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THE MENTAL GAME OF JULI
CHANGING THE IMAGE OF THE GOLFER-STUDENT

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There is no doubt that members like Arnold McLean make the C.P.G.A. a truly professional organization.

Signed,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ray Haines". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned to the right of the typed name.

Ray Haines

PREFACE

Library statistics indicate that more has been written about the game of golf than any other sport. Until recently, however, little had been written about the mental game of golf. Today, research in this area is being conducted by a number of universities in North America¹, by various PGA Associations across the globe and by the National Golf Foundation. Sports psychology is also fast becoming one of the major departments in the psychology faculties of universities around the world.

I have been aware of the mental aspect of the game of golf for many years. Numerous studies published by the universities, particularly in the United States, simply confirm what I had known and practiced as a professional golf instructor for over thirty years.

This study will present my approach to the teaching of the golf swing, as it needs to be adapted not only to the student's physical being, but also to the student's mental image of self. This revelation will stress the importance of changing the individual's image as s/he perceives her/himself as a golfer. I truly believe that student-golfers will improve when the image they present to themselves is positive and dynamic.

There will only be a few details about the grip "as I see it" and I will not discuss at any length the proper stance, alignment and other such basic physical actions. There has been too much written about these aspects

¹ Both Carleton and Ottawa Universities, in Ottawa, for example, sponsor many students in the sports psychology faculty. Carleton University has established a sports medicine department.

already and I do not feel justified in restating what has been so well said by other professionals. Unless I was to use different language, as Homer Kelley does in his instructional textbook, The Golfing Machine, I doubt that I would be able to add anything more to the general body of information on the golf swing.

Naturally, I will touch upon the physical aspects of the swing, when and where it is necessary, in my attempt to help my students to change or adapt their concept of themselves as golfers, however, improving the student's self-image is the crucial idea of this research paper. This theory is based upon thirty-five years of observation, communication, instruction and playing as a member of the Canadian Professional Golfers' Association.

I would like to add one word of clarification. This is not a step-by-step or a recipe-type system. Each student has to be approached differently for there is no perfect method.

INTRODUCTION

In 1949, at the age of 24, I entered the ranks of the Canadian Professional Golfers' Association as a first-year apprentice at the Royal Montreal Golf Club, under the Head Professional Ken Murray, a well-known professional golfer. I was placed under the tutelage of Jack Young, a class "A" assistant who possessed a great knowledge of the game of golf.

I must claim from the beginning that few professionals had my fortunate beginning. Mr. Murray knew that I wanted to spend my life as a teaching professional, but at the time, I had no aspirations to be the best tour player or the best merchandiser.

Mr. Murray had already hired the very best teaching instructor available, Jack Young. He was to teach not only the membership at the Royal Montreal Golf Club, but also the class "A" assistants and the apprentices. Under Mr. Young's supervision and direction, I not only learned how to execute a repetitive golf swing, but I also learned a great deal about golf equipment and repairs.

By 1953, five year later, I entered and won the Quebec Assistants' Championship. I had not entered to win, but rather to play, to test my ability to move the ball around as I had been taught and practiced on the practice tee, and to gain some valuable experience.

Winning, as I have indicated, was not a prerequisite; playing to the best of my ability was. Due to the fact that I was not tense or anxious, I was able to concentrate upon performing the golf swing as I knew I could.

This concept, in itself, was a rewarding experience as well as an educational one. I must admit though, at that time, I was not fully aware of its consequences.

I left the Royal Montreal Golf Club to accept the position of Head Professional at the Lakeside Golf Club, in Moncton, New Brunswick. After a one year separation from my family, as well as experiencing a great deal of frustration and unhappiness, I returned to Montreal. I was, in fact, losing my desire to continue as a Professional Golfer.

Fortunately, a golfing friend advised me that Redvers Mackenzie, at the Elmridge Golf Club, was looking for an assistant. I visited Mr. Mackenzie and our initial conversation convinced me to return to the profession. In 1955, I became the full-time teaching professional at the Elmridge Golf Club.

I had learned the fundamentals of my trade under Jack Young at the Royal Montreal Golf Club, but it was at the Elmridge Golf Club that I was able to use my knowledge of teaching the golf swing. At Elmridge I truly became a professional instructor. I had to use every facet of my knowledge and experience to help my students. At the same time, I developed my own thoughts on teaching the golf swing.

Two years later, in 1957, I entered and won the Quebec Open Championship. Again, as in 1953, I had not anticipated winning. There were many experienced and proficient golfers entered in this championship. I merely wanted to prove, to myself at least, that I was quite capable of competing with the best. I played in a relaxed state of mind and was able to concentrate upon carrying out the golf swing, with precision and accuracy.

Winning the Quebec Open proved to me that having the proper frame of mind was as important as having the proper swing. I truly believed that the swing would be there if one was in the right state of mind.

Between my teaching and my championship wins, I discovered the importance of the mental game of golf. I must admit that I did not know that I was discovering something different, but until that time, most instructors I knew were concerned only about carrying out the physical part of the golf swing.

This thesis, then, concerns the importance of the mental game of golf. My two championship wins and my many sessions on the practice tee convinced me that the golfer's image of her/himself as a golfer, was crucial to her/his success. If I could help my students form positive images of themselves as golfers, I could then, consider myself a successful instructor.

CHAPTER 1

THE THESIS DISCOVERED

One of the most important factors of any research is that part which takes place "in the field". Searching for the truth is probably more important than telling others about it, however, recording one's findings is essential.

It is vitally important that one's research-experience in any eye-hand coordinating sport come together in the practice areas. Here the instructor's skills of observation and communication are tested and evaluated, not only by the student, but also by the instructor. Naturally, the student's knowledge and ability to execute the golf swing is evaluated at the same time.

As I mentioned in my Introduction, I believe I had been able to win two championships because I had been able to place myself in a particular frame of mind. Although winning was important, playing to my potential was, by far, more important. Swinging the golf club as I knew it should be, and as I knew I could, would give reasonable results.

I could reduce my anxiety if I could create a positive self-image in my own mind. I pictured myself as a golfer, swinging the golfclub as I had been taught by Jack Young, and as I had practiced many times, under supervision and alone. Visualizing myself as a "golfer" seemed to be the key, although at that time, I was not fully aware of the psychology of the

mental game of golf. I just knew that good results depended upon good execution, and good execution would occur if I could maintain my image as a "golfer".²

My thesis, then, is simple enough. My students would have to be educated to picture themselves as "golfers" as they swung the club through the ball. I did not form this theory suddenly, nor did I ever hear my fellow professionals speak of mental pictures. I must admit, however, that I, and many other professionals, often remarked that so-and-so did not have it "upstairs" (meaning the appropriate mental image).

This paper will primarily deal with (a) changing the mental images of my students as they perceived themselves as golfers, and (b) reinforcing that image through successful execution.

² W. Timothy Gallwey, The Inner Game of Golf, Random House, N.Y., N.Y., 1981, has written extensively on this subject. He claims (and I agree) that "teaching pros were reaching a point of diminishing returns on the analysis of the mechanics of golf, and were turning their attention to the mental side of the sport". (See Gallwey's Preface.)

NOTE: Gallwey's text was printed some twenty years after I had begun to investigate the idea of mental images.

CHAPTER 2

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE THEORY

The development of my theory, on the necessity of "changing the image of the golfer-student," began at the Elmridge Golf Club, in Montreal, in 1955, when I was appointed the full-time instructor. During my teaching periods, unknowingly, I developed my powers of observation and my ability to communicate my ideas. It was through observation, communication and a number of trial-and-error practice sessions that the theory was developed.

The membership at the Elmridge Golf Club was, and I believe that it still is, comprised of successful, highly motivated businessmen. Not only were the members interested in being successful in their livelihoods but also in golf. Like all private golf clubs, the membership came in all sizes, shapes, abilities, ages, skills, potentials, backgrounds and livelihoods. As golfers, they were at various levels and in different categories.

In order to understand how the theory developed, it is necessary to understand my students. My students could be placed in one of several livelihood groups. For convenience I have separated them by gender.

1. The Males. The male population could be divided into three groups:
(a) businessmen; (b) professionals (doctors, dentists, lawyers, insurance brokers, professors, and teachers); and (c) those who were on their way up in the business world or the professions, ie. the workers.

2. The Females. The female population could be divided into three groups: (a) the majority of the female population was house-wives (the wives of the males mentioned above and the mothers of the teenagers mentioned below). Most did not work outside the home; (b) those support occupations in the business world, such as secretaries; and (c) those in the professions, especially teachers, although there were many in some area of medicine.
3. The Teenagers. For brevity's sake, I have lumped the sons and daughters of the above in one group, mostly because the number of boys far outweighed the number of girls.

It is important that we look much closer at these students.

The Males:

(a) The businessmen, on the whole, I found to be tremendously aggressive, and unfortunately, filled with tension caused by various anxieties brought on, I believe, by their daily activities at work. In this state, they were incapable of concentrating on swinging the golf club. In most cases, they had hurried through a difficult business day, jumped into their cars and hurried to the golf course for the lesson. They were extremely tense both physically and mentally. I knew that in this state they could not carry out the requirements of the day's lesson.

In communicating with these students, I discovered that their main aim in golf was "to hit the ball as far down the fairway as possible, and certainly, anything over 250 yards was desirable". They did not have the

slightest idea of the difference between the touring professional's ability to swing through the ball consistently, obtaining rather long distances with all clubs, and their ability as amateurs who practiced infrequently, were often out of shape, and played only on the weekends.

The image that they had created of themselves as golfers was unsatisfactory. Regardless of their shape, physical fitness level and general health, they had created an image of a young, male athlete who could drive the tee shot incredible distances. I had to change this image. I had to have them realize that they had to swing within themselves; physically at first, and then mentally.

My main aim was to have them get the ball into the hole, with the fewest strokes possible, and "experience enjoyment at the same time". I had to convince them that a 5 on a long par 4 (say 450 yards) was an acceptable number, especially when they usually carded 7's and 8's.

(b) The professionals, unlike the businessmen, generally worked alone. Like the businessmen, however, they wanted to impress others by smashing the ball, as far as possible, down the fairway. Outperforming their peers by outdistancing them, was a desired objective.

While the professionals did not seem to be as tense or as aggressive as the business members, they were determined to attack the ball. They had to be convinced that they too had a potential which could be reached, if they could learn to change their image into that of a golfer with a smooth, fluid, rhythmic swing. In general, professionals were easier to convince than the businessmen.

(c) The business workers were anxious to succeed in business. As a result, they listened attentively to their superiors. They tried to carry out all the tasks set for them. They wanted to learn. Their bosses had been successful people because they had formulated successful methods of operation. The workers attempted to emulate their bosses by using the successful methods. Unfortunately, they expected their professional golf instructor to have the same magic methods. While it is true that I had a formula for success, these people were unable to take advantage of it. The formula was to stay on the practice tee for a year or two and hit hundreds of golf balls. Calvin Peete is an example of a golfer who did exactly that.

Finally, like their bosses, the business workers came to the practice tee with high anxieties. This problem, added to their demand for instant success, prevented good execution. Changing their image and calming them down were priorities.

A description of the general (average) swing executed by these males follows. My observations revealed that they had little, if any, lower body pivot. The poor transfer of weight left them on the wrong side. Their stiff arm-throw threw the clubshaft outside the target line and generally came to a stop about waist high.

In discussing stiff arms with my students, they told me that they had "heard" or "read" that the left arm had to be straight. Unfortunately, they believed that straight meant "rigid". This idea, and the fact that they were somewhat tense to begin with, prevented the student-golfer from swinging through the ball with a smooth, fluid, rhythmic swing.

Overcoming these problems is detailed in Chapter 3: The Application of the Theory.

The Females:

(a) Most of the housewives possessed an image opposite to their husbands. They were, for the most part, passive persons. Naturally, there were exceptions and several of the ladies were aggressive on the golf course. These ladies tended to play in many outside tournaments, as well as in the club tournaments. Most of the ladies, however, played golf to keep busy, to impress the other ladies with their latest fashionable golf clothes, and to chit-chat.

A large number of these ladies had what appeared to be rather smooth, fluid swings. Unfortunately, the swing lacked power. If they were to come close to their potentials they would have to learn how to power the clubhead through the ball.

(b) The secretaries and other business workers, much like their housewife counterparts, also wished to impress others with a beautiful, rhythmic swing. They were, however, seldom able to send the ball into the air for any reasonable distance.

(c) Those ladies in the professions were somewhat more aggressive than the other ladies. They tended to attack the ball with more vigor.

As I have pointed out, the ladies were more concerned with their images as smooth swinging golfers. While I appreciated the fact that they tended not to care about the score, my conversations with them revealed that they would certainly like to lower their scores as much as possible. I

informed them that they would have to learn how to add power to their swings if they were to succeed in lowering their scores. Chapter 3: The Application of the Theory reveals my approach to this problem.

The Teenagers:

While at first glance the teenagers seemed to be nothing more than replicas of their parents, the fact is that they (including the girls) were more aggressive. By the 1960's our society and the school systems were rapidly changing. Students were being introduced to new and exciting information. Physical education classes were demanding more from girls than ever before. Television, as well, was bringing all kinds of knowledge into the home.

There was no doubt that my two championship wins added credibility to my teaching career, especially with the teenagers. They were eager to learn from a champion.

Since their self-images had not been well formed, they were ready and eager to follow my directions. In general, the teenagers made rapid progress.



CHAPTER 3

THE APPLICATION OF THE THEORY

I would like to reiterate and reemphasize my theory on the teaching the game of golf. As early as 1960, I knew that if I were to consider myself a successful professional golf instructor, I would have to somehow manoeuvre the minds of my male students away from both their daily activities, which caused them to come to the golf course full of tension and anxiety, and change the unsatisfactory mental pictures they had conjured up of themselves as golfers to those of relaxed golfers who are in complete control.

My female students had to learn to imagine themselves powering the clubhead through the ball with controlled force, while retaining that fluid and rhythmic swing they had brought with them to the lesson tee.

The teenagers, too, had to form a more positive picture of themselves as they swung the clubhead through the ball to a full and complete finish.⁴

⁴ I was quite pleased to see that George Knudson, in his attempt to write a standard text for all professional instructors, promotes the full and complete finish. The major difference, between what I taught and what George is teaching, is that I insisted that my student remain in position until the ball landed, rather than allow the club to move downward. (Photo #1, on page 18.)

(Photo #1)

NOTE: The student has completed a full pivot and is in balance.

I found that the key to this change depended upon the successful results of the physical movements that I taught. The basic physical move, of course, was to swing the clubhead through the ball, with controlled force, to a complete and full finish. This was true for every club in the bag from the putter through to the driver.

By trial-and-error I discovered that there were two major keys to this manoeuvring technique: 1) communication (both physical and oral); and 2) having the student focus upon one, and only one, fundamental at a time.

Communication provides a great deal of information, for example: 1) with the male students more than with the females, a handshake told me how tense or relaxed the student was; and 2) with what appeared to the student to be nothing more than chit-chat, I gathered information which I could later use to help the student relax. During these brief conversations I discovered the student's age, marital status, spouse's name and age, the number, ages, names and problems of the children, the names of parents and in-laws, and hosts of other information. My lessons usually began with: "How are you today? How is the new car? Has your daughter, Naomi, recovered from her operation? I understand that your parents will be returning from Florida this week." And so forth.

Being on a personal basis with my students helped form a strong relationship or bond between us. My students knew that I was interested in them as people as well as a golfers. Tension was released and I could begin the lesson for that day.

As I indicated in Chapter 2, students could be placed in one of three categories of golfers: 1) beginners; 2) intermediate; or 3) advanced. By beginners I meant: (a) anyone who had never played the game before; (b) those who had either hit a few balls under the direction of a friend (a non-professional) or those who had played a game or two; or (c) those who had played for a year or two, but had never had any professional instruction, and basically knew nothing about the golf swing.

In the intermediate class I placed those students who might have had a few lessons, but who played in the high 90's and low 100's and possessed poor golf swings.

The advanced players included those students who were almost "scratch" to those of about 12-15 handicaps. In general, they had fairly good swings, knew something about what the swing was all about, and performed well, from time to time, on the golf course.

Before I reveal how I approached each class of player-student, I must discuss the application of my theory from the moment the student approached the lesson tee. Students had to learn how to relax before they could carry out the golf swing. For that reason, students were asked to appear on the practice tee at least twenty minutes before the actual lesson time so that they could complete some simple but important exercises and then practice the fundamental concept taught during the last lesson.

The warm-up exercises included the basic pivot, with arms swinging through from left to right and right to left, swinging a weighted club, and lastly, stroking a few balls down the practice fairway.

These warm-up exercises helped the student to form the basic image of an athlete-golfer warming up before performing the basic moves of the art - much like a professional baseball player warming-up before the game.

After swinging the weighted club and before stroking any ball down the fairway, the student had to go through a process of setting-up. I taught each student that golf was a target game. Unlike other sports, this target was sideways, not in front. In order to impress and reinforce this idea, I

insisted that my students practice a target orientation routine before each and every shot. This routine is practiced by all tour players as well as by all good players in general.

This routine is simple enough and takes very little time. The student was to:

1. stand behind the ball in a direct line to the target. If on the green, the student was to crouch down, behind the ball, and examine the line from the ball to the hole. The student was to examine the line, the slope of the green, the texture of the grass, and the length of the putt. If on the fairway, the student was to examine the geography of the target area (say the green and the flagstick), determine the distance from the ball to the target area, notice the direction and force of the wind in the target area, and then determine which club would be the best to use. Lastly, the student would pick out an intermediate target (a blade of grass or leaf) on the line, somewhere in front of the target. (If on the green, this distance would be about five or six inches in front of the ball; if on the fairway, the intermediate would be some two or three feet in front of the ball);
2. begin the alignment processes by: (a) aligning the clubface along the target line; (b) taking the preferred grip; (c) setting-up the feet so that they are parallel to the ball flight line; (d) aligning the knees, hips, shoulders and eyes along this parallel line; (e) checking the line from the ball through the intermediate

target to the actual target; and (f) imagining the flight of the ball as it travels toward the target; and

3. execute the swing, as soon as possible, to prevent tension or anxiety from creeping into the muscles.

Concentration is also important for it is part of the image of the golfer performing his art. Concentration can be learned, practiced and improved. Concentration begins with the setting-up process. During my teaching sessions, I constantly cautioned my students about remembering what to do and how to go about doing it.

The setting-up routine and the learning to concentrate went hand-in-hand. I insisted that all students practice the routine on the practice tee during the lesson sessions, self practice and on the golf course. It was to be carried out through all strokes from short putts to long drives and to be practiced during the no-ball practice stroke, as well as with the ball-oriented practice swing.

One factor that I especially stressed during my practice sessions was the no-ball practice swing. Very early in my teaching career I found that the presence of a ball tended to take the student's mind off the swing fundamental of the day's lesson. Without the ball the student could focus on that one basic swing component. Students had to learn that the swing was the important factor; the ball simply got in the way of the clubhead and was propelled forward toward the target.

Naturally, on the practice tee, each category of student and each student within each category, had to be approached differently.

1. The Beginner. The beginner with no golfing experience was taken to the practice putting green. There are several good reasons for this initial step: (a) beginning the practice putts from about two feet from the hole, the target was close and the student was able to pick out the target line quite easily. The setting-up process was also much easier to teach and perform; (b) the setting-up process was also easier to integrate into the whole process; (c) the student would move the two-foot putt around the hole in a counter-clockwise direction to introduce a new angle of attack from the target; and (d) the student was constantly reminded to swing the clubhead through the ball.

As soon as students became comfortable with the two-foot putts, they moved to the three-foot distance, then the four-feet, and finally to the five-foot range. All this took place on a relatively flat surface. After several practice sessions, the students would add a challenge to the practice session. They had to make all five putts from each distance before going on to the next. Should one putt be missed they had to return to the two-foot distance and begin again.⁵

After gaining some confidence on the flat surface, students were to proceed to a relatively sloped portion of the green. The concentration here was to find the correct slope and trust the swing to keep the ball along that line.

⁵ Proficiency tests are found in Appendix "A".

Beginners with a little experience also began on the practice putting green, but could move to the practice tee sooner than the other beginners. On the practice tee this group began their sessions with the 7-iron. Since they had poor swings to begin with, I did not tell them what was wrong with their execution. Instead, I introduced them to one swing fundamental. We then proceeded with the no-ball procedure until the student had learned that one particular swing fundamental. Near the end of the lesson the students could swing through several balls with the condition that between ball contact swings they would execute at least five no-ball swings.

Students were not permitted to hold onto the club between swings. The proper grip was vital to good execution. After each swing the students would remove their hands from the clubs, begin the setting-up procedure and then execute. During each of these sessions, the students were cautioned about their thinking processes. Think like a golfer, then proceed as a golfer.

2. The Intermediate Student. I found that these students were the most difficult to teach. In general, I found that they had three basic flaws. Since the flaws were interwoven, I often had to teach more than one fundamental at a time. The errors were as follows:

- (a) poor weight transfer - actually, a reverse weight shift - caused by a poor body pivot;
- (b) a poor grip, especially with the right hand; and
- (c) an unnaturally stiff left arm.

The poor weight transfer and the poor grip do not have to be commented upon; the stiff left arm, however, needs some attention. Golf magazine articles, golf books, friends and the occasional golf instructor

will insist upon having a "straight" left arm without specifying a "naturally straight" left arm. Allow the left arm to hang down naturally at the side and notice that there is a slight bending of the elbow.

An unnaturally stiff left arm caused the student to let go, at the top of the swing, with the left hand. It also made it extremely difficult for the student to cock the wrists at the top of the swing and it produced tension in the upper body that caused poor execution.

Demonstrations were needed to convince students that a stiff left arm was not required. Showing them pictures of various top touring professionals helped as well.

Again, during the lessons I reminded my students to think like a golfer. Practice the procedures that good golfers use.

3. The Advanced Students. While these students were easier to teach, it was difficult to discover their flaws and it took longer to analyse their swings. Sometimes the flaw was a physical factor, such as the chin being down too far preventing the golfer from taking a full backswing or pushed the head off the ball; a slight flaw in the grip; from time to time the student would arrest the pivoting body slightly before the stroke was completed or come off the ball a split second too soon; other times, in an attempt to keep the face of the club along the target line too long, the student failed to turn the arms over.

Occasionally, the advanced player would forget to go through the setting-up routine. As a result, club selection became poor and the target was missed, often short. When these factors were left out of the game, the advanced student's handicap would rise and s/he would become frustrated. This frustration would lead to unwanted tension.

Acting like a good player helped one to think like a good player. I would now like to comment on proper dress, care of equipment and language.

I demanded that students arrive on the practice tee correctly attired. Teenagers especially, had to be reminded that blue jeans were unacceptable dress. Second, shoes had to be clean and polished; many members used the facilities in the locker room (the shoe cleaning and polishing division).

Members who used the club storage facilities always had clean clubs. Occasionally members would practice or play elsewhere and not bring their clubs into the shop for cleaning. I requested them to come to the practice tee with clean equipment.

Finally, I discouraged the use of foul or abusive self-critical language as it results in a negative self-image.

In order to create that picture of oneself performing as a golfer, I insisted that the students create the proper atmosphere. This could be done if they:

1. always came dressed as golfers dress, in clean, pressed clothes with clean and polished shoes;
2. had clean equipment;
3. used positive language;
4. followed the proper setting-up process before attempting any swing;
5. practiced one fundamental at a time with the no-ball swing, then put them all together into a complete swing;
6. concentrated upon that one fundamental component of the swing during practice swing sessions, until it became an automatic response; and
7. would learn to picture themselves swinging (in their imaginations).

I cautioned my students that they would not learn to consider themselves as golfers in a short time. After all, it took me several years to learn this simple, but essential, part of the game of golf. One's mental image is as important as the carrying out of the physical act. This is true for any eye-hand coordination sport.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

My life as a golf professional has been dedicated to my students. I wanted my students to have the best possible practice periods. Over thirty-five years I developed what I believe to be a unique method of teaching. This unique method was to bring the students to understand that unless they were to think as golfers think, success was unattainable.

This thinking process could take place during coffee breaks, driving to work or to the golf course, in the locker room, in fact, almost anywhere. The students were asked to pause every once in a while and imagine themselves carrying out the golf swing - swinging through the ball to a full and complete finish.

Thinking like a golfer included dressing like a golfer. On the practice tee, the the thinking process followed a definite routine known as the setting-up process.

Since the swing was, by far, the most important physical factor, it should be carried out without a ball until it became a smooth, fluid, rhythmic action. If the swing could be carried out successfully, then the ball would travel along the intended line to the target.

Putting the mental game and the physical action together would result in good scores.

The most important part of my teaching advice to all students was to enjoy the game of golf. Whether one was involved in competitive golf or played "just for the fun of it" golf was, is, and should always be, a game to be enjoyed.

During my more than thirty-five years of playing and teaching I occasionally encountered low points, times I wished I had never learned this wonderful game, but I constantly reminded myself that low points were always followed by high points. Winning was never the most important thought in my mind; participating in what is sometimes called "the loneliest game in the world" was important.

One can enjoy the game of golf when one is able to play to the best of one's ability on a particular day. Playing to one's potential can be achieved when the mental and physical are attuned.

APPENDIX "A"Proficiency Tests

I wanted my students to challenge themselves during their practice sessions and, at the same time, feel that they were learning. I also wanted to take some of the boredom out of the practice sessions so I set up practice standards. I asked them not to leave the particular fundamental they were learning until they had achieved, more or less, the results I demanded. These proficiency tests, follow:

PuttingPhoto #2

Photo #2 illustrates the short putt technique I used and practiced myself and taught to my students. Five balls were arranged around the hole

from two feet up to five feet for what I labelled "short putts". The students would practice these putts until they felt that each putt could be made successfully, as follows:

1. 2-foot range: 5 of 5 putts to be made;
2. 3-foot range: 4 of 5 putts to be made, with the missed putt less than 6 inches from the hole;
3. 4-foot range: 3 of 5 putts to be made, with the two missed putts less than 1 foot from the hole; and
4. 5-foot range: 2 of 5 putts to be made, with the three missed putts less than 18 inches from the hole.

For long putts, I had the students practice from 10 and from 15 feet. As they became more proficient, they could practice from whatever distance they felt they needed. In this case my standards were:

1. in a direct line from the hole, three balls were to be putted from approximately ten feet. The three balls had to rest within two feet of the hole; and
2. in a direct line from the hole, three balls were placed approximately fifteen feet from the hole. The three balls had to rest less than two feet from the hole.

Fairway

I had only two criteria for students practicing fairway irons and woods:

1. good trajectory (height and general flight of the ball) and direction; and

2. consistent distance.

As I have already claimed several times, students had to become target conscious. They had to practice their setting-up routine prior to executing the golf swing. Every swing had to be directed at a specific target whether they were practicing a 9-iron or a 3-wood. Once the target had been selected they could concentrate upon the trajectory and direction of the ball and then the distance. I asked them to check the general pattern or scattering of balls for each club. They were to try to close in those patterns.

Driver

Rather than have the students concentrate on the 200 or 250 yard target on the range, I had them make up a fairway approximately 40 yards wide. This large landing area helped them with their confidence. So long as the balls kept landing and stopping on the fairway, they had a good chance to play the next ball to the green.

Conclusion

The ultimate success of my theory is measured in the result which is two-fold: 1) students begin to enjoy the game more because they can know what to do and how to do it; and 2) their handicaps lessen progressively. When students came to me full of enthusiasm and excitement after a round of golf, I knew that they had succeeded. When a student succeeded, I succeeded as an instructor.

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