

The Grip and the Full Swing

The Most Important Part of the Grip Are the Fingers and Thumb; the Key to the Full Swing Is the Left Hand

By R. STANLEY WEIR

GOLF is a game for the hands chiefly as football is a game for the feet. The hands receive messages from the brain which they transmit to the clubs. When a player's golf is good his hands are the medium that deserve praise; when bad, the blame. Of the golfer's hands his fingers and thumbs and not his palms are the most important part; the Grip is an affair of the fingers and thumbs.

The Grip is the same at no two points of the Swing. Like the stance it constantly changes and like the stance is vitally connected with the Swing. At the very start of the Swing the gripping left hand takes the lead by firmly yet gently squeezing the shaft, turning itself inwards and upwards in conjunction with the rotation of the shoulders; at the same time the right hand begins to relax and at the top of the Swing both palms, indeed, are accommodatingly opened and the Grip is by the fingers and thumbs alone. This action of right and left is the Key of the Swing.

There is, however, another method of holding the club at the top of the Swing by which the touch of the larger fingers is very slight and the Grip is chiefly by the smaller fingers. Vardon condemns the grip by the smaller fingers because one can hold more tightly with them. Probably for this very reason Sherlock, the professional, Jerome Travers and other small-handed players grip chiefly by the smaller fingers. One must also include, I think, those distinguished players who appear to be fist-grippers, but must in reality hold by the smaller fingers. In view of the division of opinion among authorities one may conclude that either method may be adopted.

ANOTHER feature of the Grip one sometimes notices is that at the top of the swing the shaft is allowed to sink into the web between the thumb and forefinger of the right hand. The Vardon school condemns this, but many great players use it. It certainly promotes ease in Swinging and the feeling of circularity. This feature is, however, always confined to wooden clubs; the Swing with iron clubs being shorter there is no call for open palms or use of the web of the right hand.

The left hand takes the command in

the relatively slow up-swing and also starts the down swing; the right hand fingers tighten and bring the face of the club upon the ball at right angles at the instant of impact, although the feeling at this point may be that the face of the club is being turned inwards and most important of all the arrested left and passing right as touched upon further on in this article. This little feature, as well as the attempt to hit outwards recommended by Sherlock calls for appropriate modification of Grip which is thus seen to be an everchanging manipulation.

As the motions of our clubs respond directly to the motions of the hands and fingers, faithfully reproducing their er-

shoulder correspondingly to the rear. During the precise time taken to do this the arms perform their larger circuit with the club under the leadership of the left wrist and turn inwards and upwards to their position at the top of the swing as described in No. 1. It must be observed that the two movements are simultaneous and rhythmical thus producing correct timing.

3. At the finish of the up-swing the grip, particularly in the right hand, has sensibly eased, either by allowing the shaft to fall into the web between the thumb and forefinger or by a much relaxed touch by the bigger fingers. The right wrist will be found in either case to be flexed in a potentially powerful way.

4. A full swing is necessary for distance, but the fulness should be sought at the bottom and not so much at the top of the swing.

5. Instantaneously before the impact both wrists are turning but the right hand supersedes the left and for an instant covers it. Simultaneously the left hand has both the feeling of having executed a backhand swing in reality a simple turning action, and of slightly arresting its movement. Together the two hands execute a kind of twist or snap which imparts great swiftness to the stroke.

This is the point of greatest acceleration, and is the most important feature of all golf.

6. In the downward swing the power of the full weight of the arms should not be neglected in endeavoring to promote the snap of the forearms above described.

GOING to the top of the swing it is evident that the left arm has a much longer orbit or path than the right arm. Let the player test this if necessary. It is a feature not often noticed, but of very vital importance. He will note also that the left arm is the outermost arm as one swings back; at the same time the right arm is of course nearest the body and subservient; the right elbow slides more or less around the right side and at slight distance from it in the way every golfer knows. The left hand is also outermost at the top of the swing.

Now what happens in the downswing? Well, at the finish of the swing we perceive that the left hand, not the right, is now inside and nearest the head; and that during the swing the right arm took the

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Tom Kerrigan showing the grip as described by the author

rors or merits upon a large scale, it is clear that too hasty action must be avoided. It is profitable to consider, as we swing, how the hands are moving and the fingers acting. Slicing nearly always is caused by a grip which causes the right wrist to flex or bend instead of to turn. It very rarely occurs when the player has grasped what is meant by the snap of the wrists.

A USEFUL analytical summary of essential points in the Swing with wooden clubs may be set down as follows:

1. The key to the swing is the left hand as it moves to the top of the swing revolving in a semi-circle, a feature that can be gauged by the thumb moving from an upper position on the shaft at the address to an under position at the top; this action is accompanied by an easing of the shaft in the right hand in either of the two ways indicated in No. 3 below.

2. There is a quarter-rotation of the body in the up-swing bringing the left shoulder to the front and the right



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The Wages of Golf (Cont'd)

dulged in by senators. This is the sport prescribed by doctors to encourage sleep and to stimulate the appetite. What fools we mortals be! Could anything be more senseless? Why hadn't I retained my good judgment and gone on through life, perhaps with less sleep and less food, with a freedom of conscience that would permit me, the blameless, to cast the first stone?

But we were not through. The doctor led me towards another battle ground—towards another little ammunition box filled with sand—towards another tee that brought memories of my recent Waterloo.

The doctor said something about the honors being his and proceeded to drive off. I saw no honor in what he had accomplished but supposed it was merely another of those technical terms used to encourage competition.

Again I stood before the ball. Those potent words of the great Pershing came to my mind as I grasped the club viciously with both hands.

"Oh, Lafayette, we are come."
(To be concluded)

Wins Golfers Magazine Cup

THE tournament of the Texas Hotel Men's Association for the GOLFERS MAGAZINE cup, played over the Brackenridge Park links at San Antonio, resulted in a triple tie as Mrs. Jack White, J. D. Farr and S. E. Bisong each had net scores of 84, which equaled the blind bogey figure. In the play off Mrs. White, wife of the assistant manager of the Gunter Hotel, San Antonio, won the cup with the card of 135—54—81.

INDIGESTION'S PLAINT

Alas; alas! I flee; I flee!

The golfer has no room for me;

Such concentration on a ball

Has not been seen since Adam's fall.

Pace, pace with him I cannot keep;

Alas; I lay me down to sleep!

* * *

The Grip and the Swing

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outermost place, replacing the left in this particular. And it was the left arm and elbow that now kept close to the body and left side as the swing was finishing.

Evidently, then there has been a complete change in relative position. The right arm, so far from having the shorter orbit, assumed the longer in the down-swing. The left arm from having the longer arc described the shorter one. This reversal of position necessitated a twist or something very like it, which began at the very top of the swing, had its climax at the bottom and was not completed until the swing ended.

It is in this way that power and speed—the characteristic snap of the swing—is developed, the climax of the action being at the bottom of the swing when the right hand covers the left as the ball is hit and the follow-through begins.