

Four Kinds of Tee Shots

Difference Between Sliced, Pulled and Short and Long Straight Drives

By ROBERT STANLEY WEIR

A PART from the topped and be-fuzzled drive, which is no drive at all, there are four kinds of tee shots which it may reward the sedulous golfer to consider. These four may be illustrated as regards their direction by the following illustrations:

No. 1 represents the sliced ball, often struck with full power and a swing pleasing enough to the eye, but with some error of execution not readily discoverable by the eye. The cure for slicing is not simplified by the theories current as to its course, most of these being absurd.

No. 2 represents a straight ball apparently struck with sufficient power and accuracy, but which soars rather more than it should; and, although the direction is correct, having neither pull nor slice, the distance at best does not exceed 180 yards or so; it is a lazy, rather amateurish shot; it is the drive of the multitude—the drive of respectable mediocrity.

No. 3 is "the" drive in golf. The trajectory is distinctly lower than No. 2; it reaches its greatest height towards the close of its career; it has some run but the run is not a scuttle; it is the drive of the average "pro" and of the scratch amateur—full of life and zip and verve—usually preceded by a clear, clean smack at the impact such as is music to a golfer's ear.

No. 4 is the well-known pulled ball, useful enough upon occasion, but dangerous to use in these days of well-trapped fairways. It has its laws and explanation, too, which the intelligent golfer recognizes, but keeps in the back of his head for rare and necessary occasions. But the current explanations of pull are hazy and unreliable.

It may not be mis-spent effort to account for these four kinds of drive.

No. 1 with its slice is sometimes useful, for instance, when driving close to left-hand boundaries with a wind blowing in. To know how not to slice is not any more useful than to know how to slice; but in fact these two knowledges are one.

A good deal of phantasy has been written as to how the slice is caused. We have been told, and nobody has contradicted, that the slice is caused by drawing the club across the ball. But, who ever conspicuously does so foolish a thing; and how, for playing purposes, could one do so if he would! As a pedagogic instruction it is perfectly idle and

useless to tell the slicer not to draw his club across the ball. And it is almost equally mischievous to tell him boldly to throw his arms "straight out" after the ball.

The wise instructor tells his pupil and tells himself that he can slice his ball by smacking it with a bending right wrist and that he can keep it straight by turning the right wrist as he smacks the ball. The reason why many beginners slice is that they do this bending unconsciously,

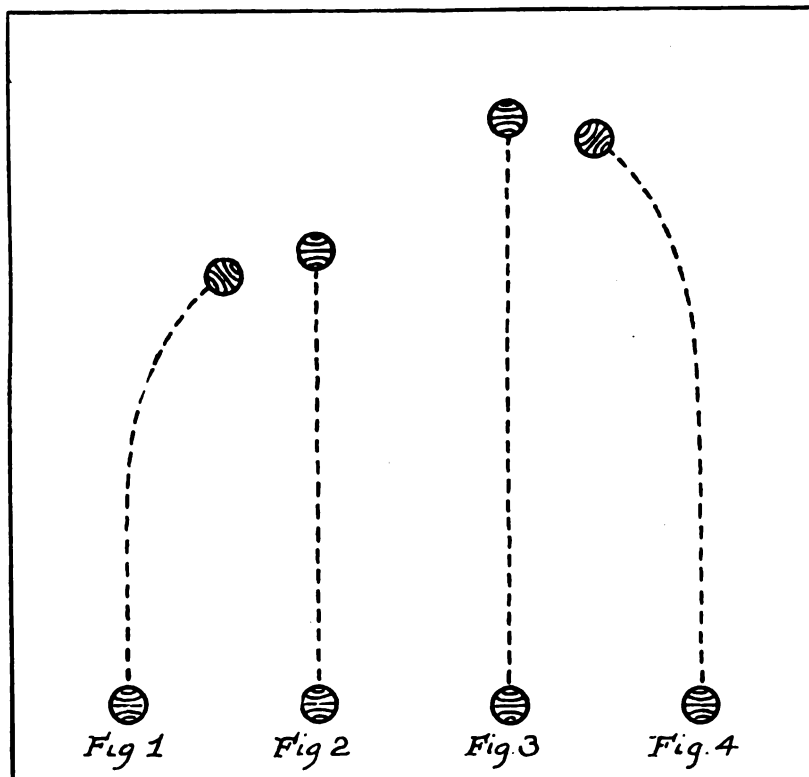
high. It results from a high tee which allows the club to get too much under the ball, and also because the right wrist does not turn soon enough. The ball, in fact, is struck too rectilinearly. The club goes out towards the hole too directly, the player forgetting that the true swing is a round-the-body swing and that the face of the club turns leftwards very sharply. The effort is made, and the movement is so swift as to be invisible. Care must be taken to put in the power just before the ball is reached, for the club goes faster than we think.

I am not a believer in the efficacy of trying to hit the ball with equal power in the two hands; either the left or the right should be master. Almost equally good results may be obtained either way. Using the right there is always a danger of the wrist bending instead of turning, while, if the left wrist bends backward, it is the very thing it should do, and, somehow, when in command, it compels the right to turn in proper style. Any greater power of the right, if properly used, is equalized by the left in its superior position at the very end of the shaft. The natural man is averse to turning his forearms as he swings; he feels that he is certain, that way, to pull egregiously. Let

him, however, be assured that it is the proper way, and let him from time to time exchange commanders; from right hand to left; often, after seven and eight holes, a change is very beneficial.

Among the most mischievous "betes noir" of golf I would mention two—first a bending right wrist, and, second, allowing the face of the club instead of its nose to go forward in the line of flight. Keeping the face of the club towards the line of flight may be described as playing with the open face and is a feature of the cut and the short drive. The closed face in which the nose of the club goes forward insures the true line. The application of these golfing truths to iron play constitutes the art of approaching, but it would need a chapter by itself.

No. 4 may be dismissed in a word. It is No. 3 just a little overdone. One allows for it by facing somewhat to the right and the right hand comes smartly over the left at the impact, either right or left hand being in command. But woe to him who exaggerates this friendly tip!



smiting the ball with the club head open-faced instead of with a turning face. In other words, they play with cut in putter-fashion; they have not perceived that the golf stroke is produced by a passing of the right hand to send the club head directly out toward the hole. The drive made with cut results in a feeble stroke. But more of this will be considered as we come to No. 3.

No. 3 or the perfect stroke is got by what Burnham Hare has called incipient pronation. It depends chiefly on what happens in a spread of three or four feet, of which the ball is the middle as it is being struck. The important thing is that the right wrist be not bent but rather turned as the hit over the left upon the initiative of either the right or left (there being lack of unanimity as to the better method). To slice, then, one hits the ball with a slightly bending right wrist, and to prevent slicing we substitute the turn for the bend—I need hardly say more save that this turn is hardly to be achieved expressly, but simply by thinking of it as we play.

No. 2 is straight, but feeble and too