

SHORT GAME INSTRUCTION

Playing 'Part Shots' Well Reduces Score

Anyone planning to write about the short shots in golf can find tons of material already written and on the shelf. There exists, however, a single book which could be described as the encyclopedia of the short game, "The Short Way to Lower Scoring" by a chap named Paul Runyan. The book includes instruction and techniques on putting, chipping, pitching and a variety of what Mr. Runyan calls "part shots" which boggle the imagination.

Runyan's use of the word "short" infers the length of the shot and definitely not the amount of time needed to master his system. He was twice the PGA Champion and twice the leading money winner on the pro tour with only average length off the tee. He clearly attributed his success to his ability to play the short shots successfully. A renowned and successful instructor in his day, Runyan wrote his book in 1979 when he was in his 60s.

The prevailing concept of Runyan's text is that golfers of all levels of skill take far more "part shots" during a normal round of golf than they should. He includes in these part shots all shots struck with less than a full swing. It is his conviction that the short game is the single most fertile part of everyone's golf game where all golfers can improve and continue to improve over time. Runyan recognizes that age, sex, and the variances in levels of skill do not effect our ability to acquire a solid short game which will serve to reduce our scores.

Short Game Primer

Runyan's theories on putting, chipping and pitching are textbook pure and have undoubtedly served as a primer and a major frame of reference for most short game instructors. It is his detailed approach to the part shots which I find most fascinating and rewarding. Its beauty lies in its range of appeal to golfers. For those of us who enjoy studying the swing it borders on being a thesis on short shots. For those who want no more than an abstract of good illustrations and a few words to clarify the technique, it also fills the bill.

The section of his book which focuses on "The Part Shot Game Plan" is one I use extensively in teaching high school golfers the short game. I also recommend it to more experienced golfers as a good process for developing solid habits with the short game, which will certainly improve your play and add give structure to your practice. The game plan is simply to examine your lie, visualize your shot options, select the right club for the shot you choose, rehearse the selected swing and then duplicate that swing in hitting the shot.

Check Your Lie

The key to this procedure is found in checking out your lie to determine what is and is not possible with the shot you face. Is the lie tight or is it sitting up on a fluffy bed of grass? Is it possible to slide a wedge under the ball with little bounce off the ground or will it be necessary to make a sharply descending blow to get the ball up and on its way? Is the grass short and consistent enough to allow you to nip the ball and impart spin to the ball or is the turf so loose and hairy as to demand a pitch and run?

Good lies allow us to hit almost any kind of shot and enable us to pick our favorite type of short shot. Once we know the range of possibilities for the shot, we can visualize the options at our disposal. How open is your route to the flag? Are there intervening obstacles which must be avoided? How much room is there to run the ball between the fringe and the flag? How receptive is the putting surface to spin shots? The answer to these questions will allow us to visualize the distance and trajectory of the shot we want to play and the select the correct club to get the job done.

More Than Wedge Shots

Part shots are not limited to wedges. I will readily admit that I am partial to a six iron on long chip shots and I prefer to hit a choked down nine iron off bare lies on hardpan. However, I do not allow my preferences influence club selection when a different loft or a different combination of carry and run is more likely to provide consistent results.

If I am considering using a sand wedge for a marginal shot to a pin located close to a bunker or hazard and then decide it is too risky, I do not automatically use the sand wedge to hit to a safer spot on the green. I make a separate analysis of which club to use to place the ball in the best possible position closer to the middle of the green. We must remember that club selection is more than distance alone. Trajectory, carry and roll are factors too seldom considered when choosing the right club for the shot desired.

Once we have selected the club to give us the desired shot we can relax our analytical nodes and concentrate on the motor skill needed to pull off the shot. Here is where practice and experience pay off with a couple of carefully executed practice swings to rehearse our shot. Then without delay we should step up to the ball and repeat our practice swing.

I fully recognize that this step by step process may seem like "old hat" stuff to many of you. You use this procedure already and you may even combine a couple of the steps in your thought process. But please allow me to close with a caution and a suggestion.

Short, part shots which are flubbed, fat or bladed blunders that run up your score are rarely due to poor mechanical execution. Imprecise execution of part shots is almost always due to indecision on how to hit the shot. Indecision will influence poor execution four or five times more often than poor mechanics.

Lastly, if you are not disposed to be so deliberate on the course, then at least give this step by step procedure a honest chance when you are practicing the short game. Intelligent, thoughtful practice can store valuable perceptions in our memory banks which will reinforce good thinking on the course and serve to fine tune swing mechanics. Practice is the element which promotes good decisions and enhances our ability to execute our shots just like our rehearsal swings.

Next week: *Play like you practice.*

Cougar Golfers Open Over Clinton

Medalist Andy Broadwell fired Kopp both shot an 83 for the an 80 to lead South Brunswick over Clinton 332-410 in the prep golf opener for both squads Monday. South Brunswick visits Topsail Brandon Vannoy and Daniel today (Thursday) in its next match.

Team Wins Sea Trail Event On Card Match

GOLFING ACTION

The foursome of Ray Washam, Ron Schadle, Clarence Brown and Ken Harris shot 66 and won the Sea Trail Men's Golf Association captain's choice event last week on a match of cards.

During the tournament, John Walker made an eagle at the par 5 sixth hole. Twenty-eight members and two guests participated in the weekly event, which was played on the Maples course at Sea Trail Plantation.

Brierwood Men

The team of Gene Loflin, Howard Bayne, Charlie Stransky and Rick Rickbeil shot a 17-under-par round of 127 and won the Brierwood Men's Golf Association best ball event last Thursday.

Finishing one stroke back in second place was the team of Don Martin, Straud Maerker, Jim Kelleher and Emile Vrydaghs.

The foursome of Odie Johnson, Jack Causer, Bob Sterner and John Cowie took third place with a score of 133.

In other recent action at Brierwood, the team of Graham Justice, Tim Parker, Ginny Anzelone and Ann Causer shot 33 and won the nine-hole mixed scramble last Wednesday.

Two teams tied for second place in the captain's choice event. Ed Rockstroh, Greg Bouldin, Olive Seitz and Audrey Salmon shot 34 to tie the team of Jack Causer, Bob Sterner, Dede Havenga and Lois Beato.

On March 4, the team of Joe

Reiter. The Scotch foursome event ended in a tie for first place. The team of Jack and Ann Causer and Keith and Lois Curry shot 134 to tie the foursome of Howard and Ellie Scutt and Fergie and Mary Nicol.

Ruth's Renegades

Ruth's Renegades held low net golf tournaments last week at Brierwood and Carolina Shores, with each golfer given one mulligan for each nine holes.

Mary Ahearn birdied the 10th hole and led the way at Brierwood with a score of 70.

Runners-up were Phyllis Harding with 76, Dot Frey with 77 and Edith Wilkens with 77. Ruth Jacobs chipped in at the 13th hole.

At Carolina Shores, winners were Sue Baer with a 76 and Mabel Kassner and Joan Turns with matching scores of 84.

Mrs. Turns chipped in at the eighth hole, and Arlene Singleton had a chip-in at the 17th.

Carolina Shores

Peg Sawyer shot net 33.5 and won the first flight of the Carolina Shores Ladies Golf Association tournament last week.

Golfers counted scores on holes starting with the letters "I" and "F" and used half of their handicaps.

Ginny Dorshimer, who birdied the sixth hole, took second place in the top flight with a score of 35. Helen Morrison placed third with a net 35.5.

Sue Greiner led the way in the second flight with a 33.5. Pat Reardon chipped in at the 17th hole and placed second with a 36.5. Jenny Botts, who birdied the second hole, finished third with a 37.5.

Dot Meader won the third flight and had the overall low net with a 30. Other top finishers in the third flight were Inky Remail with a 35 and Jackie Distler with a 36.5.

Winners in the fourth flight were Martha Paynter with a 36, Marg

Schober with a 37 and Grae Thorpe with a 38.

Joan McNamara had low putts for the tournament with 28. Shirley Vazquez chipped in for birdie at the 12th hole.

Other chip-ins were recorded by Ruth Rice at the third hole and Joan Sullivan at the 15th.

Brierwood Ladies

Three teams tied for first place in the Brierwood Ladies Golf Association captain's choice tournament last Tuesday with scores of 75.

Winning teams were Pat Reid, Pat O'Connell, Marian Corbin and Barbara Baxter; Marie Dolan, Hilda Hall, Janice Owens and Marian Rockstroh; and Jan Loflin, True Schmalzer, Joan Cowie and Margaret Pingo.

The foursome of Doris Dunfee, Elizabeth Carter, Audrey Salmon and Jean Lacerenza placed fourth with a round of 76.

Winners of the long drive contest were Bobby Maples, 0 to 25 handicap; Mrs. Carter, 26 to 30 handicap; and Catherine Clemmons, 31 to 37 handicap.



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Golf Tournament To Benefit Brunswick Literacy Council

A golf tournament set Sunday, June 2, at Carolina Shores Golf and Country Club will benefit the Brunswick County Literacy Council (BCLC).

John Crane of Carolina Shores is serving as general chairman of the BCLC Golf Tournament, which will be a four-person scramble event.

Registration is \$100 per four-person team and includes prizes, refreshments and food. American Golf is providing the course and carts at no charge for 144 participants.

All proceeds will be used to support the council. The BCLC provides adult volunteer tutors for adults and school-age students who want to upgrade their reading skills and is also working with Head Start preschool students at Longwood and Cedar Grove. During the 1990-91 fiscal year the council is operating entirely on local contributions, without benefit of state or federal funds.

Carolina Shores, a par-72 course, is just north of the South Carolina state line at Calabash.

Tournament brochures will be available at local courses soon, Crane said. Meanwhile, more information on the tournament is available from him at 579-7105.

Women Organizing Golf League

Brunswick County women's golf associations are organizing a new golf league that will conduct monthly tournaments at local courses.

The seven women's associations that have agreed to participate in the league so far are Brick Landing, Brierwood, Carolina Shores, Fox Squirrel, Oak Island, Sandpiper Bay and Sea Trail.

Monthly tournaments during the season will rotate from course to course. Fox Squirrel Country Club at Boiling Spring Lakes will host the first event, on March 27.

Gloria Riley of Fox Squirrel has been elected president of the league.

Sally Thomas, also of Fox Squirrel, will serve as secretary-treasurer.

Mrs. Riley said enthusiasm for the new league is running high and she expects between 100 and 120 golfers to compete. She said women from the different courses are looking forward to meeting each other and competing in tournaments.

Other women's golf associations that are interested in joining the league can contact Mrs. Riley through Fox Squirrel Country Club, 845-2625.

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