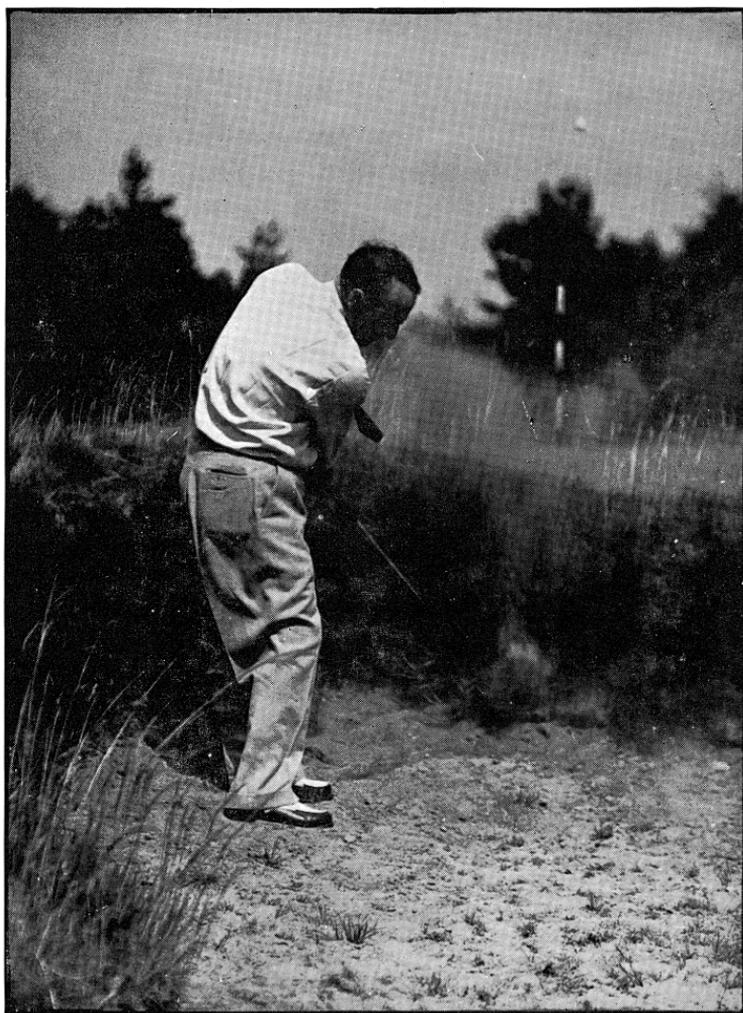


ON  
LEARNING  
GOLF





A "GOOD OUT"

PERCY

ON  
LEARNING  
GOLF

PERCY  
BOOMER



SOUVENIR  
PRESS

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## FOREWORD

*By The Late Duke of Windsor*



IN the years before the war when there was more leisure to play and study golf, I tried to help Percy Boomer evolve some of the ideas which he presents in his book. This may be the reason why he has asked me from among all his more proficient pupils to write a foreword, and because he used to find me the most persistent in the search for the secret of the correct swing.

Golf has been the subject of so much writing that Percy Boomer is to be congratulated on developing some original thoughts on the popular pastime. Although no game has produced more theories or evoked a greater divergence of opinion as to the methods of its teaching, I believe even the author's sternest critics will admit that he has achieved a pleasing combination of humour with plenty of good golf sense.

It is in no way Percy Boomer's fault that I have not yet discovered the elusive secret, and it has to be as a disciple of the game and not as a low-handicap player that I recommend *On Learning Golf*, in the hope that it will help to reduce its readers' scores and discourage their opponents.

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## PLAN OF THE COURSE



**THIS** is not a book on the science of golf, but about learning it. Everything on the science of the game has been written, little on how to learn it. So I outline a method of learning and stress certain points about the golf swing. And please remember that long experience has told me what to emphasize when teaching. Some of the points which you will find me making a fuss about are considered minor details in the science of the game, but they are important to me because they relate to feel rather than to mechanics—and it is through *feel* that I play and teach.

I believe that the mechanical details, like the ball, should become incidental. They are of course of extraordinary interest and if this book arouses interest in the fundamental sensations of the golf swing I shall be tempted to write another (and much more extensive one) on its detail. But that is another matter.

In brief, the plan of this book is that in the six chapters of Part One I outline my *theory* of golf, and explain how I came by it and why I hold it; while Part Two consists of chapters which elaborate the various technical points, interspersed with Interludes for Instruction and Reminiscence which enable certain very essential points to be emphasized as well as providing a little light relief from the more solid matter.

### *Plan of the Course*

Finally, this book could not possibly be complete without the magnificent photographs which my friends Val Doone have been at such generous pains to make for me. In the course of my golfing life (a grand one!) I have seen thousands of golfing photographs, and they were mostly all just the usual and rather useless pictures; they did not, as do these, reproduce most faithfully those subtleties of grip and stance, of the play of essential muscles, and of the poise of limb and club in motion—which are, in the end, the grail we seek.

PERCY BOOMER

ON LEARNING GOLF

*Part One*



## THE GENESIS OF THIS BOOK



GOLF is in the Boomer blood. My father was a village schoolmaster in Jersey. As an educationist he was generations ahead of his time. He saw no use in forcing a boy to try to learn subjects which he was obviously incapable of absorbing—and of which he could make no use anyway, but he did help his pupils to develop such talents and natural aptitudes as they possessed.

In consequence, though so far as I know his school never produced a Senior Wrangler and maybe did not show up too well when the Inspector came round, it did have the very remarkable record of producing five golfers of international rank in one generation.

I imagine that it is a world's record for a village school and one never likely to be beaten and if any memorial were needed to my father's devotion to the game the records of the great Channel Island golfers who were his pupils—incomparable Harry Vardon and his brothers Tom and Alfred, the three Gaudins, Renouf, and Ted Ray—would provide it.

Harry Vardon wrote as follows in the story of his golfing life:

In due course we all went to the village school but I fear, from all that I can remember, and from what I have been told that knowledge had little attraction for me in those days, and I know I often played truant sometimes three weeks at a stretch. Consequently my old school-

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master Mr. Boomer had no particular reason to be proud of me at that time, as he seems to have become since.

He never enjoys a holiday so much in these days as when he comes over from Jersey to see me play for the Open Championship, as he does whenever the meeting is held at Sandwich. But when I did win the championship on that course he was so nervous and excited about my prospects that he felt himself unequal to watching me and during most of the time I was doing my four rounds he was sitting in a fretful state on the seashore.

Incidentally when my father retired from school-teaching at the age of sixty, he joined me at St. Cloud and became a professional golfer. My brother Aubrey became a Pro at seventeen, and now my son George—having had his schooling cut short by the European upheavals—has started his chosen career at sixteen.

About myself. It was intended that I should follow my father as a schoolmaster, but as it fell out I preceded him as a golf Pro! After very few years of school-teaching I decided that any talents I had lay elsewhere and being by then a pretty good amateur golfer I obtained the job of 8th Assistant at Queen's Park, Bournemouth. I was then twenty-two. After a short period at Bournemouth I moved to Barton-on-Sea, and from Barton to St. Cloud in 1913. My long period at St. Cloud was interrupted by the first Great War (when I served in the Royal Naval Air Service) and at least broken again by the second. It was at St. Cloud that I developed my ideas about the game and built up my experience as a teacher of it.

### *The Genesis of This Book*

Though I have never had the physique required for the hard mill of championship golf I have won three International Open Championships, the Belgian in 1923, the Swiss in 1924, and the Dutch in 1927.

My brother Aubrey is thirteen years my junior. He joined me at St. Cloud when he was seventeen, with a fine athletic record at Victoria College behind him. Shortly after he also joined the R.N.A.S. and we both returned to St. Cloud early in 1919. In our first four-ball match together there we played the two top Americans in the Inter-Allied games. The Yanks won the tournament, but Aubrey and I halved our match.

The best Aubrey has done in the British Open was second to Bobby Jones at St. Andrews. He holds the record for the French Open having won it five times; he has also won the Belgian and Dutch titles several times and the Italian once. By winning the *Daily Mail* tournament, the *Glasgow Evening Herald* meeting at Gleneagles and the Roehampton show, he played himself into the British team in three matches against the Americans—two of them for the Ryder Cup.

It is also not to be forgotten that Aubrey holds the world's record for a single round. His 61 was done at St. Cloud in a French P.G.A. tournament against the American Ryder Cup team. The tournament was won by Horton Smith, Aubrey following him in second place.

Aubrey holds many course records, but I suppose the most curious one is that he has never played a shot

## *On Learning Golf*

over the course on which Harry Vardon learned his golf—though he was born in the parish in which the course lies, and indeed no more than a mile from the house in which the Vardons were born.

That was at Grouville, on the east of the island, and before Aubrey reached golfing age our family had moved to the other end of the island, where—characteristically enough—my father proceeded to build the Le Moye course with the help of his family and a few friends. Cutting greens out of that magnificent natural golf terrain was my first introduction to golf architecture.

Aubrey and I toured the Argentine together. We were in fact the first visiting Pros to do so—and the first to play that dynamic golfer José Jurado. I have always considered that the tournament that Aubrey won there against the best of their Pros and in most difficult and unfamiliar conditions, one of his finest feats.

Some years ago I was playing in a four-ball match with George (Theory) Duncan, my brother Aubrey, and Mr. E. Esmond. We were discussing a shot that Aubrey had just played and Mr. Esmond said to George, "You know Percy was a schoolmaster at one time." George looked at me with his quaint grin and said, "I thought so—he plays like one!"

He was quite right, though it is not because of my early school-teaching that my game looks as studied and considered as it does. The truth is that though I

## *The Genesis of This Book*

learned the game in Jersey as soon as I could walk and Harry Vardon was my boyhood idol, I was not what is known as a natural golfer. There is nothing instinctive about my game. Everything I have ever done in golf I had to *learn to do*. Maybe having to teach myself was not a bad preparation for my future work of teaching others.

As a boy I was just a plodder, but I stuck to it and before I took my first professional job I was a good three handicap amateur and held the amateur record of Le Moye with 78. I went back there a few years ago and did an approximate 64 in a four-ball match—nearly a stroke a hole better as a result of twenty-five years' hard work and study. But probably the more valuable gain was in the matter of *consistency* and in being able to play my best when I *needed* to play my best.

Do not think that this consistency and control “come naturally” to a professional. Far from it. My first shot as a Pro was at Meyrick Park, Bournemouth—and I topped it! Indeed the whole time I was with the Bournemouth Club I hardly hit a single really clean shot from that tee. *The very fact that my living depended upon my golf made a shot which as an amateur I should have found easy enough, one of almost insuperable difficulty.* Keep that in mind please, and so remember that when I talk of golfing “nerves” I have had practical experience.

It was probably due to my father's influence that when I set out seriously to teach myself golf, I decided

## *On Learning Golf*

I must teach myself a *simple* style. For my father was always insisting that *simplicity* was the greatest of all gifts and the most laudable of all attainments. To illustrate this, he took me to London to see Gerald du Maurier act. How utterly easy he made acting look! You were not conscious of the years of toil that must have gone to the building of that superb technique. Remember that when next you envy the effortless ease with which a crack Pro drives!

So it came about that I set out at first to find a simple swing and then, at a later date to find a simple method of imparting this to others. The discovery, or rather the development of the swing itself was not so difficult, but it is only comparatively recently that I have learned how to teach it. And I freely admit that the teaching is still less simple than I would like it to be.

I have started to write this book twenty times in the last twenty years and I might still hesitate to write it had I nothing more than the theory of a satisfactory swing to impart. But now, teed up for my twenty-first start, I know I am going on until the book is finished. And why? Because this time I feel I have a solid contribution to offer to the teaching and learning of golf. It is upon an aspect of the matter which has been practically ignored by writers, teachers and players alike—but one which I have proved beyond doubt to be of fundamental importance.

So in this book, superimposed upon the fruits of my knowledge, experience, and theories of the game, you

### *The Genesis of This Book*

will find my account of the relation between the physical and the psychological in golf—a relationship which lies at the root of every form of *control*—of both individual shots and of one's game as a whole. Until I realized the importance of this relationship and discovered how to use it everything that I wrote seemed *inconclusive*. At so many points there seemed nothing further to be done but to shrug one's shoulders and repeat "Golf is a funny game!" But once the relationship between mental and physical was rightly realized these blanks filled in—and the practical results in teaching were astounding.

## CHAPTER I

# *What Teaching Taught Me*



ANYONE who has taught golf or who has even watched closely a number of beginners at the game knows that there are two great classes—those who are *natural* golfers and those who are not. My brother Aubrey was born a golfer; I had to make myself one and a hard time I had doing it. Indeed we were both extreme members of our respective classes.

A study of the difference in mental and physical make-up between the *natural* golfer and the *made one* is intensely interesting. So is a study of their ultimate capacity for the game. Not all the advantages are on the side of the natural player. Of course if his early game is guided by a far-seeing nature, as Aubrey's was, he is fortunate. But too often the natural golfer is so successful at first that he is content to be self-taught—and the self-taught golfer is usually a *badly* taught one. Why? Well for a number of reasons which this book will make clear, not the least important being the fact that the soundest and most permanently profitable motions in golf feel unnatural and "all wrong" to most people when first tried.

Further we are all imitative to some degree and unless we learn a whole and comprehensive technique

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of the game from a teacher who has a coherent idea of the relationship of the various shots, we are apt to pick up a bit here and a bit there by watching others. The result is a patchwork game, full of pretty shots maybe when it is running well, but so loosely hung together and so self-contradictory in some of its component parts that it is *unreliable* and may be expected to break down or blow up when the strain comes.

A well-taught golfer rarely breaks down and rarely goes off his game completely and if he does strike a bad patch one or at the most two lessons will pull him back again. But patching up a badly taught player is one of the most difficult and thankless tasks a teacher can undertake. I have refused to take on hundreds of such cases, because I do not believe that any instruction that is not part of a *consistent* system can be of any permanent benefit.

“Tips” which are guaranteed to improve your game are easy enough to come by. Every club-house is full of them, and you have only to go a few holes with a friend to know what his own particular disease is by the “cures” he hands out to you! It is human nature to feel sure that everyone else is afflicted by the same troubles as those which torment ourselves. But all this advice is dangerous for it is just *impossible* to build up a sound game by accepting tips and instructions and advice from all those who are willing to offer them.

Does this apply only if we copy or take advice from

## *What Teaching Taught Me*

bad examples? Oh no!—anyone from a beginner to an experienced golfer who has tried to take too much expert advice from too many sources will have been baffled and confused both in his mind and in his style by the opposite theories and contradictory practices of acknowledged masters. This fact alone is sufficient to prove one of the main contentions of this book, that the mechanical muscular movements employed in golf are not the whole secret of it.

The truth about the conflicting theories of experts is quite simple. The masters play as it suits them to play and then evolve theories to explain why the particular movements which they discover themselves employing are *right*! Unfortunately a shot that may be effective enough in the hands of a master may have disastrous results if “copied” by some less expert player.

Of course the muscular-mechanical movements in golf are extremely important but they are not everything. After teaching myself first and then for thirty-five years teaching others, I have arrived at concrete conclusions as to what the important factors are and I would summarize them roughly as follows:

1. Every good golf shot is the outcome of a satisfactory psychological-physical relationship.
2. It is this relationship which gives *control* and *consistency*.
3. These good relationships (and consequent controls) are built up most easily and firmly when the

## *On Learning Golf*

muscular-mechanical requirements of the game **have** been simplified.

And so—

4. It is desirable to learn to play as many of the shots as possible *with the same movements*.

Let me illustrate this last point which is fundamental in my theory of teaching, by describing the case of a pupil of mine, a lady no longer young who came to me more or less in despair. She had tried hard to play golf but had been defeated because she had never succeeded in driving even one hundred yards!

I taught her golf *with one club only*, her driver, and only off the tee. All I taught her was *how to drive*. When she came to me later and said, "How do I play pitch shots?" I replied, "As you drive." When she asked, "How do I putt?" I replied again, "As you drive."

I continued, "As the shot, and consequently the club, becomes shorter, we stand a little more open to the hole and draw the feet closer together and bring the ball back nearer to the right foot. When playing with the driver the ball will be placed just inside the line of the left heel—with a No. 8 iron it will be just inside the right heel."

I did not need to explain to her that the more we face the hole the nearer to the line of flight will the club head go back—or that the nearer we stand to the ball the more vertical will be our swing (because we

### *What Teaching Taught Me*

are looking more directly down, our shoulders *dip* more on the way back and in consequence our club head comes up more steeply “naturally”). I did not need to explain these points because the correct action is the natural outcome of the position taken up—provided that the fundamentals of the swing are not interfered with.

Teaching golf as *all one shot* simplified her game. It prevented her other shots from interfering with her drive or her drive confusing her other shots, because all the shots were fundamentally the same. And though this pupil was taught with a driver only she now plays the most delicate run-up shots, and pitches excellently, in fact, she runs up better than do many players with handicaps lower than her own 15. Incidentally I look on that 15 as one of the outstanding proofs of the soundness of the theories propounded in this book.

The fault with much of the golf teaching of today, professional as well as amateur, is that the teacher tries to eradicate specific faults by issuing specific instructions. In short, the “good tip” system again. This is fatal, mainly because it is no system at all but just a conglomeration of golf patent medicines. The true aim of the teacher who desires to build up a sound and dependable game in a pupil, must be to link up in the pupil a *line of controls*. And for reasons which will become obvious as this book is read, the aim of the pupil must be to carry out the teacher’s instructions *irrespective of immediate results*.

## CHAPTER II

# *Fundamentals*



### 1. GOLF AND THE SENSES

EVERY intelligent person who has played golf must have speculated on the relation between the mental and the physical aspects of the game. This is one of the fundamental problems of golf and I had early reason to think about it, for as already related—as soon as I had become a professional the very fact that I *had* become a Pro seemed to have made it impossible for me to hit a decent shot from the first tee at Meyrick Park. Why? If we could find the answer to that we should understand golf “nerves” and maybe see how to avoid them.

When we consider the make-up of a good games player we usually start with a catalogue of *physical* qualities, such as a good eye, steely wrists, good reach, etc. To these we may add—if we are advanced enough to be conscious of psychology—two or three purely mental qualities, such as “good nerves” and intelligence. For years and years I tried to strike a fair balance between the qualities in the two groups, and decided at various times that golf was 50 per cent physical and 50 per cent mental, then 40 per cent/60 per cent and 80 per cent/20 per cent, and all sorts of other proportions. But I admit that however I considered the matter I never felt convinced that I had

## *Golf and the Senses*

found a correct answer. I already knew that we played reflex golf, and that a reflex was muscular memory, and this should have told me that any clear-cut division between mental and physical was impossible. I now know why!

Of course this division of golf into separate physical and mental departments was not an idea of my own. It was the way we all thought about the game. I remember spending one of the most stimulating evenings of my life listening to—and occasionally chipping in on—a debate on the light-ball, between some Americans and members of the Committee of the R. & A. Walter Hagen was there and members of the Ryder Cup team. For myself, though I enjoyed the argument immensely, I felt even at that time that it was *inconclusive*; something was lacking again. I think I had got so far as to realize that the arguments advanced lacked conclusiveness *because they were either too purely mental or too purely physical*.

I had in fact reached the conclusion that any separation of the mental and physical functions in the playing or teaching of golf must be artificial—because in the practical job of playing or teaching no such separation is possible.

But though I had reached this conclusion and was increasingly basing my teaching on it, I found it most difficult to express the idea explicitly—even to myself. Then by one of those happy chances which do occur when you are ripe for them, I read a remarkable little

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book, *The Use of the Self* by F. Matthias Alexander.

It was the confirmation and exposition I had wanted. For here was a man with profound knowledge of psychology and physiology surveying the whole field of human activity and expressing scientifically the very truth which I had sensed, but found so difficult to express, in the sphere of golf.

Professor Alexander's conclusion is that we never act purely psychologically or purely physically, but that every act is carried out in psychophysical unison. And further, that when this unison is functioning properly it provides a form of *conscious control* which is precisely what a golfer needs.

I realized at once that this *conscious control* was exactly what I was already trying to teach because I recognized it as a form of control *that would replace thinking*. And thinking had to be replaced because I knew by experience that if your golf was dependent upon *thinking* it was at the mercy of your mental state. Excitement, depression, elation—any emotion could destroy you.

I had always been considered a good teacher, but I had never been satisfied because I could not teach a pupil to play exactly and consistently—independent of his mental and physical feelings and of the state of the game. And I felt that I ought to be able to teach this. And now I am able to do so, provided that the pupil is willing to work at the game on a "long term" policy.

## *Golf and the Senses*

With my broadening view of the relation between physical and mental, and the possibilities of conscious control I have definitely gained a new capacity in teaching, enabling me to build up in my pupils one control upon another, by building up *feel*. I build up a *feel* of what is right in his golf. So when he gets to the first tee in front of a gallery or is faced by a tricky shot at a critical moment in the game, *mental excitement* can no longer tie his swing up and he can make his shots normally even if his brain is befogged.

A good boxer will box on even when "out on his feet," and the good golfer should equally be able to produce his best shots even though he is five down with six to play. I had long realized the importance of this and the desirability of finding some way of *insulating* a golfer's shots from his mental state. I had worked out a very effective simple and satisfactory swing, but I did not know how to teach this except as a set of purely mechanical ideas.

But when I had developed the idea of control through remembered feeling, I was able to take the words "think" and "thought" out of my teaching vocabulary. The results were literally astounding.

And why? Not because I taught a better swing, but because my pupils learned to use their swings irrespective of conditions and states of mind! Many of my pupils now say, "I am no longer *afraid* of the ball. I do not even *think* of it; I just swing through it."

That, of course, means confidence and consistency.

## *On Learning Golf*

What do these mean in results? Well, since I began teaching on these lines my pupils at St. Cloud included Mrs. A. M. Vagliano, two handicap, Captain of the Ladies' French International team; Mme Munier (*née* Jánine Gaveau), scratch, four times lady champion and International; the Duchesse d'Elkingen (*née* Mlle Francine Tollon), one handicap, twice lady champion and International; Mme Straus (*née* Aline de Gunsbourg), scratch, once lady champion French and International; Mme Decugis, two handicap, International; Mlle Petin, two handicap, International; the Comtesse de St. Sauveur (*née* Lally Vagliano), plus one, champion of France, International and British Girls Champion at seventeen.

All these ladies were gifted, intelligent, young, and keen, and they made teaching a pleasure. Also they were all under the golfing influence of the cool-headed player Mme Lacoste (*née* Simone Thion de la Chaume) of whose judgment I have the highest opinion. Her own game is the essence of perfect mental and physical balance.

But it is not only in molding the styles of the young and talented that the idea of control by remembered feel is so invaluable in the teaching of golf. One lady who came to me for her first lesson at the age of forty had the temerity to knock the great Mme Lacoste out of the French Championship ten years later!

Now here, for those who collect coincidences, is a true story which shows an independent and extremely

## *Golf and the Senses*

practical application of the ideas on which my teaching is based.

I was giving a lesson to a young American, a thoughtful, analytical fellow who up to that time had taught himself all the games he had played. He came to me because he could not connect what he knew he *should* do at golf with the physical action of doing it. So as briefly as possible I explained to him the idea of control by remembered feel. He was deeply interested, for though he had taken a course in psychology at college he had not thought of golf as one of the interests in which a knowledge of the subject might help him. He saw the point, and when he had reflected on it told me this very curious story.

“When I first came to England, the traffic keeping to the left instead of to the right as it does back home nearly got me time after time. Whenever I was going to step off the sidewalk I looked to the left instead of to the right as I should have done.

“This got so dangerous that I had to take a dip into my brain-box to find a way of checking it. It wasn’t any good just *telling* myself to look right; I had done that and promptly looked left again! So I decided that every time before stepping off a curb I would raise my right forearm and clench my fist. I reckoned it would draw my attention to the right as desired, *and it did*. In a few days I was cured.”

Do you see the full significance of that story? Here was an intelligent fellow who knew that he *should*

### *On Learning Golf*

look right before stepping off the curb, but who could not do it merely by knowing that he should do it, because he had been brought up to look left. Looking left had become a muscular memory with him, and in the control of actions, knowledge and thought can never equal muscular memory. Finding this so, this very intelligent young man decided to build up a *new muscular memory* with the sequence: edge of curb—raise right arm, clench fist—*look right*. And it worked.

Now here was a clear case of an effective psychological-physical control being developed out of the necessities of the moment with no formal knowledge of the concept whatever.

*Exactly the same development has taken place in the game of every successful golfer.*

## CHAPTER III

# *Fundamentals*



### 2. THE SWING

I HAVE already explained briefly why, both in my own game and in my teaching, I have adopted the simplest possible swing and have insisted that as many shots as possible should be played with fundamentally the same movements. Now that I have outlined the idea of teaching by feel you will better understand why I attach such importance to this point.

To put the lesson of the concept of control by feel as briefly as possible, we must give up *thinking* about our shots. In place of thinking there must be *conscious control*, obtained by building up (by constant repetition of the correct action) a comfortable and reliable *feel*, a feel that will tell you infallibly through appeal to your muscular memory, what is the right movement—and which will remain with you and control your shots whatever your mental state may be. Not being a matter of *thought*, this control stands outside the mental state.

As I have said, this controlling *feel* is built up through the constant repetition of the correct movements. We do not know just where in the system it resides, but whether it is muscular memory, or the wearing of certain grooves or channels in the mind,

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or—as is probable—a combination of the two, it is obvious that the more often the same succession of movements can be repeated the clearer the memory will be. Also, and this is most important, it is highly desirable that the memory should not be confused by the frequent or even occasional introduction of other and different movements—as happens when the swing is fundamentally changed for certain shots.

It is mainly for this reason that I teach and preach and practice that every shot from the full drive to the putt should be played with the same movement. Of course in the drive the movement is both more extensive and bolder than for the shorter shots, but fundamentally it is the same. The result must be a feeling of “in-to-out” stroking across the face of the ball—played not at the ball, but through it. The “in-to-out” refers to the relation of the feel of the path of the club head to the desired line of flight of the ball.

The only shots in golf which I have been unable to play or to teach as sections of the fundamental “in-to-out” swing are certain shots which call for cut pulled under and across the ball.

But for ninety-nine out of every hundred shots a golfer must play, *the swing* is the movement necessary. So to clear the ground I will list what I consider to be the essentials of the swing:

1. It is essential to turn the body round to the right and then back and round to the left, without moving

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either way. In other words this turning movement must be from a fixed pivot.

2. It is essential to keep the arms at full stretch throughout the swing—through the back swing, the down swing, and the follow through.
3. It is essential to allow the wrists to break fully back at the top of the swing.
4. It is essential to delay the actual hitting of the ball until as late in the swing as possible.
5. It is essential not to tighten any muscle concerned in the reactive part of the swing (movement above the waist).
6. It is essential to feel and control the swing *as a whole* and not to concentrate upon any part of it.

In a sense this last point is the most vital. The swing must be considered and felt as a single unity, not as a succession of positions or even a succession of movements. *The swing is one and indivisible.*

Now I consider that our golf is liable to go wrong if we lose sight of any of these essentials. There are of course innumerable incidentals that could be added that are important enough to have a considerable influence on one's game, but I will go so far as to say that if you have these six essentials well embedded in your system and if you have developed some conscious control of your swing by getting the *feel* of the right movements—your game will rarely or never desert you.

Of course the comfortable, reliable, *right* feel is not a thing that comes all at once. For instance, it takes years—though not if your teacher teaches by feel—to

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feel nicely set and comfortable before the ball; weight between the feet, perfectly free and active and yet firmly *planted*.

Then the waggle. About the waggle a whole book could be written. Every movement we make when we waggle is a miniature of the swing we intend to make. The club head moves in response to the body and the body opposes the club head. It is a flow and counter flow of forces with no static period, no check.

There is no check anywhere in a good swing. There is no such thing as the "dead top" of a swing—there are four points each one of which might be so considered if it were not for the other three! They are: (1) When the pivot (feet to shoulders) has reached *its* top, the arms are still going up. (2) When the arms have reached *their* top, the body is on its day down. (3) When the arms begin to come down, the wrists have still to break back, and (4) When the wrists break.

Now these four points together make up the top of the swing, and I was talking about the waggle—which is the bottom of an imaginary swing! But do not think I was digressing. I was not, the two are linked together. And why? Because unless you feel the whole of the swing in your waggle, your waggle is failing in its purpose.

The whole meaning and purpose of the waggle is that you shall first feel your swing rightly so that you may then make it rightly. I remember watching Sandy Herd makes his first Ciné pictures. In order not to

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waste film he tried to do without his customary fourteen waggles and in consequence he could not hit the ball. He could not make his shot because he had not *felt* it. They got over the difficulty eventually by letting him have his full fourteen waggles but only starting the camera at about number ten!

There is of course a great deal more to be said about the swing than I have said in this chapter, which is intended simply as an outline of the fundamentals as I see them. Much of the detail will be dealt with in later chapters.

## NEARING THE TOP OF THE SWING

### POINTS TO STUDY

The impression here is that the weight is being pushed against the left foot. It looks *inside*.

### BELOW THE WAIST

The left knee has moved horizontally forward and around in a semicircle. Because this movement has been horizontal the left heel has been lifted.

The right leg is taut and nearly straight . . . not quite straight. The weight has remained central as at the address so the right leg is not vertical.

The hips are horizontal (like the knees). The right hip has not sagged or moved laterally; it has turned straight back.

### ABOVE THE WAIST

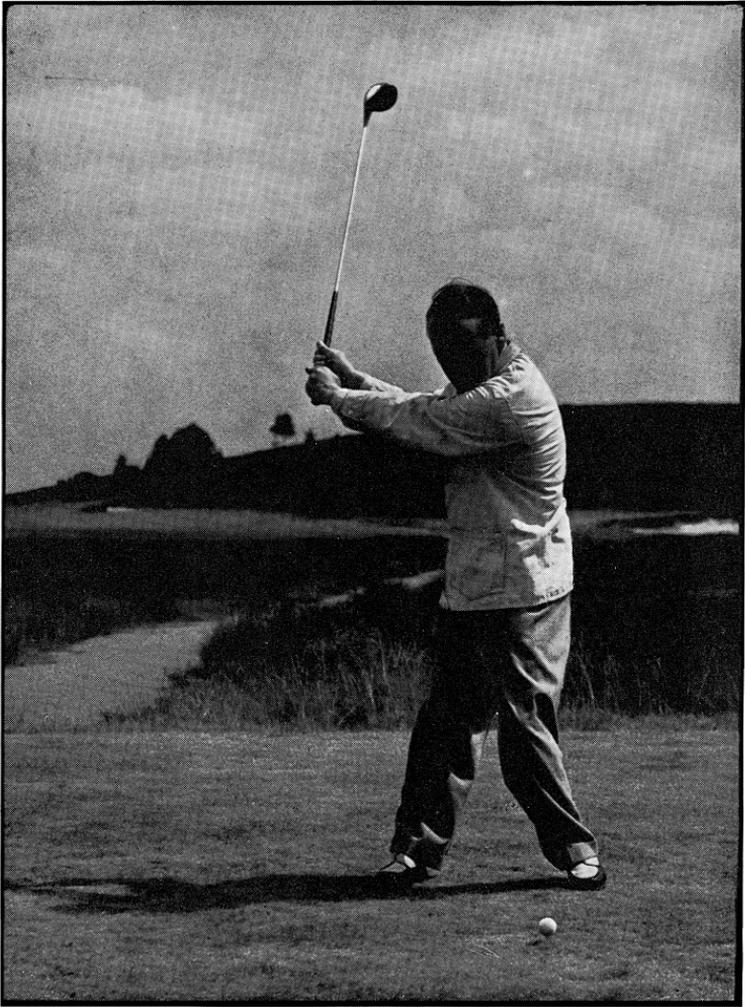
The shoulders have turned horizontally to the spine.

Because of the upright stance—the spine being very little inclined forward—the shoulders have not dipped appreciably.

The left shoulder has not dipped, but it has come under and along to the chin.

The left arm is not stiff but it is straight, and the hands are held out as wide as possible.

This is the region of the *reverse*. The arms are near their top, but the wrists have still to break back fully as the left heel returns back to the ground.



NEARING THE TOP OF THE SWING

PERCY