

Power And Precision In The Impact Zone

In last week's column I suggested that the combination of a sound fundamental grip and good footwork will launch any golfer on a path that will deliver the clubhead through the Impact Zone with power and precision.

Power is generated by the coiled, compact transition from backswing to forward swing that has its roots in good footwork. This desired footwork is simplified by attaining balance on the inside of the rear foot and initiating the transition by pushing off the rear foot to insure a lower body lead to the forward swing.

Precision is developed and enhanced by generating muscle memory in the large muscle groups of the legs, back, and shoulders. When these muscles are coordinated in sequence from the ground up they will deliver the clubhead square to the intended line of flight through the impact zone.

Byron Nelson wrote an instructional article in the May '88 issue of Golf Digest titled, "Impact!" which reinforces the swing elements that I suggest. His article is supported by "snapshot" photographs of over 30 renowned professionals at the point of impact. These remarkable "freeze-frame" photos demonstrate what Nelson describes as four positions that all great golfers have in common: a steady head, left arm in line with the clubshaft, right side release, and a tight right elbow.

Frozen Positions Vs. Dynamic Motion

You may recall my aversion to frozen position instruction. If you do not believe me just stand over a golf ball on the course or on the practice range and try to think yourself into the above four positions at impact. Your body will slowly contract into rigor mortis and your brain will freeze. We have all seen guys and gals doing just that on the course, and we wonder when they are ever going to swing.

I also reject the notion of "impact" in favor of an impact zone. Just the word "impact" infers "hit," and hit infers hands and wrist action. Hands and wrist action are a product of a good swing motion, not something you want to think about or try to reproduce or fine tune.

Nelson's "right side release" is nothing more than driving off the inside of the rear foot to initiate the forward swing. That produces a lower body lead which virtually pulls the rear elbow into a "tight" position inside and below the leading elbow. It also sets the club on an inside path to the impact zone where clubhead will be square to the target line.

The dynamic ground-up sequence of feet, knees, hips, and shoulders will fire the clubhead through the impact zone at speeds faster than any of us will ever drive a car. At such speeds we are just holding on to the club handle and the leading arm will be very straight.

Keys To Precision

The key to consistency and precise timing of the clubface through the impact zone is driving the shoulders directly down the target line and swinging the arms past the chin on the forward swing.

When driving off of the rear foot you should have the feeling that the knees, hips, and shoulders are sliding straight toward the target. In fact the knees and hips are slightly open to the intended line of flight as the club passes through the ball, but the shoulders must remain parallel to the intended line of flight.

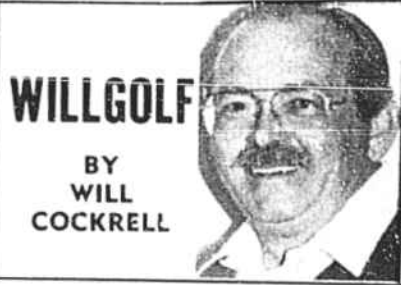
Since the feeling of keeping the leading shoulder on line to the target may be a new one to you, let me suggest a simple drill to familiarize you with the sensations you will feel as the clubhead enters the impact zone. Open any door in your house. Take a golf club and assume your address position by placing the outside of your leading heel against the door frame. Then, without moving the clubhead, slide your hip and shoulder forward against the door frame. You will experience several sensations.

The leading arm will straighten and the trailing arm will drop below and inside it. The leading shoulder will feel higher than the trailing shoulder. If your head has remained "steady" you will have a distinct sensation of entering the impact zone from inside the target line.

I know you are going to tell me that this is a freeze frame position, and it is. However, it is one born of feelings and sensations (motion) and not of places where you want to get. By the way, did you notice that to get the hip and shoulder against the door frame, you had to push off the inside of the rear foot?

Byron Nelson's "steady head" is best accomplished by keeping your chin pointed at the back of the ball until the arms bring the chin and head up. Once the arms have passed the chin, the ball has been launched and you can look up to see what a great shot you have hit.

The head isn't really all that steady. It actually moves quite a bit in a good golf swing. There are a number of myths regarding the role of the head in the swing. We will explore those next week.



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Brick Landing Plans Amateur Golf Tourney

An amateur golf tournament which organizers hope will someday be one of the best in the country will be held at Brick Landing Plantation in July.

The Amateur at Brick Landing, a 72-hole, stroke play tournament scheduled July 7-10, will offer \$10,000 in merchandise to the top finishers.

An amateur/amateur event on Wednesday, July 6, will allow competitors to get an early look at the course while enjoying a day with the tournament sponsors, said Assistant Pro Mark Beran.

Participation in the tournament will be limited to 144 golfers with handicaps of three or better. The entire field will compete Thursday and Friday before the cut is made leaving just the top 70 golfers plus ties for the weekend. Handicaps will not be used during the tournament.

Beran said organizers plan to make the tournament an annual affair, adding that they hope it will become one of the top amateur events in the nation within a few years.

Len Mattiace, an All-American from Wake Forest University who played on the 1987 Walker Cup team and competed at this year's Master's Tournament, is among the top amateur golfers expected to participate. He also won the 1985 Southern Amateur Championship and was a semi-finalist at last year's British Amateur.

Other golfers entered include Rudy Virga, who attended Central Connecticut State and is the two-time defending champion at the Keystone Invitational, and Scott Irby, who was an All-American at Campbell University. The public will be permitted to view the tournament free of charge.

Brick Landing Plantation, located on N.C. 179 between Ocean Isle Beach and Shallotte, is a par-72 layout which plays 6,482 yards from the championship tees.

Anyone with a handicap of three or lower is eligible to participate in the tournament. The entry fee is \$100 for the four-day event, and registration deadline is July 2 at 5 p.m.

Calabash VFW Plans July 4 Golf Tourney

Calabash VFW Post No. 7288 will recognize Independence Day this year with a golf tournament open to all amateur players.

The individual tournament will be held July 4 at Sandpiper Bay Golf and Country Club located between Calabash and Sunset Beach. Competition will begin at 1 p.m. with a shotgun start.

Prizes will be awarded for the low gross and low nets scores in men's and women's flights. There will also be closest-to-the-pin and long drive competitions on several holes.

A \$20 entry fee must be paid no later than July 2. However, the tournament will be limited to the first 144 players to register, so interested golfers are encouraged to sign up early, a release indicated.

Checks can be made payable to Veterans of Foreign Wars, Post 7288, and can be mailed to R.G. Botts, Gate 11 No. 5, Carolina Shores, Calabash, NC 28459.

Entry fees must accompany

registration forms, which can be picked up at local golf courses. Forms should include name, address, phone number and handicap.

Field Set For Simpson Tourney

The field of teams is set for this weekend's Jimmy Simpson Invitational Golf Tournament.

According to Simpson, all entry fees which arrived too late will be returned in full.

The sixth annual event, which provides funds for a different local charity each year, will be played Sunday, June 19, at Marsh Harbor Golf Links near Calabash.

An awards dinner will be held immediately after the tournament at Sandpiper Bay Golf and Country Club.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Bowlers Place Second

This team of local bowlers finished second at the South Carolina Women's State Bowling Tournament held Saturday in Spartanburg. Scoring 3,221 points in three games, they finished just 21 pins behind the state champions but ahead of the 357 other teams entered in the tournament. Pictured are (back, from left) Rhonda Sabiston and Jeanette Sabiston, both of Shallotte; Pam Galloway of Supply; (front, from left) Sheila Wyatt of Calabash and Nancy Kennedy of Supply.

Threesome Shoots 30 To Win Brierwood Scramble

The threesome of Mike O'Mara, Ginger Sugrue and Dot Crean fired a six-under-par score of 30 to win last week's nine-hole mixed scramble held at Brierwood Golf Club.

Finishing one stroke back in second place during the June 9 event was the team of Harley Bordeaux, Olive Seitz, Graham Justice and Pricilla Shoemaker. Third-place finishers, with a round of 32, were Bill Shoemaker, Ruth Hierman, Bill Crean and Esther Smith.

In other recent action from the Brierwood Men's Golf Association circuit, Dillon Taylor, Zane Winters, Bill Greenway and Jerry Smith took

top honors in last Friday's two-ball handicap event with a net 66.

Second place went to the foursome of Jack Casner, Al Hierman, Dave Harper and Bob Meek with a net 68.

Also last week, Zane Winters and Jim Crosby tied for first place in an individual point system tournament held June 8. Both men finished with 44 points.

Farney Edwards came in second with 43 points, while Paul Kelly finished one stroke back in third.

Closest to the pin winners at that event were Bob Watt at the third hole and Randy Milazzo at the 14th.

Carolina Shores Women Play Individual Tourney

The Carolina Shores Ladies Golf Association held an individual low gross/low net tournament on its home course last week using one Mulligan per nine holes.

Flo Warren fired an 84 for low gross honors in the June 9 event. She used a chip-in at the third hole, a birdie at the 16th and shared low putt honors with Ann Hierman, each using 28, on her way to victory in the first flight.

Jean Krisher finished with low net in the first flight. She defeated Betty Kibblehouse on a match of cards after both ladies finished with identical scores of 69.

In the second flight, Ruby Vanderburg finished with the low gross of 93. Low net honors went to Dot Meader with a 69, Sue Greiner with 73 and Anne Gentles with 74.

Ann Paladino scored an even 100 to win low gross in the third flight. The lowest net scores were turned in by Fran Torgersen with 69, Kay Quackenbush with 72 and Gerry Burdick with 76.

Fourth flight winners were Elizabeth Carter with a gross 103 and Marion Corbin with a net 67.

Dot Meader had a chip-in at the 12th hole, while Ginie Derrickson scored a birdie at the eighth hole and Ann Hierman added birdies at the third and 14th.

Three players also had chip-ins for birdie during the tournament. They were recorded by Elizabeth Carter at the eighth hole, Rose Marcsyn at the par-three 12th hole and Inky Remais at the 16th.

Ann Bennett had chip-ins at the third and fifth holes. St. also birdied the 11th hole.

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