

Golf Insider

IT'S GOOD FOR YOUR GAME

After the takeaway — the peel

By T.J. Tomasi
Universal Press Syndicate

At the end of the takeaway, the "Y" formed by the arms and club shaft at address is still perfectly intact, with the club shaft running directly along the foot line. It is now time for the peel, the act of setting the angle of the shaft correctly depending on how you're built.

The Arc player (thin-chested and flexible) keeps the Y and continues upward, delaying the wrist cock until the hands are about mid-chest high. The Leverage player (medium chest/medium flexibility) sets the wrists at waist height so the club shaft is slanted toward the target line while the hands remain on the toe line. And the Width player (large chest/minimum flexibility) sets the club more vertical with both hands slightly below waist height and the shaft still on the toe line.

The Arc Peel

In the golf swing, some movements are sequential while others are simultaneous. The Arc player's takeaway is a perfect example of a simultaneous movement in which the club, hands, arms, shoulders and chest start away from the ball as a unit. In a one-piece takeaway, everything in your upper body, including the club, moves away from the ball in harmony.

At waist height, the toe of your clubface should be tilted slightly forward toward the target line, matching your spine angle, with your hands and the clubhead the same height.

Your takeaway is dedicated to creating height by folding your right elbow and cocking your wrists as late as possible on the backswing. Note that your flexibility is an asset only when it's used correctly to access your power source — the height and length of your swing arc.

The Leverage Peel

As a Leverage player, you want your shaft down the toe line, parallel to the target line at the end of the takeaway. When you set or cock your wrists, you create a 90-degree angle between your left arm and the golf club. The club sets in response to the momentum of the swing and the folding of your right arm.

Your right wrist (for right-handers) bends back toward your forearm, thereby creating wrinkles across the top of the wrist, a most important move that keeps the club on the plane. Thus, during the peel, the club is set correctly without the hands being drawn inside the toe line, a move that often causes the error commonly referred to as "over-the-top."

Once your peel is completed and your wrists are cocked, the relationships you need to complete your backswing are in place. All you have to do now is continue your arm swing, a motion that will turn your shoulders and create the coil.

The Width Peel

During the takeaway, when the hands reach a point just above the right knee, the heel pad of your left hand pushes down on the club handle to cock your wrists.

This motion sets the club shaft on a slightly more upright angle than standard, just above your back shoulder.

In conjunction with your left hand action, your right hand pushes down on the knuckle of your left thumb to extend your arms away from your body, creating the necessary width. This forces the butt of the club down and away from the chest and pushes the club away from your body, with the right palm operating like a stiff arm in football.

This is the key to your swing because it gives your clubhead height but leaves your hands low and wide — a more comfortable and appropriate position for your large chest.

For more on how body type affects your swing, visit www.tjtomasi.com.

THE GOLF DOCTOR

A strategy for turning fives into threes

For professional golfers, par-5 holes are scoring opportunities because they can reach the green in two shots and two-putt for birdie. While you might not possess the same skill combination of length and accuracy, with a different strategy, par-5s can be birdie holes for you, too.

Using clever course management, you can turn every par 5 into a 100-yard par-3. Here's how: Instead of automatically blasting your driver then fairway wood, calculate a two-shot combination that will put you 100 yards from the green, reducing the hole to an easy 100-yard par-3.

With four of these 100-yard par-3s per round, you're bound to make some birdies and lots of pars. Plus, using this ap-

proach, the average course has eight par-3s — which should make it easy pickings!

Of course, you have to make sure your 100-yard shot is fine-tuned, but this is far easier than trying to knock the ball on in two.

To master the 100-yarder, take one more club for the shot than you normally would, e.g. to ensure more control of the ball, select a 9-iron if you usually use a pitching wedge.

To shorten the distance the club produces, grip down 2 inches. And for ultimate control, shorten your swing so that your hands stay beneath your shoulders both back and through the shot.

— T.J. Tomasi

COMMENTARY

The last tear falls for Arnie

By FURMAN BISHOP
Cox News Service

Well, there he goes, off into the sunset of his glorious career, with a tear in his eye. Coincidentally, Arnie departs tournament golf as Freddie Pender departs life, leaving behind his mournful melody: "Before the Next Teardrop Falls."

For most of his life, "Arnie" was all that was needed to identify Arnold Palmer. He won 62 PGA Tour events and many more tournaments on one continent or another, but his career is more entwined with the Masters than any other. It was at Augusta National that in 1960 the two rose to glory hand in hand.

Significantly, or peculiarly, the course on which he struck his last official shot is named Augusta Pines, located in a Houston municipal appendage named Spring. It was on the fourth tee in the Administrist Small Business event, and after two shots found water, Arnie made his official departure from tournament golf with this benediction:

"I've been doing this for a long time, and to stand out here and not be able to make something happen is very traumatic. The people want to see a good shot, and when you can't give them that, that's when it's time." But he played on and finished the round with John Mahaffey and Lee Trevino, with a "WD" by his name.

Frankly, it has been time for a long time, but Arnie loves to play. He loves the galleries, the cozy relationship he has bonded with them since the evolution of "Arnie's Army" at Augusta; the cheers, the adulation, the occasional pars, which were to become more occasional as his game receded.

Let's see, the last time he won a tournament was in 1988, the Crestar Classic, on the Senior Tour before it became Champions. The last time he won on the PGA Tour was in 1973, the Bob Hope Classic, but he's won three times outside these borders. The last time he finished in the top 25



BRANT SANDERLIN / Cox News Service

Golfing legend Arnold Palmer, shown above signing autographs at the 2005 Masters Tournament in Augusta, Ga., withdrew after the first round of the Administrist Classic on Oct. 13, saying it would be his last competitive round of golf.

was 1996, but he played on, though he managed to collect only pocket change, mainly just for being there. Obviously, money was not hard to come by for that time he was in high demand by advertisers — remember Pennzoil and that old tractor? — and in golf-course design, with his partner, Ed Seay.

This was Palmer's very last farewell to competition, for he had gone through this before at the Masters in 2004. Chairman Hootie Johnson had bent the age rule and invited him back for a curtain call, and each green became a stage. And after the round, emotionally frayed, Arnie said, "I'm through. I've had it. Cooked. Washed up. Finished, whatever you want to call it."

In Spring, Texas, of all places, it was all of that. The finale. "I made every move in the bag today, and it wasn't very successful," and then, the last teardrop fell.

Arnie was not the first Palmer on tour, and I bring this up because the original passed away almost a month ago to the day. Johnny Palmer came from Badin, N.C., where the biggest thing in

town is a huge hydroelectric dam. He was quiet by nature, mainly self-taught, and his dossier is quite impressive for any era. He won the Canadian Open, the Western Open, the Colonial, and in 1949, when he won the World Championship, a George S. May production, his check was for \$10,000, the largest winning prize on tour at the time. (I should have pointed out that for all those tournaments Arnold won on the PGA Tour, he collected just \$1,861,857, not a lot more than the winner of the Players Championship collects.) Johnny was runner-up to Sam Snead in the PGA Championship in 1949, fourth in the Masters the same year, when he also made the Ryder Cup team, and led at Augusta after the first round in 1952. After it was all done, he went back home to Badin and became the local club pro. You don't see a lot of his kind any more. He was 88 at death.

I might add that the Tour is now down to one Palmer again, Ryan, a 30-year-old from Texas. Under that name, he bears a heavy load.

Two events left to gain PGA Tour privileges

By STAN AWTRY
Cox News Service

Lake Buena Vista, Fla.

He has grown accustomed to performing in the PGA Tour's pressurized environment. But the next two weeks are somewhat different for Brian Bateman. Every time he crouches to read a 5-foot putt or decides to challenge a par 5, Bateman knows it could affect his future on the PGA Tour.

Bateman, who has won \$645,153 this season, is No. 125 on the PGA Tour's money list. With two tournaments remaining in the regular season, Bateman must defend his ground — make the cut and cash a check — or face the likely prospect of returning to the PGA Tour Qualifying Tournament for the fifth time. Meet this year's Mr. Bubble.

"I don't feel like Bubble Boy yet because it's still a weak away, but it's been a long year for me," said Bateman, who has battled a knee injury and back spasms this season. "This is the first time I've been in this position. When I kept my card a couple of years back, I was well within the 125. And the years I missed it, I really had to play top-three golf the last tournament."

This is the time when players such as Bateman begin to worry about their playing status for next

year. Anyone in the top 125 keeps their PGA Tour card and is exempt for 2007. Players ranked No. 126-150 can bypass the first round of Q School, but all others must suffer the indignity of returning to the first stage, where the odds of getting back to the Tour are longer.

"I hear talk on the range or in the locker room about who is No. 125 on the list, what the number is going to be," said rookie Eric Axley, who went from outside the top 125 to a guy with a two-year exemption after his recent win at the Valero Texas Open. "I think it's not just desperation on keeping your card, but depending on how you're playing, everyone seems to have a goal of where they're trying to get."

There are plenty of veterans trying to catch Bateman and steal a spot among the privileged class: John Cook, a winner of 11 PGA Tour events; former U.S. Amateur champion Bubba Dickerson; three-time winner Duffy Waldorf; two-time winner Jonathan Kaye; and Bob May, who lost in a playoff to Tiger Woods for the 2000 PGA Championship. All four fall between 126 and 150 on the money list, and all are in the field at this week's Funiaki Classic at Walt Disney World Resort.

The race is closer: Cook, playing this week on a sponsors exemption, is \$648 behind Bateman, less

than the amount many professionals tip the clubhouse attendants at the end of the week.

Jerry Smith, 10 spots behind Bateman, needs \$90,947 — the equivalent of one top-10 finish — to catch up.

"I don't look at it shot-by-shot because each week you can go back and find a shot," Bateman said. "And it doesn't necessarily have to be the last five-footer on 18 for par on Sunday that costs you money. That counts just as much as a ball in the bunker on the first hole on the first day."

Other drama remains for the final two weeks. The top 30 qualify for The Tour Championship, as well as the 2007 U.S. Open. The top 40 qualify for the Masters. The top 70 earn a spot in the Arnold Palmer Invitational (formerly Bay Hill). The top 80 earn an invitation to the Bank of America Colonial. That makes this a potentially big week for Jason Bohn, who is No. 41 on the money list. He's one big finish away from making the Tour Championship and two solid weeks away from earning a return trip to the Masters.

"That's a goal," said Bohn, who was second two weeks ago at the Chrysler Classic of Greensboro. "It'll probably take another top-five finish, so I'm going to play both weeks and see what happens."



BRANT SANDERLIN / Cox News Service

Par-5 holes can be scoring opportunities. Phil Mickelson goes for a birdie on the par-5 second hole at Augusta National Golf Club during the 2004 Masters Tournament.

ASK THE PRO

Q: I've read a lot about cocking the left wrist (I'm right-handed), and I've even bought a teaching aid to help me use my left hand, but I'm still not sure exactly what I'm supposed to do when I swing.

A: In golf, the wrists are the clubface. When you change your wrist formation, you automatically change the position of the clubface, which is largely responsible for the direction the ball travels. So the wrists have a huge effect on the quality of impact and, hence, the distance

SCHEDULE

All Times EDT PGA TOUR

Funiaki Classic at Walt Disney World
• Site: Lake Buena Vista, Fla.
• Schedule: Thursday-Sunday
• Courses: Walt Disney World Resort, Magnolia Course (7,516 yards, par 72) and Palm Course (7,010 yards, par 72)
• Purse: \$4.6 million. Winner's share: \$828,000.
• TV: ESPN (Thursday-Friday, 3-6 p.m.; Saturday, 4-6 p.m.) and ABC (Sunday, 3-6 p.m.)

LPGA TOUR

Honda LPGA Thailand
• Site: Chonburi, Thailand.
• Schedule: Friday-Sunday
• Course: Amata Spring Country Club (6,392 yards, par 72)
• Purse: \$1.3 million. Winner's share: \$195,000.
• TV: None.

CHAMPIONS TOUR

AT&T Championship
• Site: San Antonio.
• Schedule: Friday-Sunday
• Course: Oak Hills Country Club (6,670 yards, par 71)
• Purse: \$1.6 million. Winner's share: \$240,000.
• TV: The Golf Channel (Friday-Sunday, 6-8:30 p.m., 10 p.m.-midnight)

PGA EUROPEAN TOUR

Mallorca Classic
• Site: Pula, Balearic Islands.
• Schedule: Thursday-Sunday
• Course: Pula Golf Club (6,676 yards, par 70)
• Purse: \$2.19 million. Winner's share: \$364,385.
• TV: The Golf Channel (Thursday-Friday, 9 a.m.-noon; Saturday-Sunday, 8:30-11:30 a.m.)

NATIONWIDE TOUR

PalmtoPride Classic
• Site: Charleston, S.C.
• Schedule: Thursday-Sunday
• Course: Daniel Island Club, Ralston Creek Course (7,446 yards, par 72)
• Purse: \$500,000. Winner's share: \$90,000.
• TV: None.

LEADERS

WORLD RANKINGS

1. Tiger Woods	22.89
2. Jim Furyk	8.70
3. Phil Mickelson	8.31
4. Adam Scott	7.26
5. Vijay Singh	6.68
6. Retief Goosen	6.35
7. Ernie Els	6.25
8. Luke Donald	5.55
9. Geoff Ogilvy	5.42
10. Sergio Garcia	5.42
11. Henrik Stenson	4.86
12. P. Harrington	4.83
13. T. Immelman	4.59
14. David Howell	4.36
15. Paul Casey	4.28

MONEY LEADERS

Player	Money
1. Tiger Woods	\$9,941,563
2. Jim Furyk	\$6,483,316
3. Phil Mickelson	\$4,256,505
4. Geoff Ogilvy	\$4,228,869
5. Vijay Singh	\$4,163,831
6. Adam Scott	\$3,808,858
7. T. Immelman	\$3,479,745
8. S. Appleby	\$3,230,297
9. Luke Donald	\$2,911,408
10. David Toms	\$2,764,287

LPGA TOUR

Player	Money
1. Lorena Ochoa	\$2,342,872
2. A. Sorenstam	\$1,906,126
3. Katrie Webb	\$1,889,613
4. Cristie Kerr	\$1,502,190
5. Mi Hyun Kim	\$1,263,802

CHAMPIONS TOUR

Player	Money
1. Jay Haas	\$2,266,427
2. Loren Roberts	\$2,128,461
3. Brad Bryant	\$1,655,292
4. G. Morgan	\$1,468,107
5. Tom Kite	\$1,362,125

and direction of the shot.

What is proper wrist action? Pretend to make a pistol out of your left hand with your index finger as the barrel and your thumb up in the air as if it were the hammer.

Now, pull directly back on the hammer in the direction of your forearm and cock your wrist. That's the proper wrist set.

This creates power and solves the direction problem by getting the clubface in the proper position throughout the swing and, most important, at impact.