

HOW TO PLAY GOLF

by
BEN THOMSON
Yale Golf Coach



BEN THOMSON

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Preface

IN WRITING THIS BOOK, I have in mind the people who want to take up golf under some guidance but cannot afford to pay the cost of instruction from a competent professional.

From many years of experience in teaching golf and my long association with the game, I have tried to simplify the art of teaching so that the benefits of the game may be enjoyed by all. Many players have accomplished great things in golf without the aid of instruction, but for those who have done so, there are many thousands who would still be in the beginner class were it not for the teaching and the guidance of instructors.

To hit a ball with a club designed for the purpose seems at first sight so natural and easy a thing that many, for the most part beginners, scarcely suspect the need of instruction. But plain observation shows that in golf, as in many other things, this assumption is not true.

Walter Travis, a pioneer of American golf, is reported to have said that he spent five years acquiring the wrong game, five more unlearning his errors, and that

only then was he in a position to begin the right way. Since his time (some 25 years ago), American golf has developed more or less fixed style and form. If one follows a dozen first-rate professionals or amateurs for a few holes, he will gain the impression that they all play the same way. The impression will be both true and false, but will carry more truth than falsehood, since out of a multitude of styles, used by a vast number of players over many years, certain methods for playing each shot have been found to be the most effective, and have thus come to be generally adopted. These methods constitute the fundamentals of the game, and if they can be presented to the beginner clearly, and in a form easy to put in practice, they will save him a lot of time and a certain amount of vexation.

What I have to say is meant obviously for the player himself; but the long habit of instruction has made it seem natural for me to address myself to one who is just beginning the business of teaching the game. Also, the golf coach is finding a place in more and more public and private schools, colleges, and universities, and many a young man who has proved only that he is a good player is called upon to give instruction. It is my aim to help the instructor quite as much as to guide the inexperienced golfer.

In my suggestions I have tried to avoid the dogmatism of laying down "the only way," and to recognize that every pupil has his own individual problems. My own experience with beginners is based not only on the ordinary clients of any golf professional, but on a good many university students. I say this merely to indicate that my opportunities for observing and meeting the

problems which confront the beginner have been considerable, and that the hints which I give have been found serviceable in many cases.

Golf is a pleasant game if the player accomplishes pretty much what he aims at; it is usually a source of vexation and profanity if he fails. To make the game pleasant and easy—as, in fact, it is—is the goal of instruction, and to that end this book is dedicated.

The grips, stances, and strokes in the pictures without credit (with the exception of Figures 32 and 33) were demonstrated by Joe Sullivan, the assistant Yale coach.

BEN THOMSON

Foreword

HERE IS THE TRUE DOCTRINE and the way to teach it. For the experienced golfer, it points to fundamentals of which he cannot be too often reminded; for the beginner and his teacher, it outlines and develops a simple, logical, and effective approach to sound swinging, and therefore to happiness. There are no tricks, short cuts or quackeries here.

Ben Thomson is teaching his fifth college generation of golfers, not to mention retired professors with their children and grandchildren. He is a Scot, with a very Scotch background, who has studied the American game and is contributing substantially to its development. He teaches all sorts and conditions of golfers, made and in the making, young people who when they come to him do not know a divot from a driver, those eighteen-year-olds who like to drive three hundred yards but score around a hundred, and a seasoned group who play consistently in the seventies when the pressure is on. He teaches the year 'round, morning and afternoon.

Thus, this book is born of experience. The result is a clear, direct exposition of a teaching technique which in

practice has grown simpler and simpler every year. "The higher golf" is too much with us these days—my method, yours, his and the other fellow's method, and most of it is written by (or for) natural golfers who have grown up on a golf links, grooved a swing by incessant practice and play by feel and instinct. Their books confuse, and confusion brings discouragement.

Ben Thomson's book is just an analysis of the principles which underlie all sound swings, however widely they may differ in detail of execution. It is original for its stress on the unadorned fundamentals and the manner of their teaching.

To the teacher he says "the simplest method is the best," "one demonstration is worth a hundred words, never confuse by saying too much"; to the player, "nine times out of ten the simplest shot is the best."

Likewise, the simplest book is the best book.

SELDEN R. ROSE

*Former Chairman, Board of Control
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How to Play Golf

Grip

THROUGHOUT THE BOOK, please assume that the pupil is a beginner and is right-handed. The directions can be reversed for left-handed players.

During the first lesson, I impress on the pupil that good golf is easy, and that the big fellow hasn't much advantage over the little fellow, since it is the speed of the club head swinging into the ball which gives the required distance.

At first, I may swing slowly while talking, using a short swing, and gradually draw the pupil's attention to the swinging movement of the club head, explaining that the complete swing is built around that particular movement. Then, I demonstrate how far a ball will travel when hit lightly with a short swing, gradually using a longer swing until the full swing has been reached. During this talking and demonstrating, it is best never to swing fast or hit the ball hard, for the purpose of both is to impress on the pupil that the club head must swing

into the ball, and that great strength never need enter into any part of the swing.

From this point, I go on to the methods of gripping or holding the club. There are three ways of gripping, and probably more, but the three most commonly used are the "overlapping," the "interlocking," and the "natural." The fundamentals in each of these three are essentially the same, and I try to find which one is best adapted to the pupil.

The grip most generally used today, the one which it is advisable to teach first, is the overlapping. With this grip, the swing and feel of the club head are very sensitive and must be controlled from the fingers, especially by the forefinger and thumb of the right hand.

A great many players and teachers have the wrong conception of the finger grip. They grasp the shaft while it is resting at the base of the fingers instead of having it diagonally across the palms of the hands. This is especially true of the left hand. Before explaining the grip further, I put the club in the pupil's left hand and place it so that the shaft rests along the base of the fingers. Then I close his hand and ask him to swing several times, using the left hand only. After several swings, I move the shaft so that it will rest against the middle joint of the left forefinger and lie diagonally across the hand. Again I close his hand and have the pupil swing as before. He will feel at once that the second grip is preferable and more powerful.

After drawing the pupil's attention to the position of the back of the left hand, I explain why the hand is turned over toward the right, showing from two to three

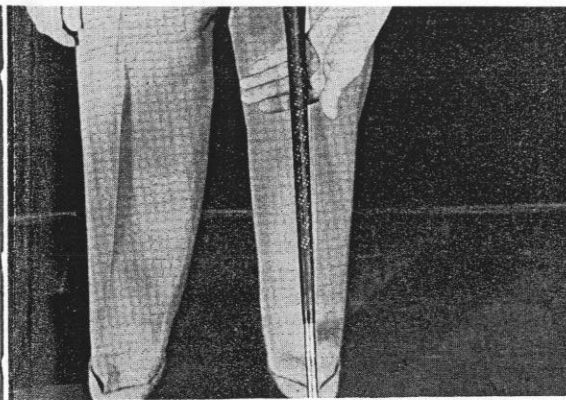


Fig. 1. Incorrect position of the left hand with the club held at the base of the fingers.

Fig. 2. Correct position of the left hand with the club held diagonally across the hand.

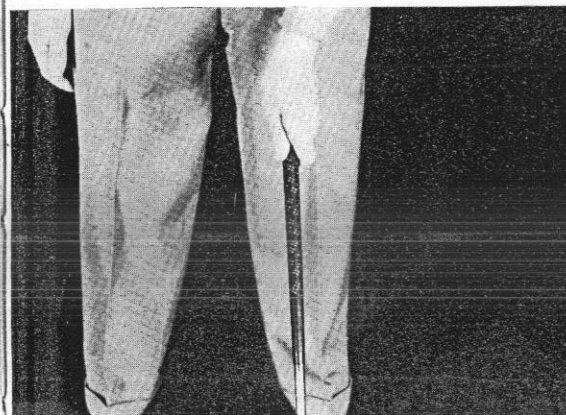
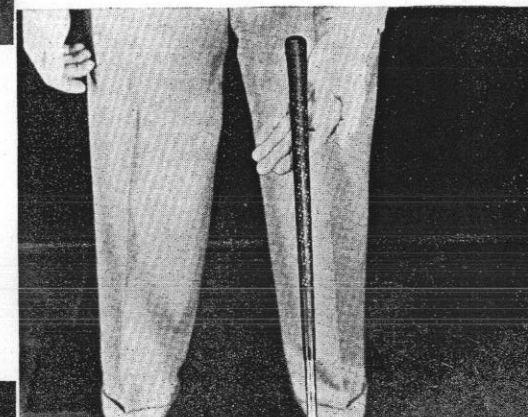
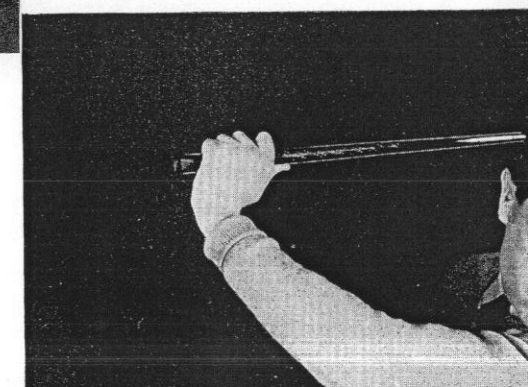


Fig. 3. Correct position of the left hand when closed on the club.

Fig. 4. The "break" or "cocked" position of the left hand at the top of the backswing.



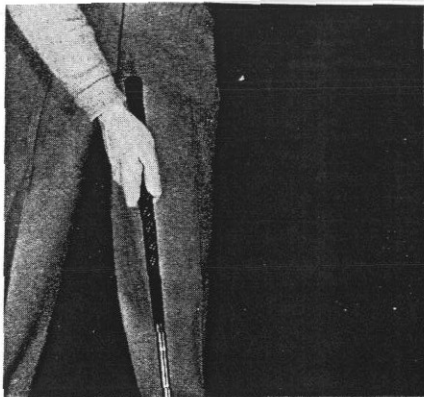


Fig. 5. Correct position of the right hand showing position of the forefinger and thumb.



Fig. 6. Complete grip.



Fig. 7. The overlapping grip.



Fig. 8. The interlocking grip.

GRIP

3

knuckles, and why the left thumb is placed over toward the right side of the shaft. The reasons are:

1. The left hand must deliver a kind of backhanded blow to the ball, which can be done only with the hand in this position.

2. The left thumb is over to the right side of the shaft because, in this position, it will not interfere with the "break" or "cocking" of the wrist (to be explained later) at the top of the swing.

Before proceeding to show the grip with the right hand, I help the pupil to swing the club using his left arm only until the full swing has been reached. Then I show the "cocked" position of the left hand. The left hand should grip the shaft in such a way that the left wrist is entirely under the shaft at the top of the swing. I emphasize that position and explain that in this cocked position the face of the club will be kept open, and that on the downswing the club head from this position will naturally swing into the ball. I then have the pupil try this full backswing several times until he begins to feel the proper position for himself.

Keeping his left hand in this position, I have him put the right hand on the shaft, placing the club against the middle joint of the right forefinger. The hand must be closed with the knuckle of the forefinger on the right side of the shaft, never under it.

The purpose of keeping the knuckle in that position is to develop power and control. It is surprising how much power, control, and feel of the club head are lost when the knuckle slips to a position under the shaft.

Close the hand, placing the thumb to the left diagonally across the shaft so that it helps the forefinger to

grip the shaft. At the same time the left thumb should fit into the palm of the right hand, and the little finger of the right hand should be placed lightly on top of or between the first and second finger of the left hand. This placement of the little finger is known as the "overlap."

The interlocking is the same as the overlapping grip except that the little finger of the right hand interlocks with the forefinger of the left. This is a perfectly good grip but is considered less sensitive than the overlap.

The natural grip is one in which both hands are placed entirely on the shaft without the little finger and forefinger overlapping or interlocking. This grip was used many years ago when the handles of the clubs were large, and is still used by many players who have small fingers. I teach this grip only in exceptional cases, and discourage its use with beginners.

Be sure to give enough time to learning the grip. The hands are the only part of the body which come in contact with the club and whatever speed is given to the club head is supplied through the hands. It is never wise to proceed further until the pupil has thoroughly mastered the grip.

For the individual pupils there may have to be variations in the grip, as it is not possible for every player to grip alike. I fit each pupil with a grip which will permit his hands to be on the shaft in all stages of the swing, not like a vice, but with a sense of easy control over the club head.

Stance

STANCE IS THE POSITION of the feet in relation to the ball and the line of play.

Before explaining the different stances, I have the pupil hold the club in his hands, using the grip which he has been taught. This should be done at every opportunity so that the feel of the grip will become natural.

There are three stances which are recommended: "square," "open," and "closed," and each one has a bearing on the swing for different shots of the game, as well as for different types of physique.

At this point in the instruction I find it advisable not to go too deeply into the relationship of stances and shots. However, let me review briefly the different uses of the stances:

1. In the square stance, both feet are placed evenly at the proper distance from the ball, so that a line across the toes is parallel to the line of play. This stance is generally used when playing all wood shots, and, in many cases, long irons, since its use allows the player to

turn or pivot either side of the body freely. The feet should be placed comfortably apart, about the width of the shoulders. Make sure that the weight of the body is evenly distributed on both feet. The toes should be turned slightly out to facilitate the turn of the body in either direction.

2. In the open stance, the left foot is withdrawn slightly, thus "opening" the position of the body into the direction of the line of play. This stance is sometimes used with woods, but most often for iron shots, especially at distances ranging from 180 yards down to short approach shots.

When the open stance is used for long iron shots, the feet should again be separated about the width of the shoulders, the right side of the body should be slightly facing the line of play, with the left foot drawn back a little. When it is used for shorter distances, the feet are closer together, but the right side of the body should still be in the same position as for the longer irons. The weight of the body is evenly distributed on both feet, as in the square stance, but the pivoting or turning of the left side will not be as free as in the square stance.

3. The closed stance is the direct opposite of the open; that is, the right side of the body and the right foot are drawn back from the square position. This stance is generally used with all clubs when playing for a "pull," and by players who are of stocky build. It is also used by those who have a flat swing.

After showing and demonstrating the three positions, I have the pupil try them and I impress on him that regardless of the stance he uses, his position in relation to

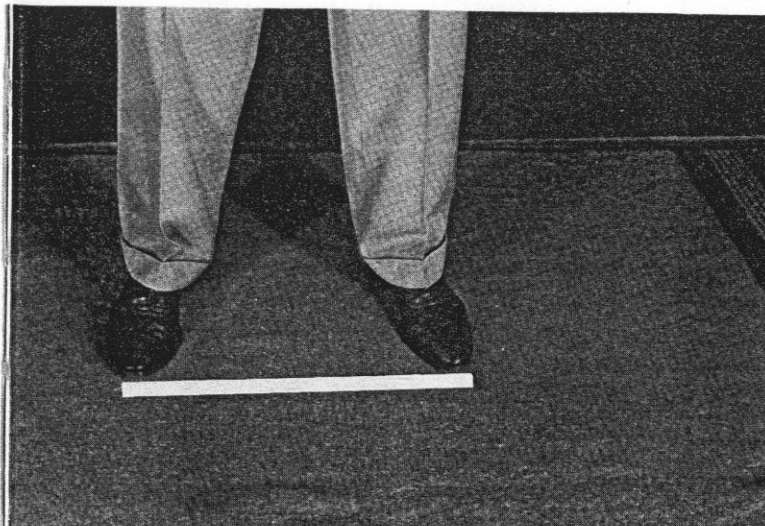


Fig. 9. Square stance.

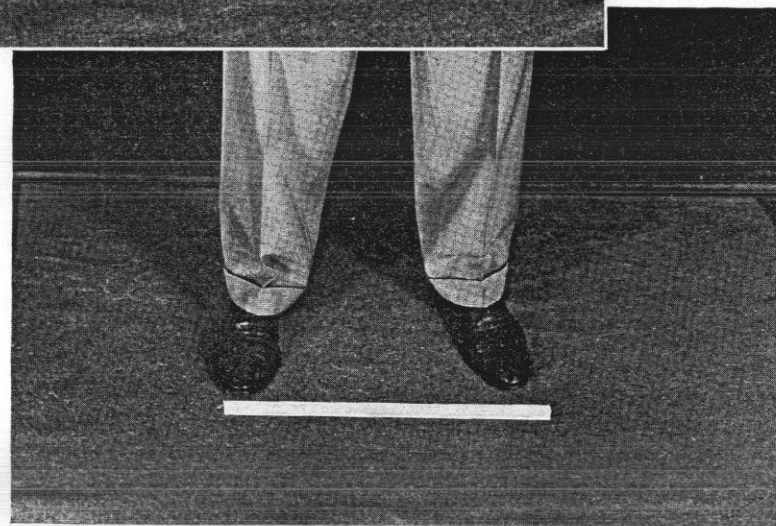


Fig. 10. Open stance.

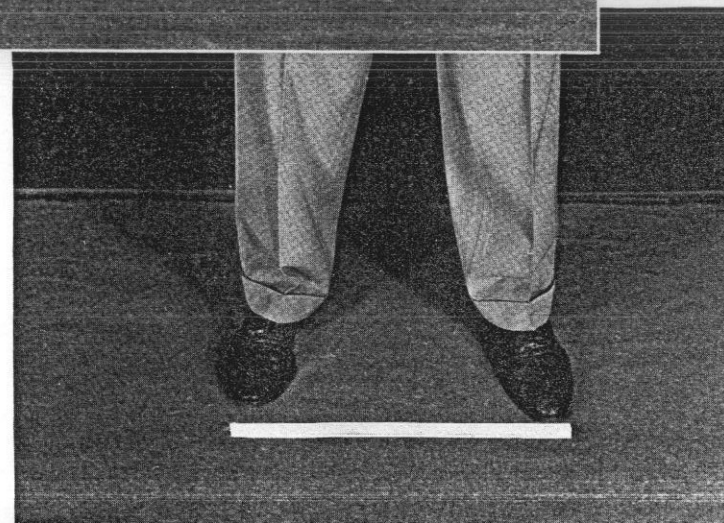
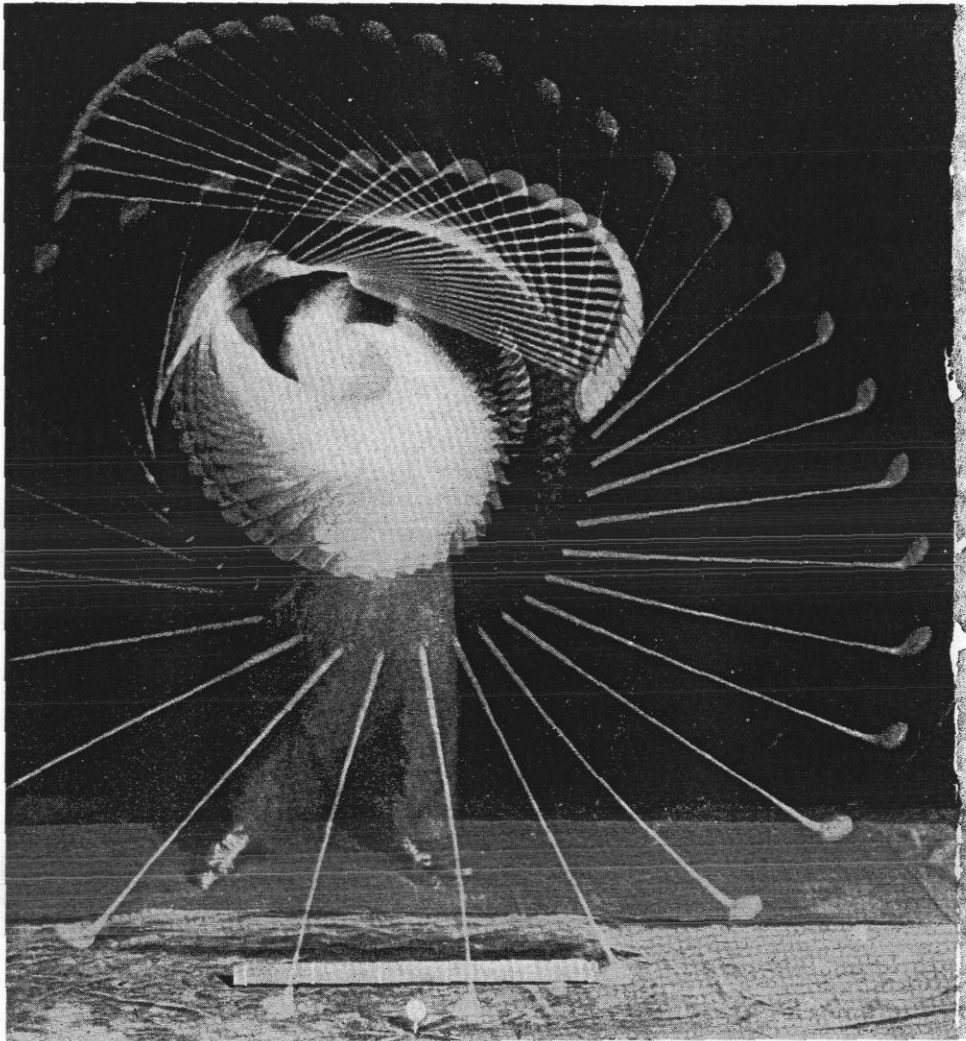


Fig. 11. Closed stance.



Courtesy A. G. Spalding & Bros.

g. 12. A multiple-flash photograph of Bobby Jones with a driver. The interval of time between pictures is $1/100$ second. The exposure of each picture is $1/100,000$ second. Measured from this photograph, the ball velocity is 225 feet per second, the club velocity before impact is 166 feet per second, and the club velocity after impact is 114 feet per second.

the ball must be natural and without tension or a feeling of discomfort.

Foot action is the basic fundamental of the game. Without good footwork, it is almost impossible for the body to turn freely, and at this early stage of instruction I spend some time impressing on the pupil the great importance of "balance" and correct footwork.

I always try to emphasize that golf players must be light on their feet. They must feel that most of their weight is on their heels, and not on their toes; that it is not necessary to lean far forward, as is often the case with many beginners. They should stand fairly upright, in a natural position.

Foot action in golf is easy and natural. It is simply a relaxation of the left leg and side as the body turns to the right, and again of the right leg and side, as the body turns to the left. This relaxation will prevent locking of the body, and can be compared to walking. When walking, the left foot relaxes as the right foot goes forward. The weight of the body in walking cannot be kept on both feet. The same applies to footwork in the golf swing, when the shift from left to right in the backswing, and from right to left in the downswing, takes place in a similar and natural way.

Before going on to teach the swing, where more will be said about the feet, I impress on the pupil the importance of balance, and its relation to footwork, without which the hands will never function properly to control the club.

Balance is the foundation of skill in any sport, perhaps most of all in golf.

Swing

ALL MOVEMENTS lead up to and follow the swinging of the club head. The swinging of a golf club is controlled by the hands, and the length and speed of the swing are controlled by the left arm. However, the easy turn of the body necessary for the swing is accomplished through foot action.

Before proceeding to teach the swing, I find it best to demonstrate it, so that the pupil may retain a mental picture of a full swing. This will make instruction much easier to follow. One demonstration is worth a hundred words, and when I am teaching new players, I never confuse them by saying too much. At the same time, I choose my words carefully so that I will be clearly understood. It is preferable to use a square stance when teaching a full swing, for the reasons described in the previous chapter.

Backswing

The beginning of the backswing is very important. It is a full left-arm movement, from the shoulder on down

to the hand, with the elbow straight. As the club head is swung around backward in a wide, upward arc, the complete left side—foot, knee, hip, and shoulder—turn fully to the right until it is possible to look at the ball over the left shoulder. This movement is called “pivoting.”

A combined movement of the left shoulder and left foot controls the complete pivoting of the left side. Without these two, the left foot and left shoulder, it would be impossible for the knee and hip to turn freely and fully. So that the left foot shall control the turning of the left side, allow the left heel to rise off the ground, and the remaining weight on the left leg to rest lightly between the ball of the foot and the big toe. This movement or pivot of the body is a perfectly natural one, as can be seen by standing upright and turning the body so as to face right or left as far as possible without moving the feet. Try this and you will see that on the extreme turn to the right the heel of the left foot leaves the ground, as does the heel of the right foot on the turn to the left.

As the body turns, the left arm is gradually swung around and up, so that when the full turning has been completed, the hands should be in a position just above the level of the right shoulder. At this point, the left arm should be comfortably straight, and the right elbow away from the body, but pointing towards the ground.

The backswing is not a difficult movement, and it should not be made to seem so. When I find that the pupil is having difficulty in turning or in keeping his left arm straight, I check the position of his feet; he may be keeping too much weight on his left foot.

The height at which the arms should be at the top of the swing depends entirely on the build of the pupil. Naturally, some may have to use a flatter swing. It would be foolish to have a pupil who would naturally use a flat swing raise his arms as high as one who will use a more upright swing.

Thus far, I have said nothing about the backward movement or break of the wrists, as to when they should "break" or "cock" during the backswing. This is a very much discussed subject and it is one of the most essential points to good swinging.

Some teachers believe they should break or cock at the beginning of the backswing and others when halfway up. I find no fault with experienced players who use either method, but I do believe the cock should come gradually, as the arm nears the completion of the upswing, and that in this way there is less effort and more consistency in the cocking of the left wrist.

Frequently I am asked by the pupil why the wrists should be cocked and why both wrists should be under the shaft at the top of the swing. To answer that, I go ahead a little and again demonstrate:

1. The club head swinging into the ball. I show that the speed and power for the downswing come in part from the "uncocking" of both hands in the downward motion.

2. That to hit the ball squarely, the face of the club must be kept open. I show the position of the face of the club when at the top of the backswing, that the face of the club is parallel to the line of play and that the toe of the club points toward the ground. The only possible



Fig. 13. As the backswing begins, note the wide arc of the club head and the left side turning to the right.

Fig. 14. Note the steady position of the head and the complete freedom and full turn of the left side at the end of the backswing.



Fig. 15. The left arm is comfortably straight.

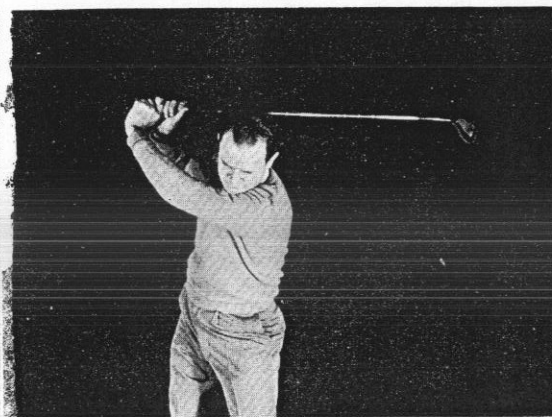
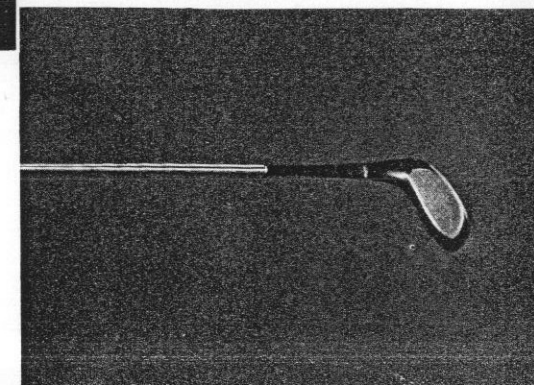
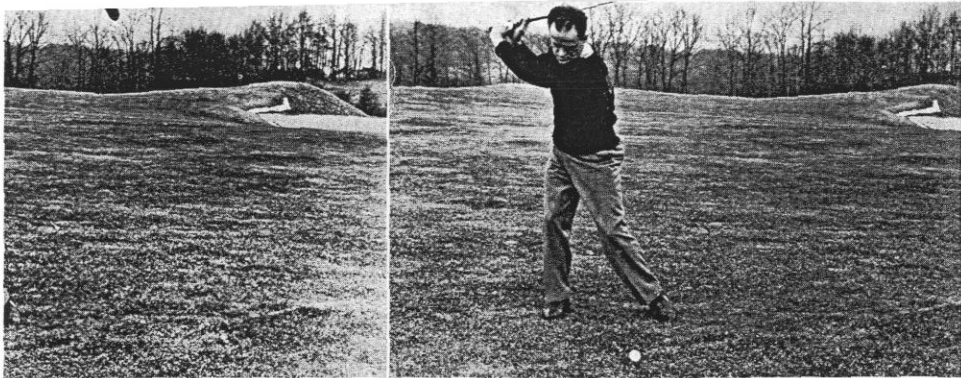


Fig. 16. The position of the club head at the top of the backswing with the toe of the club pointing towards the ground.



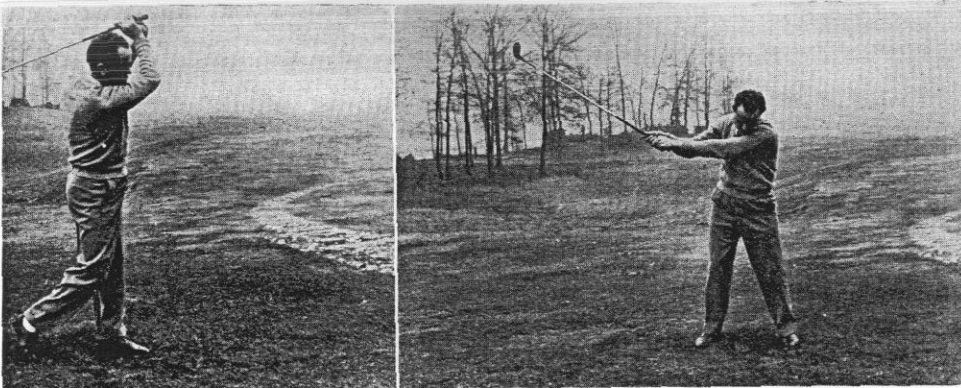


Correct body balance at the beginning of the downswing.

Fig. 18. Too much weight is shifted over to the right, and the body is too tense.



Fig. 19. Note the comfortably close position of the right elbow.



There is complete freedom in the full body towards the line of flight.

Fig. 21. The hands have been uncocked too soon at the beginning of the downswing.

way to get this position is to have both wrists cocked at the top of the swing.

All through the backswing nothing has been said about the right side. While the turning of the left side is going on, the right side will turn with it, and the main weight of the body will shift onto a firm, straight, right leg. But the turn should be a true pivot on the right leg, and not a sway of the whole body to the right.

I never attempt to go on to the beginning of the downswing until the upswing is practiced and thoroughly understood. Harry Vardon in his *Complete Golfer* says: "The upward swing is everything. If it is bad and faulty, the downswing will be wrong and the ball will not be properly driven."

Downswing

The beginning of the downswing is confusing to many players, not only to beginners but to some who have played for years. There should be nothing confusing about it; it is simply a downward movement of both arms with the left arm leading till the hands are about waist high. At the same time, the left heel goes back to the ground, so that the left side will be firm when the club head swings into the ball.

As both arms come down, the right elbow is kept fairly close to the body, so that the club head will descend in practically the same arc as was used in the upswing. Then, when both hands reach a position almost waist high, the wrists uncock themselves and reinforce the speed of the club head as it hits into the ball. In the meantime, as the club head swings on through, the right

side of the body is turning to the left, with the right shoulder down, so that it is possible at the end of the swing to look over it and see the spot where the ball was. The right knee is also turning inward to the left, and the weight of the body is firm on the left leg and foot.

Finish or Follow-through

The follow-through is simply a continuation of the swinging of the club head until the arms reach their full length. The body continues to turn until it faces the line of flight, and what little weight is on the right foot should be carried on the toes with the heel well raised. The hands carry the club around and up over the left shoulder, and they should finish in a position similar to the cocked position of the hands when at the top of the upswing.

The face of the club must meet the ball squarely, and to make this possible, the right wrist should never turn over to the left until after the ball has been hit, when it will do so automatically. At impact, the right wrist must be square to the line of play. Then, when the club head has gone on through, the hands will take care of themselves.

A very common mistake made at the beginning of the downswing is that of trying to develop speed by throwing the club head out at the top of the swing or, as it is often termed, "hitting from the top." This causes the hands to uncock too soon, and when the club head reaches the ball the power and speed in the hands have been wasted. The effect will be a push instead of a swing.

I find a very effective practice to stop this throwing out of the club head at the beginning of the downswing is to ask the pupil to place his feet together, with the heels touching, and then start the downswing. The effort of throwing the club out will cause him to come forward on his toes and lose his balance. I then have him take the same position and, instead of throwing the club head out as before, delay the uncocking of the wrists in the downswing until they have reached a position about waist high. The difference will immediately be felt. He will keep a proper balance and at the same time will feel the club head as it swings into and through the ball. This is one of the best ways of developing hand action and balance, and I have used it quite successfully in my work with Yale golfers.

When I find that the pupil has developed the feel of the swing, and that there is no effort required to swing the club, I allow him to swing at a few balls, using a brassie in preference to the driver. I usually warn him, however, that the purpose of this practice is to become accustomed to seeing the ball in front of him.

Don't become discouraged if you swing and miss; and regardless of where the ball finishes, concentrate on the swing, especially the movement of the hands when coming down into the ball. This procedure is often something of a mystery to the beginner, especially the injunction not to uncock the wrists until just before making contact with the ball. Turning the wrists back at the top of the backswing is a simple and natural thing if the hands are placed properly on the club so that the wrist (especially the right wrist) can be turned back. But the impulse to straighten out the wrists immediately

on the downswing is to most beginners irresistible and thus the extra force and speed of this movement is lost before the ball is reached.

An illustration which every man (and most women) will understand can be found in the swing of a hammer. Grasp an ordinary hammer, not a light tack hammer, as you would if you were driving a large nail into a piece of wood. Swing back the forearm, and at the top of the swing notice that you throw back the wrist. Now bring the hammer down and note exactly at what point the wrist straightens out. You will see clearly that the wrist straightens out as nearly as possible at the moment of hitting the nail—or rather, a split second before. That is, the downswing of the forearm is at the last moment reinforced by a quick additional wrist movement.

Position of the Head

We have now gone through the body, arm, and hand movements necessary for a full swing, but one thing still remains, perhaps the most important of all—the position and control of the head. During this whole procedure, the turning and pivoting of the body, the raising of the arms, the cocking of the wrists, and the reverse of these movements on the down swing, the position of the head, taken as the ball is addressed, must remain fixed and the same: the eyes rest easily on the ball. Don't hypnotize yourself by glueing your eyes to the ball, but remember that if you want to hit anything, a nail with a hammer or a dandelion with a stick, you must look at it at the moment of contact.

To hold the head in this steady position seems a simple

thing to do, yet, for the beginner, it is one of the most difficult. The tendency to look up and see where the ball is going before it has even been hit is very strong, and regardless of how often he has been told to keep the head steady, overanxiousness to see the course of the shot forces the player's head to move too soon, with the result that the eye is taken from the ball just before the moment of impact.

There are many ways of helping to overcome this fault, such as telling the pupil not to move his head until after the ball has been hit and he has counted "one, two, three." This method may help some, but it has its disadvantages because in some cases the attempt to keep the head down too long locks the neck and the entire right side of the body.

Another method is to have the player try to see the club head swing into the ball. Some players maintain they can see the club head hit the ball on every shot, but that is extremely doubtful. Recent experiments with high-speed photography show that the normal speed of the club head far outstrips the capacity of the eye to follow it. However, a player may well believe that he sees the club head make contact with the ball even if in reality he does not see it. For many players this belief will be a useful device to prevent raising the head too soon.

A simple yet very effective method of teaching the beginner to keep his head steady is to have him close his eyes when swinging. This method was experimented with in a mid-western university and was found very successful. Two groups of beginners were chosen. One group was taught to swing in the orthodox manner; that is, with eyes open. The other group was taught to

swing while blindfolded, and, odd as it may seem, the latter group made much faster and better progress than the first group. The blindfolded beginners were taught to feel the swing, that it was not necessary to see the ball when swinging, and that the main thing was to keep the head steady.

I have tried this on many occasions when all other methods have failed and have found it very successful.

Addressing the Ball

A SIMPLE BUT IMPORTANT preliminary to every shot is addressing the ball, which means taking a position in relation to the ball and the intended line of play.

There should be little difficulty encountered in this, yet a great many players, even experienced ones, do have trouble in finding the correct position and go through all sorts of movements in order to find the true position to the line of play. Nine times out of ten an inexperienced golfer will be playing to the right of the intended line, all because of trying to find his direction by looking over his left shoulder, thinking wrongly that both shoulders are parallel to the line of play.

In teaching how to address the ball, there are several steps, which, when taken in order and repeated with every club for every shot, will soon overcome any difficulty which may be encountered.

The method I teach and recommend to teachers as well as players is:

1. Grip the club and let the club head rest on the ground in its natural way.

2. From a position slightly back of the ball, place the club head on the ground so that the face of the club is directly at right angles to the line of play, keeping the center of the club head directly behind the ball without changing the position of the face of the club.

3. According to which club is being used, place the feet in their relative position to the ball. With woods, the position of the ball is generally opposite the left heel. As the length of the club and the required distance decrease, the position of the ball will be slightly back towards the right foot. With beginners, however, never play the ball farther back than the center of the stance with any club.

I advise my pupils to watch closely the procedure which the leading players follow when addressing the ball, and they will find that the great majority of them will do exactly as I have described.

I have found it well to prove that this method is easy and correct by picking certain objects to aim at, and asking the player to take his address as though to play to that object. Then, when he has taken his stance, I exchange places with him so that I may take his exact position, and enable him to stand directly behind the intended line of play and see for himself the position of the face of the club. Then, I ask him to move around to see the position of the ball in relation to the feet.

There are other methods and systems of teaching how to address the ball, many of which I have tried and found too complicated. Through experience I have found that the simplest method—the method I have described—is the best.

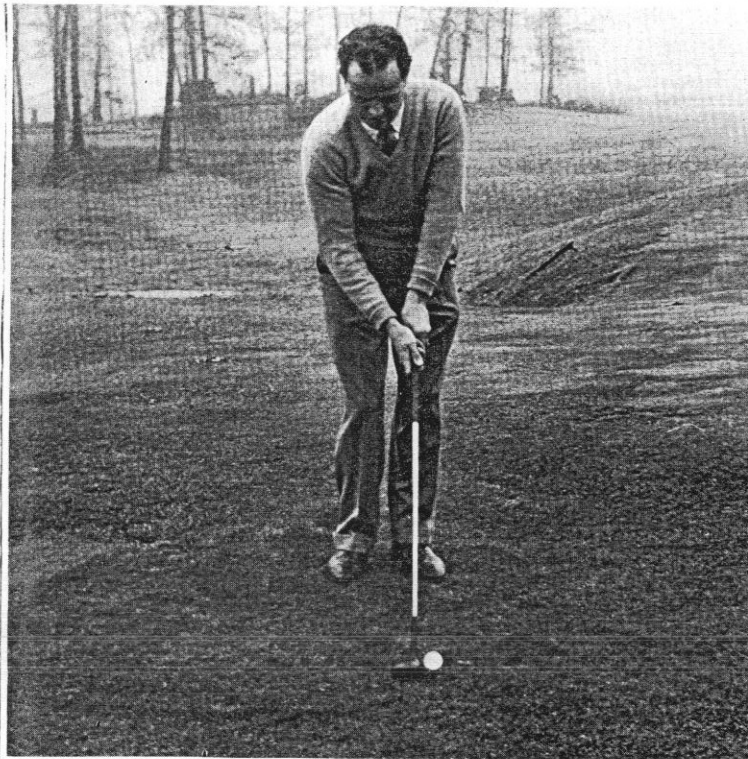
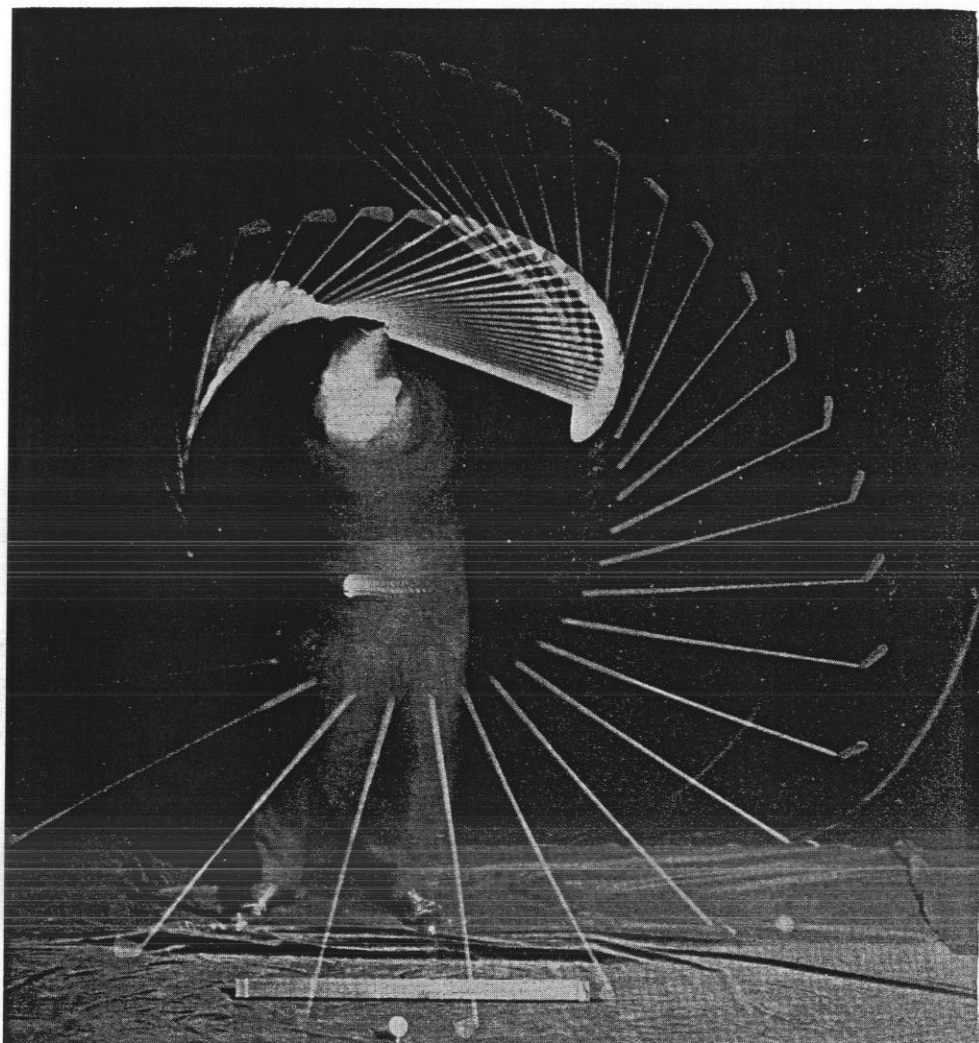


Fig. 22. A simple but sound method of addressing the ball. The face of the club is square to the line of play, and the position of the feet is slightly in back of the ball.



Fig. 23. The feet are then placed relative to the ball.



Courtesy A. G. Spalding & Bros.

ig. 24. A multiple-flash photograph of Bobby Jones with an iron. The time interval between photographs is $1/100$ second. The time of exposure of each photograph is $1/100,000$ second. Measured from this photograph, the ball velocity is 198 feet per second, the club velocity before impact is 136 feet per second, and the club velocity after impact is 102 feet per second.

5

The Mashie and Long Irons

A QUESTION OFTEN ARISES as to which is the best procedure in teaching: to start with the putter and work up to the full swing, or to start with the full swing and work down to the putter.

At Yale, it has been possible for me to try both methods, since during the winter months I give golf instruction indoors, and have the opportunity to teach a great number of beginners. From this experience, I have come to the belief that it is best to begin with a full swing, then proceed directly to the mashie. (The mashie in most sets is the No. 6 iron.) The full swing develops every action which enters into the swinging of a golf club, and the mashie develops the sensitive touch which is necessary when playing approach shots.

Mashie Shots

I have the pupil grip the club with the right hand only, with the pressure placed on the forefinger and

thumb, and let him swing several times until he gets the feeling of the swinging club head. (See Figure 25, opposite page 22.) It is not necessary to take a long swing; instead, just enough to feel the swinging of the club head. This should be repeated until it is clearly understood.

In suggesting the mashie, I do not mean that a full mashie shot should be played. A distance of no more than 50 yards is enough to begin with, because that is far enough to produce the effect of a full swing, and is not too short to lose the swinging movement of the club head.

I demonstrate the swing by playing a few shots, and let it appear that the swing is very easy; and I never discourage the pupil in any way by making the shot appear difficult.

I then explain the position of the feet by telling the reason for using a slightly open stance, and why the feet should be much closer together than when using the full swing. (See Figure 26, opposite page 22.) The explanation may be that:

1. The stance is slightly open to allow the left arm to swing the club head back on an almost straight line from the ball. As the club head swings through the ball, the finish is also on an almost straight line toward the hole, and does not come around the left shoulder as much as with the wood. Remember that the shot is one of direction, rather than of distance.

2. The feet are much closer together, since there is no pivoting required for a swing of this length. The length of the swing and the speed of the club head is controlled entirely by the left arm and the hands.

At this early stage of the game, I advise playing the ball from a point midway between the feet, and I say nothing about "hitting down" on the ball, or about "back-spin." Stress should be placed on the loft or angle of the face of the club, which is designed purposely to get the ball into the air. Therefore, no scooping or effort to get it up is necessary.

The beginning of the swing is again accomplished by the left arm, which should be kept fairly close to the body. The break of the wrist, though not so pronounced as in the full swing, is necessary to bring the club head (as it hits) into the ball. Note that the feeling for the movement of the club head is entirely governed by the forefinger and thumb of the right hand. On the down-swing, keep the right elbow fairly close to the body and both arms perfectly straight when the club head meets the ball. (See Figure 27, opposite page 22.)

This swing is a very important one and must never be passed over lightly, because it is the foundation for the play of all other irons.

It is perfectly natural for a beginner to want to see how far he can hit the ball. I usually let him try hitting it hard; he will soon discover that it is the wrong thing to do, and will presently be satisfied and happy to swing correctly and get a fair distance with little effort.

Until the pupil has a thorough grasp of the swing, and has developed a sensitive touch with the forefinger and thumb of the right hand, I never go on to the teaching of the other clubs; and when trouble develops in swinging the other irons, I go back immediately to the swinging of the mashie.

How far to stand away from the ball in the address is

a subject of discussion by many teachers. I find that to rest the heel of the club lightly on the ground behind the ball with the left arm hanging comfortably from the shoulder is a good indication of the distance at which the player should stand from the ball. The left arm should always have freedom to swing, and it cannot have it when held too close to the body, or too far away.

Long Irons

When the foundation is made solid by the perfection of the short mashie swing, I go on to teach the longer irons.

With the work which has already been done in teaching the "full swing" and the "short swing," the pupil is now ready to grasp the meaning of the swing for the other clubs. The work will now become much easier for the pupil and the handling of the club will become more natural.

From the short distance played when first using the mashie swing, increase the distance to between 75 and 100 yards, and continue with the mashie, using a little longer backswing with the left arm.

The ball is still in the same relative position to the feet as in the shorter distance, and it is not necessary to alter the stance in any way, for the left side is still in a position to pivot a little to allow for the extra length of the backswing.

It is rather difficult to state how far back the left arm should carry the club; much depends on the pupil, on his physical ability, and on how well he can use his hands when coming into the ball. I never encourage him to



Fig. 25. The swing for a short mashie shot should be controlled by the thumb and forefinger of the right hand.



Fig. 26. The feet are fairly close together.

Fig. 27. On the downswing the elbow is close to the body and the arms are straight as the club head meets the ball.





Fig. 28. Correct position of the club head on the ground.



Fig. 29. Incorrect position, with the club resting too much on the toe.

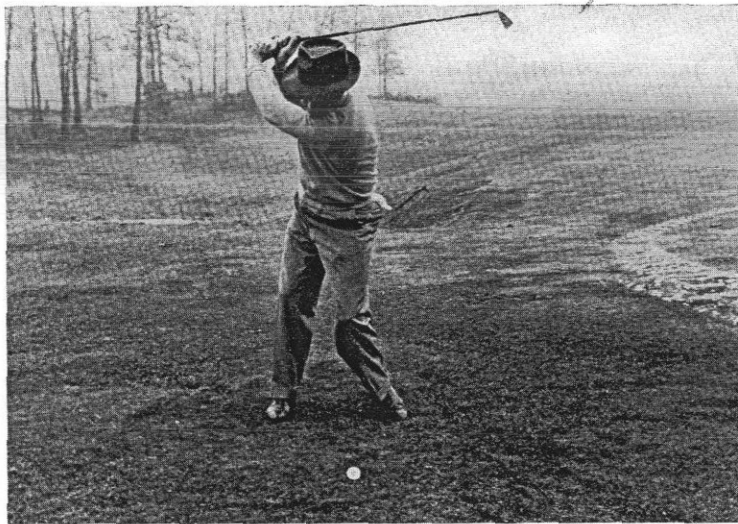


Fig. 30. Note the easy and full turn of the body with both hands firmly on the club.

go above the right shoulder, because the swing still calls for direction and accuracy, rather than distance. Not only with the mashie, but in all iron play, accurate direction is the goal to aim at rather than great distance.

You may wonder why I recommend having the ball played from a point midway between the feet when playing irons, and not back towards the right foot. I have found in teaching beginners that to place the ball in a difficult position is too confusing. They must first learn to swing the club head into the ball. The punch or sharp downstroke of the expert will come later when the hands are fully accustomed to control the club head near the bottom of the swing. In the meantime, play the ball from a position midway between the feet.

As you go on to longer irons, the stance is not as open as in the shorter ones. The left arm must swing a little longer, until the hands are about shoulder high, and to permit the longer swing, the body must pivot a little more and the left hand must again be fully cocked as in the full swing. The position at the top of the backswing with the long irons is almost identical with that of the full wood; to the beginner, the downswing and the finish are similar in every respect. (See Figure 30, opposite.)

A trial of this method of teaching the full swing, then the mashie, and then the long irons should demonstrate its ease and simplicity for the pupil. Perhaps it is not the only method, but in long experience I have found it successful and not in any way complicated.

Short Approaches

FROM THE LONG IRONS we proceed naturally to the short "approach" shot, or "pitch and run," played no more than 30 yards from the hole.

When teaching this shot, I usually take the pupil to some green which does not require a high pitched ball and which is fairly level, since it is a shot which requires delicacy of touch and finesse. To play to an undulating or rolling green would, by the uncertain roll of the ball, distract the pupil's attention from the hands and the club head, and cause a tightening of the arms.

A No. 6 or a No. 5 iron is the club I find best suited for this shot. The loft on either is sufficient to raise the ball from any fairway grass around the edge of the green, and the pupil is already familiar with both of these clubs.

Demonstration is very valuable here, and I try to be absolutely relaxed while playing a few shots so that the swing is made to appear a very simple one. To an experienced player, the shot calls for a great amount of

concentration and finesse with the hands, but to the beginner it is simply another shot to get the ball onto the putting green.

The grip is the same as when using any other club, the stance is again slightly open, and the ball should be played from between the feet, or slightly forward, in line with the left heel. There is absolutely no pivoting required, and the body should be perfectly relaxed. (See Figure 31, opposite page 28.)

The club head should be swung fairly close to the ground on the backswing, and on an almost straight line. The left arm is close to the body and the right elbow should be comfortably close to the right side.

Though the left arm controls the length of the back swing, the forefinger and thumb of the right hand control the club head throughout the complete swing.

After demonstrating and explaining the shot, I then have the pupil try a few, playing towards the flag stick. He should not worry if some of the balls stop short or go beyond the flag. What he needs at this stage is to feel the swing of the club head, and to see how little effort is required to produce the shot.

There are two common faults which I look for when the pupil tries his first few shots:

1. A tightening of both shoulders.
2. A stiffening of both hands.

Either one of them will cause the pupil to "push" the ball with too much right arm and hand.

The finish of the swing should be out towards the flag stick, keeping the right elbow and arm close to the body.

I stress again the use of the forefinger and thumb of

the right hand, because all approach shots will be difficult to control unless this is remembered.

When the pupil has made sufficient progress with the short approach, he may go back to a little longer distance, but not more than 50 yards, and play the same shot, using the same club. There is no new difficulty in added distance, except a little sharper hit with the right hand, and probably a slightly longer backswing with the left arm.

High Approach

The high approach—that is, lifting the ball sufficiently high to clear any obstacle, such as sand traps, long grass, or mounds, which may lie between the ball and the hole—is the next shot I teach, and it is one which may cause the pupil a little anxiety. At this stage in the pupil's progress nothing more should be attempted than a simple high pitch produced by a more lofted club, a No. 7 or No. 8 iron. A slightly longer swing will be required, but in other respects it will be the same as the previous approach shots.

I again demonstrate, but never try to stop the ball from running when it hits the green; that is, I never play a shot with back-spin, or use a cut or any other type of shot which I myself might use. The pupil is far from being ready to try any type of shot except an easy high pitch, and until he has mastered this, I forget any other type of approach. Nine times out of ten the simplest shot is best.

Putting

PUTTING IS THE SIMPLEST swing of the entire game. It is a swing or stroke which any player should be able to perform with ease.

As simple as it is, much depends on the correct swinging of the club head, or striking of the ball, and even to many experienced players, a short putt is something to be dreaded.

One need only go to some tournament, amateur or professional, and observe the many different methods used, as Woodrow Wilson said, for "putting an elusive ball into an obscure hole."

I would suggest again that the beginner start on a fairly level green, for the same purpose as when learning the short approach: to enable him to concentrate on the swinging of the club, and to avoid confusion by the uncertain roll of the ball over undulations.

Demonstration is again very valuable, but while demonstrating, I never play towards the hole, or to any other object, for, if I should miss a few, the pupil would

immediately sense that putting may not be as easy as it looks or should be.

When teaching putting, I recommend standing fairly upright, keeping the feet fairly close together and the stance slightly open, with the weight of the body comfortably placed on both feet. The grip changes a little, but not enough to cause any radical method of gripping; the change is simply a turning of the hands so that both wrists will be facing each other. This changed position will allow the hands to swing the club head in a free pendulum movement and help keep the club head close to the ground throughout the swing. (See Figure 32, opposite.)

Keep the left arm fairly close to the body and the right forearm comfortably close to the right thigh. This position of the right forearm will help the hands to swing the club head back on a straight line from the ball, and to swing through on a straight line to the hole.

The ball should be played from a position between the feet, or forward towards the left heel.

The putting stroke is a very sensitive one and requires a fine touch. That fine sensitive touch is applied by the forefinger and thumb of the right hand, and though some may disagree with me, these two fingers control the club head entirely throughout the putting stroke. They control the speed and the length of the swing, and though the left hand steadies the club, putting is essentially a right-hand stroke.

Before allowing the pupil to do any putting towards the hole, it is best for him to try a few without any particular object, so that he may get the feel of the swing, and an idea of how far the ball will roll when hit with

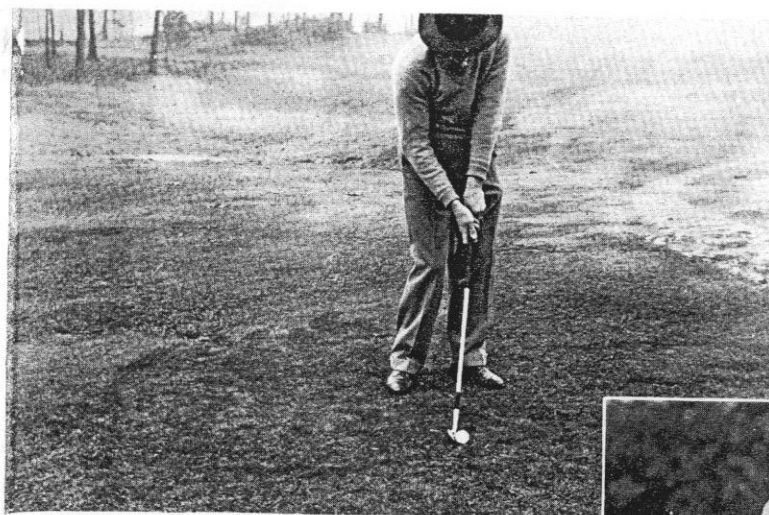


Fig. 31. For a short approach shot, the left arm is straight and the right elbow hugs the body.

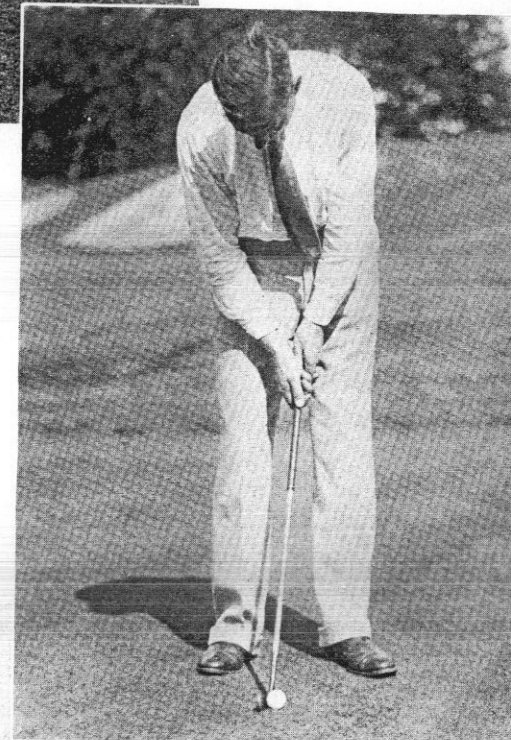


Fig. 32. In putting, note the fairly upright position of the body with the hands and arms quite close and the feet not too far apart.



Fig. 33. It is best to get well behind the ball when lining up a putt.

Sand Traps

BEFORE DISCUSSING the different methods of playing from sand traps, let me review briefly the many types of sand and sand traps which are likely to be encountered when playing different courses.

Seaside courses are fortunate in having sea sand to play from, fortunate in that the sand is always uniform, and, regardless of the weather, will keep the same texture indefinitely. The ball will very seldom be found buried, as it is very likely to be found in a sand trap on inland courses which may have to use sand from a sand pit. This type of sand after several rains becomes too soft and more or less like powder, so that when a ball drops into the sand, it is apt to be found almost buried. Then there is the sand trap which is a sand trap in name only, because no sand has ever been in it, and the ball may be found sitting up on bare ground or clay. On some courses the sand traps or bunkers will be shallow, deep, or very deep; some will have long grass planted in the

sand to make the shot more difficult; and some will have mounds or other irregularities inside them.

Under all these circumstances it would be rather difficult to stress any one method of playing from a sand trap. An "explosion" shot would be absolutely useless from bare ground, and a "chip" shot would be as useless for a half buried ball.

There are several ways of playing from sand traps, but the two which it is most necessary to teach are the explosion and the chip shot. All other ways and methods are slight variations of these two.

The pupil has already used the No. 6 and No. 7 irons for approaching, and it is advisable for him to carry on with either one of these two clubs and play chip shots from a shallow bunker; that is, a bunker where the bank is not steep, and the ball is resting clearly on top of the sand, or on the bare ground. I would suggest using the No. 6 iron, which has sufficient loft to raise the ball. As it is practically the same type of shot as the short approach, it is much easier for the pupil to understand. The main and important difference is that the club must not touch the sand when taking the stance or during the backswing. It is well at this point to explain why the club head should not touch the sand and that a penalty is involved if it does so. The reason is to stop players from grounding their club behind the ball and thus make it possible for the ball to be practically teed up. (See Figure 35, opposite page 32.)

The player will have a little difficulty at first in adjusting his grip when holding the club away from the sand, but a little practice will soon remedy that.

The grip, stance, and swing, as I have already said,

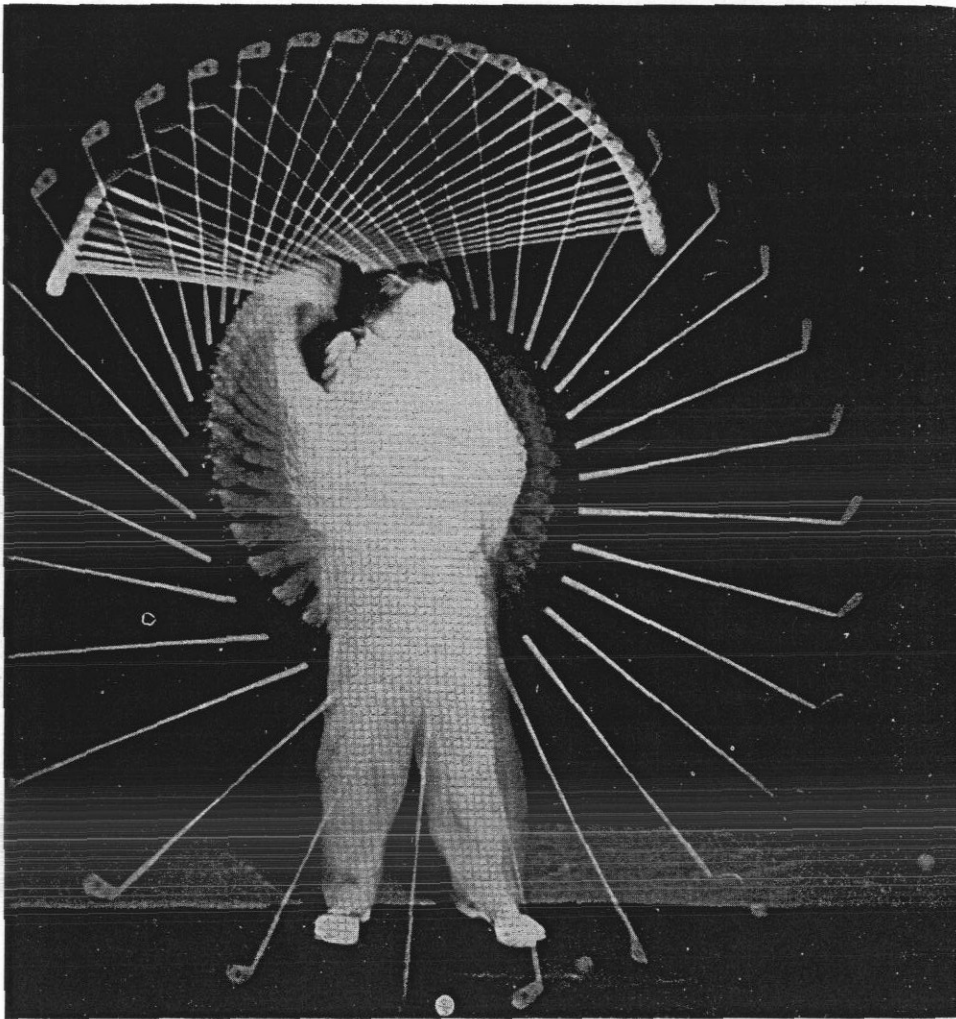
little effort. After he does that for sometime, allow him to play towards the hole.

I impress on him always to give the ball a chance to reach the hole, and to help him do that, I place a peg about six inches beyond it. That will help teach him to hit up to or slightly beyond the hole. (This cannot be done when playing; no mark shall be placed anywhere on the putting green. The penalty for doing so in match play is loss of the hole, and in medal play, two strokes.) If by chance I am teaching on a slightly undulating green, I show him how to find the roll of the green by squatting well back of the ball, keeping the ball in a line between himself and the hole. (See Figure 33, opposite page 28.) Then without marking or touching the line of play, I ask him to pick out some spot on the green between the ball and the hole and to play towards that spot, allowing for any roll the ball may take in following the contour of the green when played.

All putting greens will not be alike. Some will be faster than others, some will have different types of grass, and some will be more undulating than others. Only with diligent practice can one become a good putter.

The two most important things in putting are:

1. A slow, steady swing.
2. Keeping the putter close to the ground throughout the complete swing.



Courtesy A. G. Spalding & Bros.

34. A multiple-flash photograph of an ordinary golfer showing the twist of the head of an iron when a toe shot is made. Notice the trace left by the tee as it flies upward.

are practically the same as for the short approach. The right forefinger and thumb again control the club head, especially to carry the club head on through the ball.

When mastered, the explosion shot—the name speaks for itself—is the only sure method of playing from a sand trap when the ball is partly or wholly buried.

It isn't advisable in the beginning to let the pupil play a ball which is almost buried, since he will find it too difficult. Neither should he worry about making the ball stop when it hits the green. My first job is to teach the player to get out well from a reasonably fair lie; when I have accomplished that, then I have him play some which are partially or almost buried.

The sand wedge has helped many players tremendously in making the explosion shot, but I would never suggest its use, nor do I have my beginners use it when I teach this shot. The club is entirely too heavy and its heavier weight, as compared with the other clubs, makes it too hard to handle. It is much better to use the regular niblic.

The stance is still open, the feet are fairly close together, and the grip is the same; but I check carefully to see that the pupil does not grip too tightly, for the hands must have enough freedom to swing the club head through the sand. Note that I say "through" the sand, because it is the force of the club head hitting the sand which causes the ball to rise, and the amount of sand taken determines the distance which the ball will travel.

I emphasize the hitting point, and that in this particular shot, the club head hits into the sand rather than into the ball, for the reasons which I have already given in the preceding paragraph.



Fig. 35. In playing from a sand trap, the club head does not touch the sand while addressing the ball or making the backswing.

Fig. 36. The beginning of this backswing is too flat.



Fig. 37. Correct backswing for playing from a sand trap.



Fig. 38. The head is held steady while the hands complete the swing.



When teaching the explosion shot, I ask the player to take a fairly long swing, because, as the ball must be made to rise quickly, a more upright swing is required. Bunker play is difficult to many players, simply because they swing the club head too flat and too short, and instead of swinging through the sand and continuing to go "through and up" to the finish, they stop or bury the club head in the sand, with the result that the ball does not get a chance to move. A simple illustration and one which I use successfully is to describe the swing as a letter U, particularly when the ball is close to the bank of the bunker, and has only a short distance to travel. (See Figures 36, 37, and 38.)

Never stop the club head when it touches the sand; keep it going through and up.

Not knowing which kind of sand you may be playing from, it is impossible here to say how deep the club head should go into the sand, and my only advice can be: the closer you are to the green when in a sand trap, the more sand you must take.

Before leaving the sand trap, be sure to fill up your foot prints and all holes made by your club. This is not a rule, but it is a part of the etiquette of the game.



Courtesy A. G. Spalding & Bros.

Fig. 39. The impact of an iron and ball produces distortions of the golf club.
The time interval between photographs is 1/600 second.

Some General Advice

I HAVE NOW EXPLAINED and taught the use of the most essential clubs. Although the pupil is not yet ready to go out by himself on the course and play, he may, under the guidance of the teacher, learn more quickly and completely on the course itself the use of some of the clubs, and the most essential rules of play and the traditions of etiquette and usage.

When I feel that the pupil has progressed sufficiently, and that his swing is becoming natural, I take him onto the course to play a few holes so that the shots which have been taught and practiced can be tried under actual playing conditions.

There is a double purpose in this procedure:

1. That he may become accustomed to judging distance and to use the clubs which will enable him to reach the green comfortably.
2. That I may teach and demonstrate shots, which may not have been possible to teach or demonstrate while on the practice tee or fairway, such as shots from

the rough, or uphill, downhill and sidehill lies (these I shall discuss later), and to enable me to find any defects in the swing or handling of the club, so that they may be promptly checked and corrected.

Let us assume—an improbable assumption—that the pupil has never seen a golf course and lacks the most elementary knowledge of the game, such as “teeing off” from within the boundaries of the tee markers. The ball must never be played from in front of the tee markers, and never any farther back than two club lengths from the line of the markers.

In match play, if the player plays his ball from outside the limits of the teeing ground as indicated, the opposing side may at once recall the ball and require it to be replayed from within the limits without penalty; but in medal play, if a competitor plays his first stroke from outside the limits of the teeing ground, he shall count that stroke, tee a ball and play his second stroke from within those limits. The penalty for failing to do so is disqualification.

The difference between “match” and “medal” play should be explained. Match play is playing the game by holes; that is, the hole is won by the side which holes its ball in fewer strokes than the opposing side, and the match is won by the side which is leading by a number of holes greater than the number of holes remaining to be played. Medal play is a competition in total number of strokes, and the player with the fewest strokes at the end of the round or rounds is the winner.

Different rules apply and different penalties are incurred in match and medal play, and as I go along and

as opportunities arise, I explain the different rules and penalties pertaining to each method of play.

The swings with the driver and the brassie are similar in every respect, and it is preferable at first when driving to use the brassie, as the slight additional loft instills confidence.

Let us again assume that the player has "teed up" and played, that the ball is on the fairway, and that good length with a wood club is still required for the second shot. If, as is probable, I outdrive my pupil, I explain to him that he, being farther from the hole, must play again before I do, and that this procedure will apply throughout the entire game. The ball which is farthest from the hole must always be played first.

If the ball is not in a close lie, the brassie may again be used; otherwise it is best to use the spoon. The difference in the loft of the spoon from that of the brassie will enable the player to play the ball with less effort, and the difference in distance at this early stage of the game does not mean much.

Before going on to play my own ball, I allow the pupil to play a few balls with the brassie or spoon, so that he may gain confidence with either club. Regardless of the distance I may be from the hole with my own ball, I use an iron and take a divot, being very careful to see that the divot is replaced. Impress on the player that all divots must be replaced; it is the etiquette of the game. An incident concerning divots happened recently on the Yale course. A new caddie was sent out with one of our student players, and on the first hole, the player took quite a divot but told the caddie to pick it up, which he did, and the caddie faithfully picked up all the other

divots which the player took during the course of the round. When the round was completed, the caddie reached down into the bag and asked the player, "Do you want your divots?"

The ball is now close to the putting green (the putting green is all the ground, except hazards, within 20 yards of the hole being played), and the player has an approach shot to play. It may be a high approach, or a pitch and run; but regardless of which type of shot is to be played, the opportunity arises here to explain the difference in rules between match and medal play if the ball should hit the flag stick, or the person standing at the hole. In match play there is no penalty for striking the flag stick when it has not been removed or is not attended by either side; but in medal play, if the ball strikes, or is stopped by, the flag stick or the person standing at the hole, the penalty is two strokes.

After the approach has been played, and both balls are on the putting green, the rules for match and medal and the "stymie" may be defined. In match play no penalty is incurred if a player's ball strikes the ball of his opponent, but in medal play the player shall incur a penalty of two strokes, and the ball which was struck shall be at once replaced. A player is laid a stymie if on the putting green his opponent's ball lies in the line of his putt to the hole, provided the balls be not within six inches of each other. When within six inches of each other (on the putting green) the ball lying nearer to the hole may be lifted until the other ball is played, and the lifted ball shall then be replaced as near as possible to the place where it lay.

As I go along from hole to hole, I seize convenient

opportunities to explain different elementary rules, such as out of bounds, lost ball, water hazards, unplayable ball, or any such rules, but I do not give too many, else the beginner may become confused.

The United States Golf Association, or the Royal and Ancient Golf Club (the governing body in Great Britain) will furnish a copy of the rules as most recently drawn up, and will keep players informed of any changes which may be made.

10

Slicing

SLICING MAY BE ALL too well known to require a definition, but it is worth while to realize that in all cases it results from bringing the face of the club across the ball from right to left, which gives the ball a clockwise spin that carries it to the right of the line intended.

Slicing, to many players, is a chronic disease, and has caused more than one to give up the game in despair of remedy.

However, any player who has been taught correctly and who has a thorough knowledge of the fundamentals of the swing should have no great trouble with slicing. Don't misunderstand me: I am not saying they will never slice. Every player at some time or other will have, or has had, trouble with slicing, and so long as golf is played there will be only rare exceptions.

There are many faults which will cause the club head to hit the ball in such a way as to produce a slice, such as a wrong stance, an improper grip, the face of the club striking too openly, starting the backswing wrong, in-

sufficient pivoting, or a wrong beginning of the downswing.

There is no quick and lasting cure, such as turning the right hand far over on top of the shaft, or facing to the left of the fairway, or closing in the face of the club. These remedies or "tips" may sound fantastic, but I have had players tell me in all seriousness they had been taught some of these quick ways to cure a slice.

When a pupil develops a slice, I first check his grip: the position of the right forefinger knuckle may have slipped under the shaft instead of being on the right side. Perhaps he may not be pivoting enough; this will include the left foot, knee, hip, and shoulder. At the beginning of the backswing, he may be lifting the club with the right hand instead of swinging it in a wide arc with the left arm. Lifting with the right hand will retard the pivoting. At the top of the backswing, the right elbow may be away from the body too far and up in the air instead of being comfortably close to the body and pointing to the ground. At the beginning of the downswing, the hands may be coming forward, causing the right shoulder to turn too soon (this movement will cause the club to come down diagonally across the line of flight), or it may be that the stance is too open. Any one of these faults may cause the pupil to slice, but each can be easily spotted and corrected.

The two important points I look for and the two which I find most generally cause the slice are insufficient pivoting of the left side, and faulty beginning of the downswing. I make the pupil turn more freely and fully on the backswing and on the downswing, keeping

the right elbow close to the body so that the club head may swing into the ball from the inside.

Slicing isn't always an evil. It is a necessity at times, such as when one is playing a dog-leg hole to the right, playing around trees or hazards which may be in the direct line of play to a hole, or allowing for a "fade." A fade shot is one in which the ball is played to the left, but as it nears the end of its flight, turns off to the right.

When learning how to play an intentional slice it isn't necessary to change the position of the hands. Simply open the stance slightly more than usual, allow the backswing to be more on the outside of the true line to the hole, and make the turning or pivoting of the left side less pronounced than in a regular swing. From this position the club head will swing into the ball diagonally from right to left, and at contact the ball will start its flight with a left to right spin, producing a slice. (See Figure 40, opposite page 48.)

I demonstrate a few, and then have my pupil try some. He will soon realize that it isn't a difficult shot, and that it will be a tremendous help in time of need.

We all have seen and probably have played an "intentional slice," and as a matter of interest to the pupil, I tell him of some outstanding shot of that kind. The one I usually describe was played by Walter Hagen. In the Ryder Cup matches played at the Worcester country club in 1927, Hagen was paired with Johnny Golden in the "foursome" matches (if two play against two, each side playing one ball, the match is called a foursome) against Ted Ray and Fred Robson of the English team. On the 16th hole, Golden drove into the woods on the right of the fairway, leaving Hagen to play the ball

which was stymied by a tree. The flagstick was directly behind a bunker guarding the right of the green. This left Hagen with two alternatives, either to play safely onto the fairway, or try to reach the green. He decided to play for the green, and with just room enough to swing his club, he swung and the ball started off towards the left of the fairway, then changed its course of flight to the right. The ball barely missed the bunker guarding the green and finished a few feet from the hole. It was a very important shot and had a bearing on the outcome of the match, which the Americans finally won.

II

Hooking

"HOOKING" IS A CHRONIC ailment with many players just as slicing is with others. It is to be distinguished from the "pull" which is explained later.

In discussing hooking, I am referring to a "quick hook" or a "smothered ball"; that is, a ball that leaves the club head and flies directly to the left of the fairway and usually into the rough or out of bounds. This is not so much a matter of giving a left-hand spin to the ball, as of coming into the ball with the face of the club head quite closed.

One of several causes may be the trouble and the same methods of checking the swing to locate the reason for slicing should be employed here. The faults I generally look for are:

1. An incorrect grip. The left hand may be over too far on top of the shaft, or the right hand may be under the shaft too far; either one may be the cause.
2. A stance which is too closed. This will cause the left arm to swing the club head back in too sharp an arc,

or too much inside, so that on the downswing the club head will not have enough room to meet the ball squarely, but will be rolling into the ball and around to the left too sharply.

3. That the face of the club may be "toed" or turned in to the left too much at the beginning of the swing.

4. That the right elbow may be too far out from the body on the downswing. This will cause the face of the club to be turned in to the left as the club head comes in contact with the ball.

Anyone of these four faults will cause the ball to hook, and the most common of them is the last. If I find this fault, I demonstrate the position of the face of the club when the right elbow is out from the body at the hitting position, then drop the right elbow back against the right side and the face of the club will immediately return to a square position to the intended line of flight. A simple illustration is that of a fighter throwing a straight punch. To do this, his right arm must be close to the body, thus keeping the elbow straight. But if he hits with a right "hook," his right elbow will be out and away from the body. (See Figures 41 and 42, opposite page 48.)

A hooked ball and a ball which has a slight "pull" are entirely different things. A ball with a slight pull—that is, with a rotation from right to left when the ball leaves the club head—may start off slightly to the right of the fairway, and then, as its speed diminishes, come round towards the left or center of the fairway. A "pulled" ball generally runs some distance when it hits the ground.

This is a very valuable shot, and many experts use it

when playing woods, and in many instances when playing long irons to an "open" green, that is, a green which has no hazards close to it. It is also a valuable shot to use when playing around to the right of a hazard which may be directly in the line of play, or when playing a dog-leg hole to the left.

When teaching this type of shot, I have the pupil close his stance. With some players, the right hand may have to be moved under the shaft slightly more than usual, and the arc which the club head will describe as it swings into the ball will be much more "inside."

As the club head comes in contact with the ball, the ball will start off slightly to the right with a right-to-left spin; and when the ball hits the ground, this spin will cause the ball to run, adding additional distance. (See Figure 43, opposite page 48.)

Uphill, Downhill, and Sidehill

THE TEST of a good golfer is his ability to play shots when the ball is not level with his feet; that is, when the ball is lying on an uphill slope, a downhill slope, or where the player may have to stand above or below it.

There is nothing more satisfying to a player than to play a shot well from any of these four positions. It calls for skill and concentration, and when it can be accomplished, much has been achieved.

When teaching how to play from these different positions, it is best for the pupil and much easier for him to follow my instructions if I demonstrate the shots from gradual slopes, and not from positions where the slopes are too steep.

The player must be warned when playing from any one of these hilly positions that distance must be disregarded, and that the whole effort must be on accuracy. He must strive for accuracy because the weight of the body is distributed in an uneven manner and a full turn of the body (when playing woods) cannot be obtained.

The club must be absolutely under control; the shot must be played easily and with a slow swing.

A very simple formula to follow and one which can easily be remembered is: always allow the club head to follow the contour of the ground.

If the ball is being played on an uphill slope, the club head will come into the ball with a flat swing, and will rise quickly after impact. When the ball is on a hanging or downhill lie, the club head will contact the ball from a more upright swing and on the follow-through the club head should be kept as low as possible.

One cannot give any set rules on how all of these four shots should be played, nor which clubs should be used. Too many elements enter into each one such as the degree of the slope, the character of the lie, the distance to be played, wind, and other conditions peculiar to each case. However, I shall try to describe as nearly as possible the general method of playing from each position.

Uphill

When playing from an "uphill" lie, it is advisable to stand a little closer to the ball than when on the level, and to use a slightly closed stance. The weight of the body will be more on the right foot, and as the right side of the body will be much lower than the left, the backswing will naturally be much lower or flatter than ordinary.

The club head as it follows the slope of the ground will be more inside than when on level ground, and the result of the shot will be a pull. Allow, therefore, for the pull by aiming slightly to the right of the intended

48 UPHILL, DOWNHILL, AND SIDEHILL

line of play, and after impact, allow the arms to swing through with a long sweep up the slope of the hill. (See Figures 44 and 45.)

Downhill

When the ball is to be played from a downhill slope, the first thing to observe is the angle of the slope. If a fair distance is required and the slope is too steep, never try to play a wood club; it is much safer to use a long iron. The chances of getting the ball to rise will be much greater with an iron than with a wood. The position of the ball in relation to the feet does not vary much from the position when playing from level ground, though in some instances, when the slope is steep, the ball may be played slightly farther back towards the right foot. Because of the slope of the ground, the weight of the body will be more on the left foot, which means that the pivoting of the left side will be less, and since the club head should follow the contour of the ground, the backswing will be more upright than usual. This means that when the club head strikes the ball, there will be a tendency for the ball to slice, so that one must allow for the slice by playing toward the left of the line of play. The club head, still following the slope of the ground will go on downhill and care must be taken to let it do so, otherwise the ball will be "scooped" away. (See Figure 46.)

Sidehill—Ball Below Feet

In playing a sidehill shot when the ball is below the feet, balance is the most important factor; the weight



Fig. 40. In order to play an intentional slice, the backswing should be started slightly outside the line of play.

Fig. 41. Wrong position of the right elbow—too far from the body.



Fig. 42. Correct position of the right elbow as the club head comes in contact with the ball.

Fig. 43. When playing for a "pull," the stance is closed, and the backswing and downswing are inside the true line of play.





Weight is on the right leg and ball on the feet for an uphill lie.

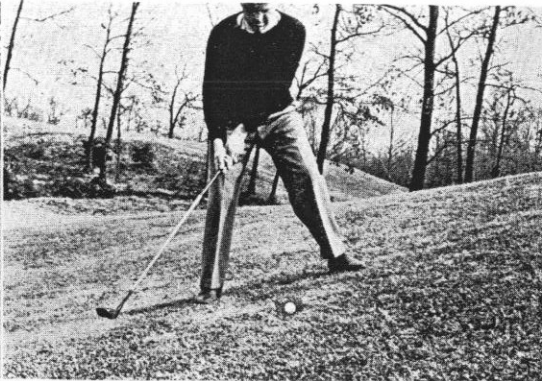


Fig. 45. The club head is kept low on the backswing for an uphill shot.



Fig. 46. Weight on the left leg, ball nearer the right foot for a downhill lie.



The stance is open and the hands kept low for a sidehill shot with the ball below the feet.



Fig. 48. The stance is closed and the weight is well forward for a sidehill shot with the ball above the feet.

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will naturally be mostly on the toes and, to compensate for this, open the stance slightly.

In playing a shot like this, the swing will inevitably be more upright than usual, and the ball will generally be sliced. Therefore, allow for the slice by aiming slightly to the left. Since the tendency when playing this shot is to top the ball, it is advisable to use a longer club than usual, and not to pivot or turn the left side as much on the backswing as when playing from the level. Above all, keep your balance. (See Figure 47.)

Sidehill—Ball Above Feet

It is rather difficult to play a sidehill shot when the ball is above the feet. Great care must be taken with the position of the hands. A mistake which many players make in this shot is holding the hands too high above their normal position. This position creates a tendency to strike down on the ball too much. The shot must be played with a flat swing, and the hands must be kept low. From this position it is desirable generally to use a short club, or to grip well down on whatever club is used.

The swing, like all others when the ball is not on the same level as the feet, must be slow and deliberate. To try and hit the ball hard will throw the body out of balance, and that will be fatal.

Be careful to address the ball in this position nearer the heel of the club, as the tendency here is to play the ball from too much off the toe of the club.

The swing will be much shorter than usual, and the ball being above you, the club head will swing back low,

and the result here will again be a pull. (See Figure 48.)

Play these shots slowly and carefully, study the slope of the ground, and play for direction rather than distance.

Rough

PLAYING FROM THE ROUGH is not quite so difficult as at first appears, and when teaching a beginner to play from the rough for the first time, I take him to some spot where the rough is not too long. The short rough just off the edge of the fairway will be long enough to start with.

As in sand traps, conditions vary, and to my knowledge, except for a few seaside courses, we in the United States do not have the same type of rough to play from as in England and Scotland, where one has to play from "heather," "whins," "gorse," or long "eel" grass, all of which grow alongside the edges of the fairway.

Our rough is generally long grass which is allowed to grow at varying lengths, and when allowed to grow too long is just as hard to play from as the Scottish gorse or whins.

When teaching how to play from rough, I do not find it necessary to have the pupil play towards any object, nor need distance enter into consideration. The

stance should be slightly open, and the backswing more upright than usual; a more upright backswing will help to prevent the club head from entangling with the long grass, and as the club head swings through, the finish is more upright, as in a sand trap.

It is possible to get distance from short rough, and the choice of club depends entirely on the texture and depth of the grass; but until the pupil has become accustomed to making the ball rise sharply, and before he goes on to play from deep rough, he should forget distance.

The procedure in learning to play from deep rough is different from that of short rough. As in short rough, distance need not enter into this shot, and the position of the ball should be studied and played to the nearest fairway or open spot. The procedure in playing this shot is similar to the explosion shot in sand traps, with the addition of opening the face of the club slightly. The opening of the club head will help to reduce the resistance of the long grass as the club head swings through, and at the same time it will cause the ball to rise more quickly.

Perfect use of the hands is very essential to play this shot well, and again I advise using the forefinger and thumb of the right hand to control the club head as it swings into the ball.

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Wind

NOTHING IS MORE CONFUSING to the beginner than playing when a strong wind is blowing.

Wind is one of the natural elements which must be confronted, and a general idea of how to play under all windy conditions should be learned by every beginner. The knowledge of how to play shots into a head wind, when the wind is directly behind, or when the wind is blowing across the fairway from either direction, will give the beginner confidence; and he will not be left to flounder around fighting the wind instead of taking advantage of it.

My first advice is: never fight a wind by swinging fast; rather, take more time and swing much slower than usual. Speed is not essential when playing into a head wind; a slow, deliberate stroke is preferable, and much better results will be obtained.

Head Wind

Let us begin with a head wind; that is, with a wind blowing directly against you. Assuming the ball is

being played from the tee, the tendency with many players is to tee the ball as low as possible, thinking that by doing so that the ball will be kept low. With many players that method is quite successful, but I find that to keep the ball low, which of course is necessary, it is better to tee the ball fairly high, and play it from a position back more towards the right foot than when playing under normal conditions.

It is not necessary to change the stance or grip in any way, but the weight of the body should be slightly forward and on the left foot, and the face of the club should be turned in very slightly. Naturally, with the weight of the body being slightly forward and on the left foot, the right shoulder will be higher than it ordinarily would be. The purpose of this position will be to enable the player to hit the ball cleanly on the downward swing, and, as the face of the club will be slightly closed at contact, the ball will start off low, and slightly pulled. To take advantage of the pull, play to the right of the intended line of play. (See Figure 49, opposite page 58.)

Following Wind

To play with a following wind is practically the reverse of playing into a wind.

The stance is still the same as under ordinary conditions, except that the weight is more on the right foot, and the ball is played from a position slightly more off the left foot. It isn't necessary to tee the ball too high. I would recommend just the regular height. The weight of the body being more on the right foot, will keep the right shoulder down low, and the whole effect

of this position and swing will be to hit the ball up. (See Figure 50, opposite page 58.)

Cross Wind

The player has already been taught to play an intentional pull and an intentional slice. Here is an opportunity to use his knowledge and take advantage of cross winds.

Many players have been taught to play against a cross wind unwisely. For example, when the wind is blowing from right to left, they have been advised to fight that wind by playing into it with a slice from left to right. That method is perfectly sound when playing an approach to a green, when the ball must be made to stop; but when playing for distance, I find it advisable to teach a beginner to take advantage of a cross wind by playing with it. That is, if the wind is blowing from right to left, it is much better and easier to play a ball which will start off to the right with a pull, and allow the wind to bring it back to the fairway. Greater distance will be gained in this way than if the ball were to come in and meet the wind.

The reverse remains true when playing into a wind from left to right. Play with an intentional slice, and again greater distance will be achieved than if played with a pull to meet the wind.

My advice to beginners, or to any others, when playing on a windy day is to swing slower than usual.

Competitive Golf

WHEN A PUPIL has mastered the strokes which have been explained and illustrated, he will do well at first, if possible, to play directly under the coaching of an instructor or of some more experienced golfer in whom he has confidence. Then, it is best for him to play alone for a time, until he has gained confidence in himself; I do not advise him to plunge at once into competition with opponents, either beginners like himself or more practiced golfers. Competitive golf is, of course, the goal, but for the beginning golfer it is a prolific source of unlearning what he has laboriously acquired. The temptation to wallop the ball, to look too soon to see whether he has cleared a barrier or made the green—these and similar vices rear their heads and the problem of swinging correctly and carefully is displaced by the problem of beating the other fellow. And yet, the game's the thing, and eventually he must emerge and take his chances with other players.

There are two types of play recognized in the game:

match and medal. The first needs no definition, for obviously each hole is a competition against an opponent to finish or "hole out" in a smaller number of strokes. Medal play is a less obvious designation, and means that the total number of strokes throughout the eighteen holes taken by each player decides the winner. Except for convenience and economy of time, the medal players might play by themselves, were it not for the check that is demanded upon the individual score by the presence of another observer.

The merits of the two types of game are a constant topic of discussion among players, and are forced upon the committees who are charged with arranging tournaments with many entries. Except for the purposes of eliminating a weaker group of players, or allowing individual experts to try to establish a low record, there is not much to be said for medal play. It is a lonesome, solitary sort of game, in which the player's real opponent or rival is not (unless by chance) the man with whom he is touring the links, but someone quite unknown to him in quite another part of the field, or even some unknown who played yesterday or may play tomorrow. It is like a handicap yacht race which finds the ignorant crowd cheering the first boat across the line, only to discover next morning that that boat placed tenth or perhaps last. The only moment of competitive excitement comes when all the players have turned in their cards and the committee announces the lowest scores.

Nevertheless there are players who excel at this sort of game, and who do their best work concentrating on each shot undisturbed by the successes or errors of an

immediate competitor. But while it lacks the agitations which an alert competitor would furnish, it nevertheless has its worries. A single bad hole will be enough to convince the player that he might as well tear up his card. (Surely, someone out there is doing the course in par or very near it!) Or again, there is a chance for a "birdie" if you will go for it boldly. The match player keen on getting the better of his partner takes the chance; he would be ashamed otherwise. Perhaps he makes it; perhaps not. But the miserly medal player, counting his strokes like so much gold, will run no such risks, with the general result that while his average is good, he falls short of his best. If, after the first round of medal play, the leading low scorers are paired together for the final round a kind of game combining the merits of both styles of play may arise to enliven the monotony. But, after all, such devices and, indeed, medal play itself, is an afterthought, a refinement upon the natural fundamental business of a game which is not so much a struggle to establish records as it is a battle to beat a competitor in open and continuous play.

The real game of golf is match play, the elimination of one competitor after another until the surviving pair meet in final struggle. Even though you never take part in such a tournament of elimination, the underlying idea of a friendly twosome or foursome is the same direct competition, stroke for stroke, and hole for hole. This is the sort of thing which brings out other qualities than the making of shots. It is where mental attitude, disposition, nervous control, and the "poker face" contribute to the result. Golfers call it temperament and the man who has "golf temperament," or who has ac-



Fig. 49. When playing into a head wind, keep the right shoulder higher than usual.

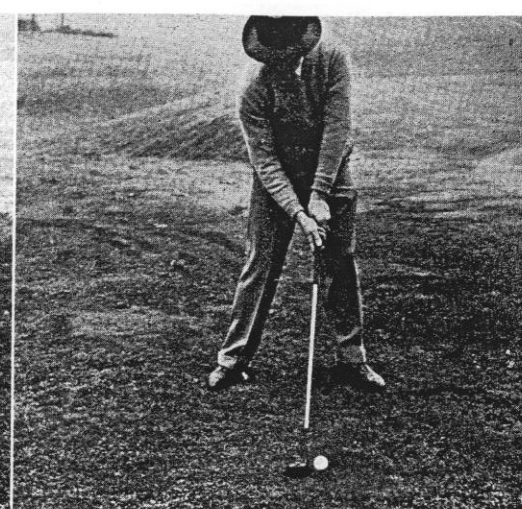


Fig. 50. The right shoulder is lower than usual when playing with a following wind.



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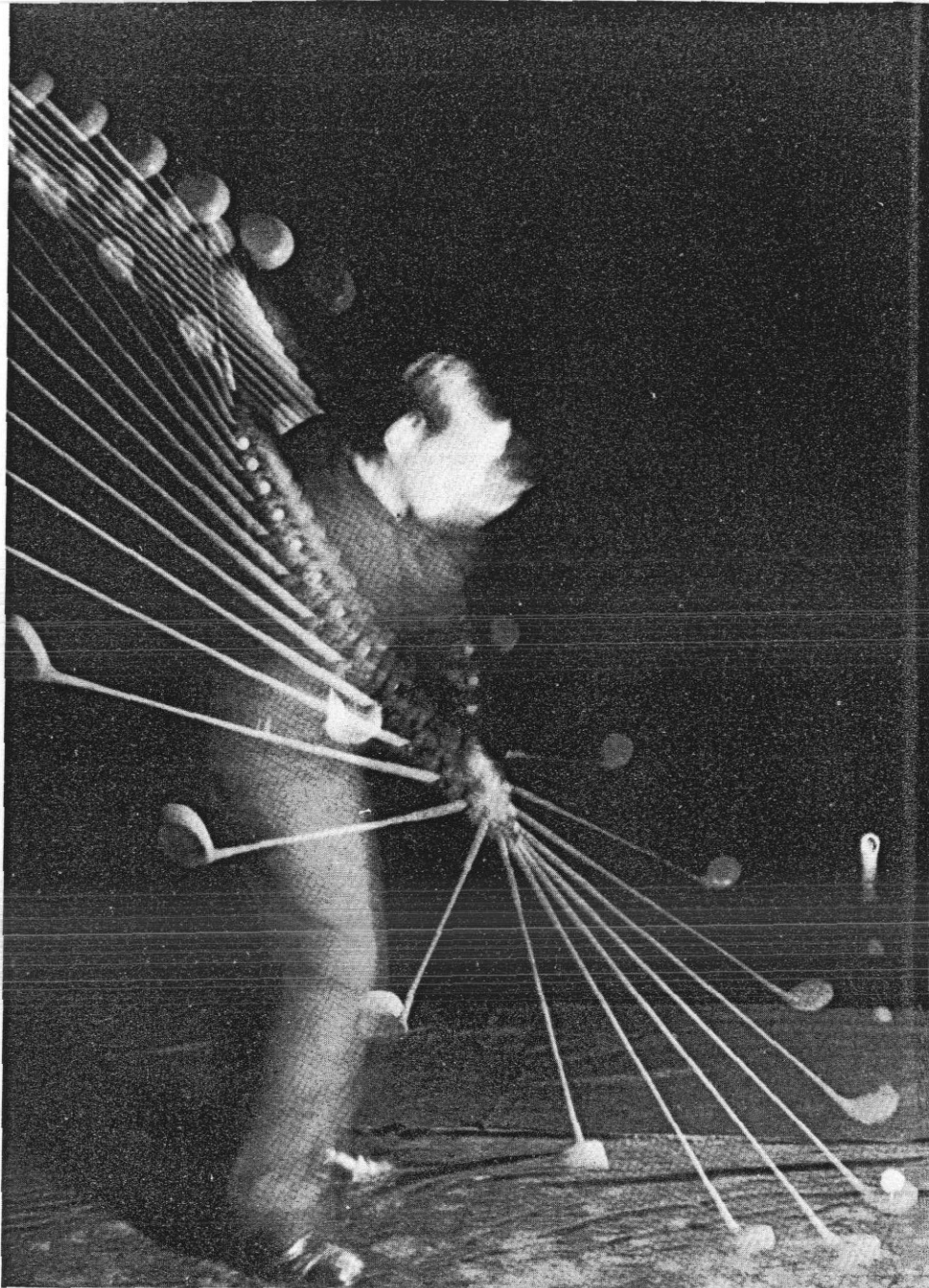
Fig. 51. The Yale golf team which toured England and Scotland in 1937. Front row: Merritt, Jamison, Munson (Captain), Meister, and Lauck. Rear row: Walker, Verity, Reigeluth, Thomson (Coach), Amory, Borsodi, and Arthur (Manager).

quired it, is generally successful, even though his game is no better than that of his opponent. He cannot, of course, win without steady play, but he is one who is not discouraged if his drives are short of his opponent's, who does not press his shots when he is "down," but assume an attitude of unconcern for his opponent's success and his own mistakes.

Sir Walter Simpson, in his old-fashioned but delightful book, *The Art of Golf*, remarks with whimsical humor: "Next to the idiotic, the dull unimaginative mind is the best for golf." I would qualify that statement by saying that the *outward appearance* of a dull, unimaginative mind is well suited to golf. Inwardly, however, the successful golfer must be alert to watch his chances, to learn from his opponent's shots where to place his own, and to take advantage of every opening; in short, to add a conscious element of strategy to his ability to make shots.

These points were brilliantly illustrated in a recent victory of Paul Runyan over Sam Snead. Runyan was everywhere much shorter in his game than Snead; on long holes he was frequently short of the green with his second, but, by brilliant approaching and putting, and skillful strategy, he wore down his long-hitting opponent.

Between two closely matched opponents, it is the game from 100 yards off the green to the pin which decides victory. The besetting vice of nearly all amateurs at this point is timidity, the fear of overshooting the cup. In reality, there is no more danger in being 15 or 20 feet beyond the hole than in being the same distance short, and meantime there is the chance that the



Courtesy A. G. Spalding & Bros.

52. A side-view multiple-flash photograph of Bobby Jones. Time interval between pictures is 1/100 second.

hole itself may gobble the ball in passing. That chance, small as it is, does not exist for the shot that is short; I have yet to see the cup move forward to embrace an on-coming ball. But there is more room for skill at the green than being straight and up. There are many problems such as placing the ball so as to use a slope or undulation of the green for favorable roll, avoidance of the necessity of a downhill or sidehill putt, and others dependent upon the nature of the green or the player's own preferences.

In regard to putting, the old rule used to be (and courses are generally laid out to observe it): two, or occasionally three, strokes to the green, and two putts. But our modern top-notchers hope to get his second shot near enough to the pin to hole out in his third. He doesn't always do it, but there is no really low scoring without it. A beginner after some experience will not be in that class, but he may learn a lesson from it. Play to hole out the first putt and, even if you don't succeed, you will probably be in better position than if you took an approach putt and then a final putt in orthodox fashion. Sometimes your final may well be a third instead of the second which you planned.

Golf is too uncertain to concede anything. It weakens character to concede putts, and presently, from too much indulgence in this form of generosity, your opponent is doing the conceding for himself and assuming that anything within a yard of the hole is conceded. It is too late to protest; for, if you readily grant 12 inches from the hole, it would be churlish to object to 13, and then 14 and 15 up to extravagant distances. The only safe posi-

tion is to agree at the outset to observe all the rules and accept all the penalties which the rules impose.

Another bit of advice may sound obvious, but there is value in it: play to win, particularly if you expect to become a golfer, and are not merely out to take the air. If you are in the lead, aim to keep the lead, and if possible increase it; and by the same token, until your opponent has you dormy, never give up and slacken your play. You can never tell when your opponent may crack, and remember that as a rule you will win more games by your opponent's errors than by your own success, much as the latter is to be desired. Some small wager on the side, if it be no more than a cigarette, or at most a golf ball, will be a useful tonic. Lazy easy-going games of pleasant scoffing and familiar banter, with no strict observance of rules, are a kind of golfing holiday which may be occasionally indulged in when the weather is too hot or the course too wet for the best play, but if they become a habit between a group of friends, there is an end to improvement, and deterioration sets in. The next stage is the habitual slice, the vicious hook, the frequent fizzle, and the final retirement of the once hopeful golfer to the club-house gallery of old men.

Finally, let me pass on a grand piece of advice which was once given to me. When playing in competition, whether match or medal, remember that some shots will not come off just as you planned them; so, as you miss them, forget them, because your competitors will be doing the same thing. No rules can be laid down to make a man a good competitor whether in match or medal play, but try to be steady, keep cool, and play boldly without pressing.

Team Play

IN THE PREFACE, I wrote that the golf coach is finding a place in public and private schools, colleges, and universities. His duties are not confined to teaching beginners and correcting the faults of more advanced players; he must teach a selected squad how to play as a team.

Assuming the coach has picked his squad (a procedure which he will always do in his own way), his next step is to find which combinations of players will be the best. It does not always hold true that his best players taken in rotation will play best together as a team; for example, taking the best player at Number 1, and so on down the line, until the weakest man is playing in the last position.

From long coaching experience, I find that the strongest combinations should be the first two pairs, while still keeping a strong player to play with the weakest member at the end of the team. In this way, each player is strong enough to play against his opponent

and at the same time help his partner in the foursome match. At this point, it may be well to explain the procedure in intercollegiate matches. In the Eastern Intercollegiate league, all teams consist of six men, and all matches are played in foursomes, with a total of three points, one each in the individual matches, and one for the best ball, making a total of nine points for the complete three matches. The matches are played in this manner to save time, and three matches may be played against different teams over the week-end, one on Friday afternoon, one Saturday morning and the last Saturday afternoon.

In other parts of the country, the Nassau system is used; that is, a point is given to the winner of each match, single and best ball at the end of each nine holes, just as in a regular Nassau game.

The system of playing team matches in the English and Scottish universities is entirely different from ours, and if it were possible to find the time to adopt their style, our team matches would be much more interesting and more beneficial to each player. Under that system, the regular foursome matches are played (two play against two, taking alternate shots) in the morning, and the singles in the afternoon.

In this way of playing, the combinations in the foursome must be very carefully selected, and very often a strong player and a weak player may be teamed together without placing too much responsibility on the strong player. Then, in the afternoon when the singles are played, strength can be played against strength, and weakness against weakness.

In the summer of 1937, I had the privilege of accom-

panying the Yale golf team on an extended tour through England and Scotland, and all of our matches were played in the above manner. Naturally, it was strange at first to the boys and we had to keep trying different combinations until we finally found our strongest in the foursome. When we did, we held our own, and made a creditable showing. (See Figure 51, opposite page 58.)

On many occasions I have seen teams placed with the Number 1 man playing in his regular position and a weaker man as his partner, and so on down the line to the last combination. This procedure may have to be followed out in cases where there are no more than two or three strong players on the team, but I would never advise it. It places too much responsibility on the shoulders of the strong player, who, instead of concentrating on his own individual problems, has also to worry about the best ball. Never split a combination which plays well together, even though it might help a weaker combination.

Some players play much better with one in whom they have confidence, and though they may not be the best individual players, their team work will be strong.

Team play is like other competitive golf—a player cannot be timid; he must be bold and always be up to the cup. When playing foursome matches as we play them, there is one piece of advice I will pass along to the young coach.

When on the putting green, and the opponents are in a position to halve the hole, never allow your own player who is nearest to the hole to putt first to secure the half (unless he is most reasonably sure to hole his putt), and thus leave his partner, who is farther away,

to go for the hole for a win. The player nearest to the hole may miss, and the one who is away will then have to play for the half, and may possibly take three putts. It is always best to have two sure tries for the half.