

The Stance and Hand Action

Both Grip and Stance Should be Visualized, Not as Postures of Hands or Feet, but as Movements or Accompaniments of Actions

By R. STANLEY WEIR

THE stance, like the grip, is usually described as at the address. At this point one may stand square, or with the left foot advanced, or with the right foot advanced. The first and third methods are most commonly employed. And the nearer one gets to the hole, using iron or mashie, the more one inclines to face it and the right foot is still more advanced.

But, like the grip, one's stance is ever-changing throughout the swing. During no two consecutive moments is it quite the same, as it conforms to the twisting and untwisting of the body and the corresponding adjustments of its weight.

The old debate as to whether the body's weight bore chiefly on the right or left leg in full swing was a silly one, and arose from failure of the left leggers to perceive that in the up-swing the body turned upon a central axis and inevitably bore chiefly upon the right foot, inasmuch as the turn was from left to right and the greater part of the left foot was raised from the ground. The counter-argument that the deposition of weight on the right involved swaying was pure fallacy. Any object truly turning on its axis does not sway.

It is even more useful to study the stance at the top of the swing than at the address. Much has been said, for example, of the importance of bringing the left shoulder well under and in line with the chin, but in many cases this causes too much strain and Braid's counsel is, wisely, against it. There may be slight tension allowed here, but no strain, and the correspondence between the right shoulder and the left should be noted; as the one advances the other retires, and vice versa; this should be done with the utmost smoothness and exactitude, there being few points of the swing of more importance.



J. H. Taylor's Stance in the Drive

ONE tenet of doubtful practical wisdom that many books have cherished is that, as one strikes the ball, the initial position of the stance is regained; both feet at this point, we are told, are flat upon the ground. Such a statement is of doubtful validity and, in any event, is quite valueless, seeing that, at the point indicated, the entire action is pivotal and of the swiftest. No more mischievous reflection could be indulged in by a golfer in action



Jock Hutchison's Stance

than this. As a matter of fact, the ball is probably struck by most players, just as the left heel returns to ground. This is the view of Miss Cecil Leitch and I think she is right.

But J. H. Taylor has sometimes taught that the ball should be struck while the full weight is still on the right foot. This method ensures that the ball is well struck from behind and has its advantages for some, but, I think, reduces distance. The tenet above quoted, however, is in every way mischievous and may well be disregarded. The rotation of the body requires the full and alternate use of both feet, first the right, then the left. You cannot rotate the body with both feet plantigrade at the same time.

Both grip and stance then should be visualized not as postures of hands or feet, but as movements or accompaniments of actions.

I have written of one's stance as ever-changing throughout the swing. This refers to foot action, which the player must work out for himself. But, it is worth noting that direction is chiefly affected by stance. Execute your swing in a circular way, no matter how you are standing, but stance governs direction, apart from the putt or the slice.

WITH regard to the action of the hands in full swing, an action which is modified as the swing is shortened, the following feature is interesting to note. The thumbs which are uppermost at the address are, as a result of the turning and ascending hands and arms, found to be underneath the handle at the top and over the right shoulder. Then, when the return action has been fully completed over the left shoulder the thumbs are again underneath the shaft. This reversal of position with all that happens between is very characteristic and essential. It generates much power and speed. The left hand or wrist is the leader throughout the movement, first in taking the club back and next, when the bottom of the swing is reached, in the interruption of a full arm sweep by turning itself sharply leftward, while the right hand sharply covers it, thus converting arm action into wrist action, both hands then leading up to the finish automatically.

We note also that, whereas, the left hand was uppermost at the top of the swing, the right hand is uppermost at the finish.

To fix in mind this reversal of the position of the hands, together with what I have called the arrest of the left hand and change in its action at the bottom of the swing, is to possess oneself of the essential principal of golf action.

The notion that the hands have identical functions has been wrongly encouraged by the reasons commonly given in favor of the over-lapping grip, viz: the alleged unification of the hands, and also the ambiguous notion to throw the hands out well after the ball. But, as a matter of fact, although the hands function harmoniously in good play, they certainly do not function in the same way. They function in all good play as just described. The secret of golf consists in an understanding of this.



Taylor's Stance at Top of Swing