

The Snap of the Wrists as Applied to Irons

By R. STANLEY WEIR

THE key to iron play is the same as the key to wooden club play as regards the semi-circling of the left hand in the back-swing and the easing of the right at the top. The importance of keeping the body out of the stroke so that the arms may operate with requisite snap must not be lost sight of.

In iron play there should be free use of the wrists with snap as explained in previous articles.

In the downswing the snap of the swing is, perhaps, most noticeable in iron play. The rotation of the body is naturally less. The swing is from shoulder to shoulder; the fore arms first; the left hand turns at the bottom of the swing so that the toe of the club is the leader.

It may perhaps be well to change into more scientific statements two or three empirical maxims that are current about iron play. These are: "Grip tighter," "Take turf," and, "Let the right hand take command." As to the first, there is no particular need, given an ordinary lie, to grip the club more tightly. The maxim has its origin in the fact that the iron being shorter than the driver, the swing is correspondingly shorter. There is consequently less need for the opened palms or eased finger grip that mark the manipulation of woods and the grip thus appears to be tighter. If we should swing our irons as fully as our woods, the easing of the grip at the top would also be necessary with irons. But as this is not usually done, it is clear that the caution to "grip tight" is merely intended to prevent overswinging.

THE second current injunction, to take turf, in reality means that in iron play your blows are downward and leftward rather than horizontal or parallel with or tangent to mother earth as is the case with woods. Taking turf is the result of the downward blow and unless the blow is of this sort turf might as well be spared. It is not gripping tight or taking turf that matters; it is swinging right.

We may uncover truth by examining the third empirical maxim which declares that "the right hand takes command in all iron shots." If the sedulous student asks why, he seldom gets a satisfactory answer. He is perhaps told that it is because the right is stronger than the left, which is a doubtful answer. More nimble the right

is, but is it more powerful, seeing its tendency to bend—something from which the left is free? No. The reason why the right takes command is that by pass-

ing over an arrested and turning left it can produce the desirable snap which we have expounded above. The snap of the wrists, i. e., the rapid passing of the right hand over the left at the instant of impact, is even more noticeable in iron than in wooden play. The toe of the club, as said above, immediately leads in the follow-through. And as the club moves faster than the eye can detect, it is advisable in some cases to give this lead by the toe an apparent instant before the ball is reached.

The beginner, in his anxiety to smite the ball fair and square with the face of the club is apt to overlook the fact that the impact at right angles is instantaneous, about the one-thousandth part of a second. He wants to make it longer instead of allowing the club-face to turn in a perfectly natural way. He fears an arrant pull. Let him, however, bearing in mind that the impact is but for the fraction of a second, play by faith and not by sight, and allow the right hand to pass freely and briskly over the left and not too late. The twisting action just touched upon (not for the first time in these pages) gives a brisk, straight ball although sometimes with a touch of pull and sometimes a touch of slice if the turn be delayed. The true conception of the swing is that of a circle; the ball being taken in transit and the left hand turning to make the correct follow-through.

To obviate pull it is common to address the ball with the toe of the club slightly turned away. On the return the impact is at right angles, the tendency to pull being corrected by this simple device and the ball goes perfectly straight.

Against the wind or upon soft turf such a ball is a thing of beauty but, under reversed conditions, it sometimes is necessary to play what is called the push shot which will be considered in the next article.

The accompanying photographs of Chick Evans show the proper stance and address for the push shot, also the proper position of the wrists in the upswing with the iron, a part of the game in which he excels.

The golfer has his sufficient reward if his strokes are well executed. This result he can only secure by a knowledge of the basic principles which he has reduced to practice. Only by practice can the scientist in golf become an artist. But a knowledge of basic principles reduces the necessity of long or arduous experimentation and increases the delight of play.



Stance and Address for Push Stroke Shown by Chick Evans



Notice Position of Chick Evans' Wrists in Upswing With Iron