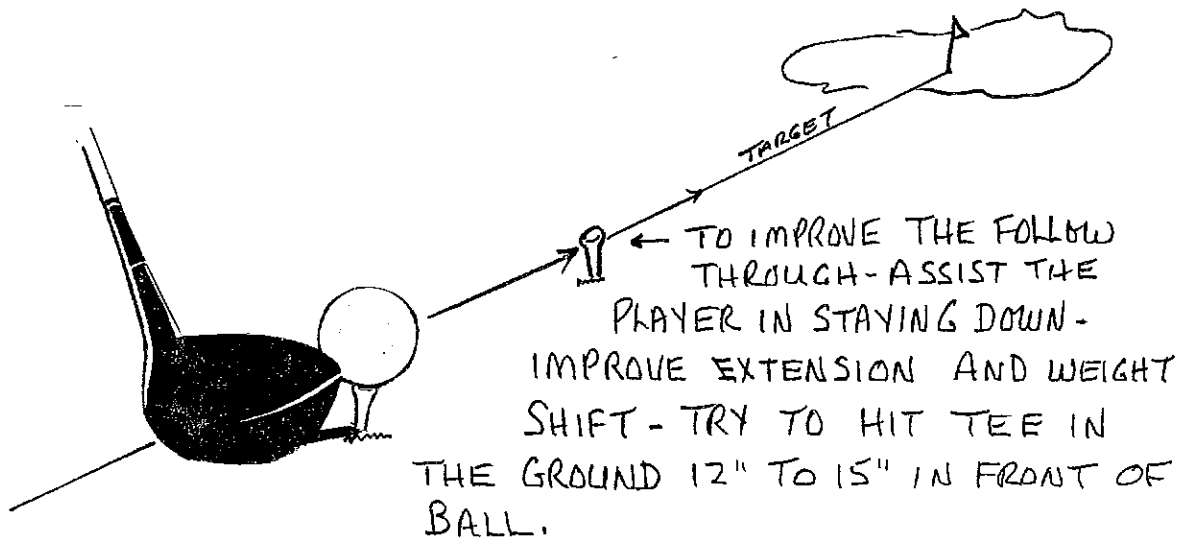
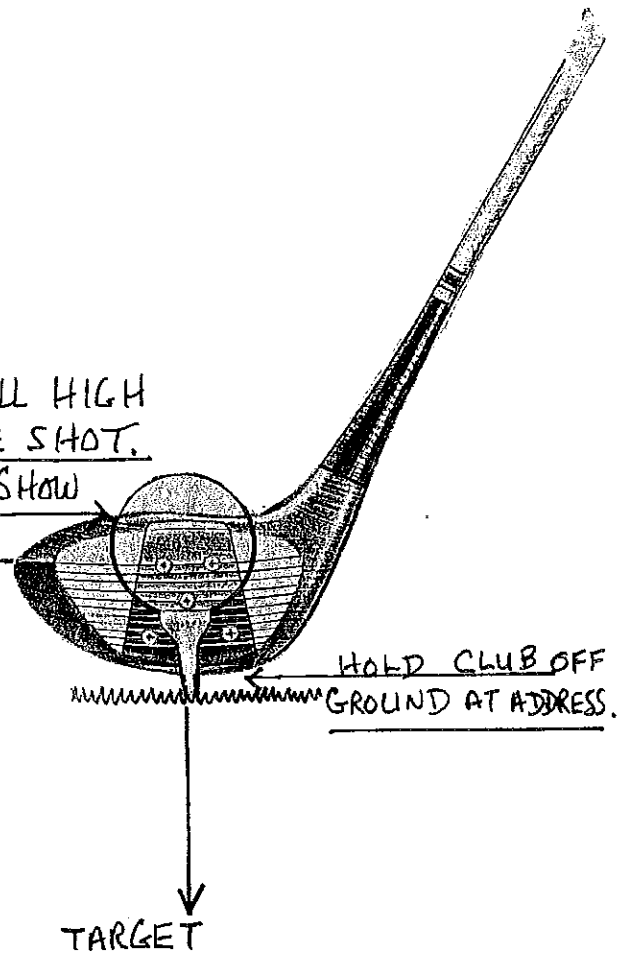
The pendulum practice swing - building the beginners swing a la Ernest Jones.

Swing the clubhead back and forth, back and forth.



TEEING UP

BEGINNERS SHOULD TEE THE BALL HIGH
TO PROMOTE A HIGH FLYING TEE SHOT.
MORE THAN HALF THE BALL SHOULD SHOW
OVER THE TOP OF THE DRIVER.



The Intermediate Student

The intermediate students have some knowledge of etiquette and how to play, so little time is spent on this.

I discuss their current problems, ask what they are working on and what points did I leave with them the last time we had a lesson.

We are then able to set up a pattern for this lesson.

I quickly check the basics at a glance, and if a basic is wrong, then we work on that prior to getting to the playing problem on the course. I watch the pupil hit a few shots and do the following:

1. check the basics of his swing
2. check the swing keys he says he is working on
3. assess what he is really doing and spot the problem
4. set an immediate goal for the pupil and get the lesson under way.

I teach only one to three moves during a lesson, never more.

The intermediate pupil is usually fun to work with. Their handicaps are still coming down or they have realized their "level" as a player and just want to stay there.

I spend some time on their course strategy and they usually can benefit from this advice.

The intermediate pupil is usually thirsting for knowledge because there is still a mysterious excitement about the game.

The Advanced Student

We are now entering a coaching phase rather than teaching. It is assumed at this stage that the basics are known and I work on their mental golf rather than physical swing problems.

I work on:

1. situation golf
2. course management and strategy
3. tee shot placement
4. intentional hooking and slicing
5. wet weather procedure
6. playing in the wind
7. unusual lies and shots
8. practice procedures

Books by Arnold Palmer, Tommy Armour and Billy Casper⁸ could be used as reference to build a teaching program here for advanced students.

Once again I do point out that it helps to be able to demonstrate the shots and prove your thoughts on course strategy.

One thought to leave with you here, is that many American college golf coaches have built reputations as teachers.

While some of them may be good, imagine working with scratch handicap players all the time. It would be easy to produce a champion every once in a while with pupils like these.

Pity the poor club professional teaching beginners and dubs day after day.

Pat Fletcher summed up his position one day when he said to me "do you think God put me on earth just to tee up golf balls so little, old, fat ladies can swing at them and once in a while hit one fifty yards?" I couldn't answer his question at the time but that's what we do some days and only God knows why.

Teaching the Handicapped

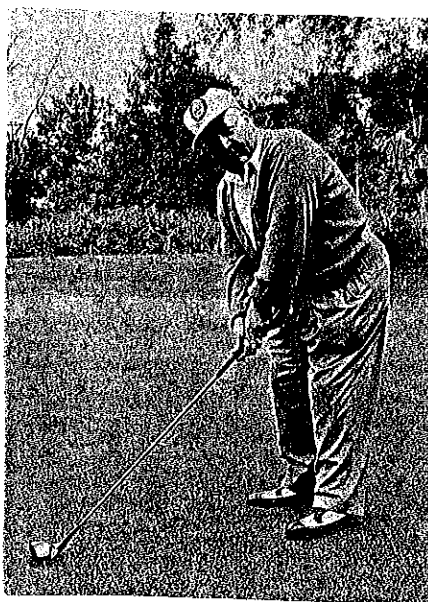
I have had the pleasure of teaching some physically handicapped students.

Some of the handicaps were of an arthritic nature while others were as severe as having amputated limbs.

I once taught a man with a stiff left leg who had difficulty pivoting his left side out of the way on the downswing. We removed all of the spikes from his left shoe with the exception of two on the heel and this smoother sole allowed him to pivot on the heel of the shoe without the rest of the foot sticking in the ground. His balance was more on the right leg and foot but with his new pivot, he hit the ball quite well.

One of my most interesting golf school students was a man who had one artificial leg and the other damaged from World War two. My assistant and I figured out a swing for him, talked it over, and brought his handicap down to twelve. While we cannot take all the credit for his improvement, because he had other help previously, it was really rewarding work.

Once again I point out the primary object of golf lessons. You work with the talents the pupil has to offer and use the method that will provide enjoyment and a lower score.



The man above is Johnny Gaucas, professional at⁹
Van Schaick Country Club, Cohoe, New York.

Johnny Gaucas, over sixty years of age, lost his leg
to cancer four years ago. He re-taught himself how to play
and has scored in the sixties since his operation. What
a courageous fellow.

In 1973 he was a National Vice-President of the U.S.P.G.A.
and is active in all his section's P.G.A. affairs. Johnny
is an inspiration to all amputees.

Playing Lessons

Playing lessons are lessons in "course tactics" and the pupil must be able to hit the ball before he can benefit from a playing lesson on the course.

I never give a beginner a playing lesson, only intermediate and advanced students.

When giving playing lessons, the pupil and I play a normal nine holes, I make notes, I give him a written resume" to keep at the end of the round and we usually spend half an hour discussing the resumé so he can practice my suggestions.

Playing lessons are very time consuming and expensive to give. They must be worthwhile.

Communication During Teaching

I believe the purpose of taking lessons is to produce lower scores.

I teach my pupils in a way that, hopefully, will produce these lower scores and, in the process of learning, will help my pupil achieve good style.

Good style and basics allow the pupil to obtain help much more easily.

I never talk down to my pupils and I avoid golf terms that would be beyond their normal golf vocabulary.

To communicate with the pupil I enquire as to

1. the pupil's current handicap
2. his playing and swing problems
3. his present goals
4. his long range goals.

At this point, we are ready to discuss what we must do to correct any faults.

I know what my lesson procedures are, but I cannot have proper communication with the pupil until I know his requirements.

The communication of the proper swing image is most important .

Mental Imagery

I use many descriptive phrases and examples to get my

messages across: a) I say "swing--don't scoop" and an image is formed.

b) Don't think negative and worry about hazards or out of bounds. Think "there's a perfect spot, I'll hit the ball over there.

c) Don't think about not being short, say mentally, "I must be up".

Bob Toski's book is a perfect example of good imagery. The pupil reading these examples cannot miss the teacher's efforts to communicate.

You must place the correct mental image of the swing in the pupil's mind before they can function properly.

For example, when teaching athletes from other sports, I relate to their games. I had great success one day in taking a short hitting, strong hockey player and by relating to "shooting the puck (a slap shot) into the top left corner of the net" I put forty yards on his tee shot. Prior to this he mentally blocked everything into the "lower right corner of the net". When he thought of putting the shot into the "top left corner" he learned to release and got the message.

Visualizing the ball flying through the air toward the target assists the pupil to follow through.

Pupils have a difficult time trying to get the proper swing image when watching the complex swing of a Gay Brewer or Miller Barber. It is easier to relate to the marvelous swings of the classic stylists such as Julius Boros or Sam Snead.

I could, at one time, pick out the swing of a squash or cricket player when they attempted golf. The mental image of their own game couldn't be erased when they played golf and reflex action formed an unusual motion.

Jack Nicklaus is playing more and more tennis, but I believe Jack's mental image will always be golf and he will be able to subdue the tennis reflex. Let's hope so.

A natural reflex action is hard to change, therefore, I have never changed a natural left handed person to right hand playing. I have seen too many frustrated players because they have changed.

I recently had a natural lefty who was trying to play from the right side because he didn't want to be different (a mental problem). I got him a set of left hand clubs and helped him from a twenty - three to an eleven handicap in one season.

Scoring

Low scoring, of course, is related to progress.

Lower scores are usually the result of a sharp, short game. I insist my pupils spend as much time on the short game as they do on the long game.

When teaching pitch or sand shots, I carefully check the pupil's equipment. The wedge must have the proper sole to do the job it was designed for. An absence of "bounce" defeats the shot in almost every case. I believe in a "bounce sole".

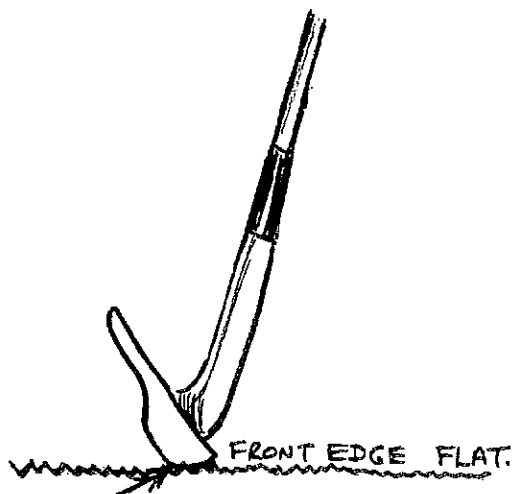
I cover chipping, pitching, sand play and putting in my short game lessons.

My chipping techniques are similar to a long putt and I stress weight on the left foot, a straight left arm and a firm left wrist on contact.

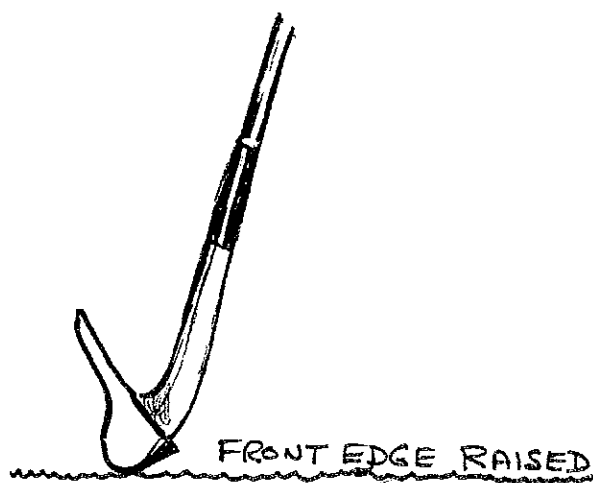
When teaching wedge shots, I explain "bounce" and concentrate on the basic wedge shot. When necessary, I teach them variations of the basic shot to be used for special situations.

I have studied all sand trap methods, but use Gary Player's technique. He showed me the proper setup prior to swinging, and it changed my outlook.

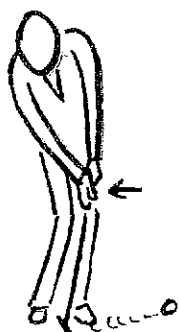
THE SHORT GAME



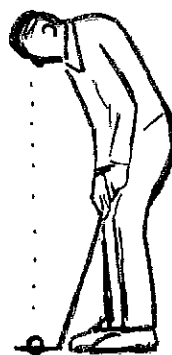
REGULAR SOLE OF A
#9 IRON OR PITCHING WEDGE
HAS A **"FLAT SOLE"** (NO BOUNCE)



ON A GOOD SAND WEDGE
THERE IS A BUILT-IN
"BOUNCE" ON THE SOLE



PITCHING AND CHIPPING - BE
SURE LEFT ARM AND HAND
LEAD THE CLUB HEAD ON
THE WAY THROUGH.



PUTTING - WEIGHT EVENLY
BALANCED, EYES DIRECTLY
OVER BALL, LEFT HAND IN
CONTROL.

I teach putting basics and recommend Horton Smith's book on putting as good reading on this subject.

Performance of Student

The performance of a student should only be rated as to progress.

If the pupil can reach the realistic goals we set and is happy with his teaching program, he will perform well.

Performance is based on confidence in the program.

I put performance responsibilities where they belong--
on the pupil. They must

1. understand the program
2. practice
3. be physically capable of making the swing we plan to use
4. have the proper mental image.

I can teach, but the pupil must accept his responsibility to learn.

Playing ability cannot be purchased on the lesson tee, it must be earned.

Progress of Student

Ben Hogan states "the basis of progress is to execute properly a small number of the fundamental movements".

Ernest Jones covers his "obstacles to swinging" thoroughly and refers to "paralysis by analysis". As usual he solves it all by "swing the clubhead".

I chart the pupil's progress for him when I give him lesson notes on each visit.

His progress is related to his mental and physical limitations plus the time he has available for practice.

The pupil could become discouraged when his progress stops and he fails to reach his potential.

If the pupil does reach his peak, I often use this story of a wonderful eighty year old man I met down south:

This elderly gentleman regularly took lessons from golf professionals and one day a smart alec young pro yelled at him, "Hey, Mr. Vaughn, do you think you're going to get any better taking all those lessons?" "Young man," Mr. Vaughn replied, "I gave up thoughts of getting better twenty years ago, I'm just trying to not get any worse."

Progress is an individual thing.

Area of Research

Most of my teaching method has been based on personal experience.

My personal golf library, however, contains more than one hundred volumes written by the world's great players and teachers. These books have provided me with a tremendous wealth of knowledge to draw from.

The bibliography at the back of this thesis shows the names of some of the best books in my library, two-thirds of which were not published until after I had become a successful teacher. I refer to them because I try to update my knowledge of the game by continually reading new books of golf.

I have played with, conversed with, or personally observed more than half of these authors on the practice tee, lesson tee or golf course.

I feel my greatest area of research has been my large personal experience over the years.

There is no book written that is a substitute for a lesson from a well qualified teaching professional.

Arriving at a Method

My method was developed over many years of study and personal observation of thousands of swings.

"I teach people, not a method". My lessons vary from ten minutes to an hour in length depending on the pupil's progress that day.

Many teachers solve the pupil's problem in ten minutes then start to tinker with the swing and ultimately at the end of the lesson the pupil's swing has collapsed. This does not happen with my method.

I teach one to three points per lesson and when the pupil can make the proper moves, the lesson is over.

Henry Cotton says "there is no one way to play the game". In my opinion, there is no one way to teach because it is apparent that you cannot teach an athletic fifteen year old boy the same way you teach a forty year old corporate executive or a sixty-five year old woman.

I vary my teaching method to suit the pupil.

I want results and a progressive, happy pupil. To achieve this, basics and tempo are common to all lessons.

Great Pupils make great teachers and we recognize them both.

Jack Grout

Jack Nicklaus

Gordon McInnis

Marlene Stewart Streit

Harvey Pennick

Kathy Whitworth

I have had hundreds of wonderful pupils, produced a few minor champions and have had the opportunity to make hundreds of people happy by teaching.

I am most grateful for this opportunity.

FOOTNOTES

1. Bobby Jones, (Robert Tyre Jones). Golf is My Game, New York, Doubleday and Company Inc., 1960. Pg. 4.

Robert Tyre Jones, Bobby Jones on Golf, New York Doubleday and Company Inc., 1966. Pg. 4

Percy Boomer. On Learning Golf, London, Unwin Brothers Limited, 1949 (1942). Pg. 4.
2. Gil Walker, at Old London Hunt Club, scored 63 in 1949, to hold the course record. Pg. 6.
3. Golf schools; Granite Club started 1954--Rosedale Golf Club, started 1957 and Board of Trade Country Club, started 1968. Pg. 12
4. Henry Cotton, three time British Open winner; from Britain. Pg. 16
5. Frank Walsh, from Detroit, tour player during the Walter Hagan era. Pg. 17.
6. Bill Ezinicki, former Canadian National Hockey League player, known on the Canadian tour and quite successful in the New England States. Pg. 23.
7. Jack Burke, The Natural Way to Better Golf, New York, Hanover House, 1954. Pg. 33.
8. Arnold Palmer, Situation Golf, New York, The McCall Publishing Co., 1970. Pg. 48.

Arnold Palmer, My Game and Yours, New York, Simon and Schuster, 1965. (Copyright, 1963).Pg. 48.

Tommy Armour, How to Play Your Best Golf All the Time, New York, Simon and Schuster, 1953. Pg. 48.

Tommy Armour, A Round of Golf with Tommy Armour, New York, Simon and Schuster, 1959. Pg. 48.

Billy Casper, Golf Shotmaking, New York, Doubleday and Company Inc., 1966. Pg. 48.
9. Johnny Gaucas, Professional Golfers Magazine, Professional Golfers Association of America. Pg. 51.

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