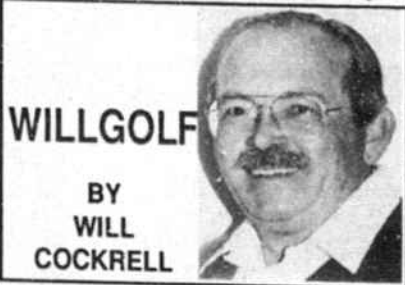


SHORT GAME FUNDAMENTALS

The Principles Of Good Putting

The putting stroke is only stroke in the game which is largely left up to the golfer to develop on his own. There are a number of reasons that few professional teachers spend much time teaching fundamentals which relate to the putting stroke.

First of all, most professional instructors have learned through experience that the most difficult golf habits to change are those associated with putting. Almost every golfer has "found" a stroke that works well for him most of the time. Remember I said "most" of the time.



WILLGOLF

BY
WILL
COCKRELL

Watch Out For Those Putting Gurus

We are all familiar with the case where someone gives us a hot tip on the practice putting green and within minutes we are rolling the ball straight and true to the cup. We take our new "found" stroke to the course and it works like a charm. We continue to putt well for a number of weeks while focusing on this new tip for our putting stroke. Suddenly the new stroke stops working. We go back to the practice green and try to reinstall the new "find." Even that does not work.

At this point, we are open for help from the next "putting guru" who strolls by. Here he comes now: "Hey Guy, you are never going to be a good putter as long as you wear that golf glove. Get rid of it. The secret to good putting is in your fingernails. You gotta feel those fingernails on the handle of the putter. You should let the fingernails grow a little longer to improve your feel with the putter."

Before you laugh, let me tell you that I heard those remarks being passed along to a friend of mine. He took his glove off and gave it a try. I watched him for several weeks to see if he let his fingernails grow. I have never been sure what he would have done, since he found a better method before the fingernail system sunk in. He now putts with his master eye over the ball while squinting with the other eye. Seriously. And he will not divulge which guru gave him that tip.

My friend has always had a nice setup to his putts. His stance is solid, his grip is fine, his hands and arms are relaxed and there is little or no break in his wrist during the stroke. His only downfall has been his interpretation of "accelerating through the ball." He has a nice smooth back stroke but then he jabs at the ball giving it a rap while stopping the putter blade just a few inches beyond the point of impact. His back stroke is three or four times longer than his follow-through. He refuses to believe that he is actually decelerating the putter through the ball. And he is quick to tell you that Gary Player and Billy Casper are "pop" putters.

Most Great Putters Agree

If you are a golfer who feels you have a fundamentally sound method of putting and still are not getting all you expect from your putting, let's review the list of Putting Principles from the PGA Manual. The manual states that, "There is no single element of putting technique that every great putter agrees upon, but there are a few that a majority support." They are: Set up with the eye over or slightly inside the ball. Set the clubface square to the target line. Position the ball slightly forward of your swing center. Limit body motion. Use an accelerating stroke. Be comfortable over the ball. Make solid contact by hitting the ball in the putter's "sweet spot."

As with the fundamentals of the short game, there is not much in this list which will surprise an experienced golfer. It is possible that some have not been conscious of placing their eye over the ball and aligned with the intended line of your putt. This principle improves consistency and accuracy in the direction your putts roll. The farther your eye is from the intended line of the putt, the more your visual image is distorted. It is also a good check point to remind you to always stand the same distance from the ball.

Ball Position Not A Fundamental Violation

Positioning the ball slightly forward of center is not a violation of the fundamental to address the ball "generally in the center of your stance." Positioning the ball forward of center allows you to contact the ball fractionally on the upswing, just beyond bottom dead center. This ball position is particularly helpful on short putts on slick greens when you want to roll the ball dead straight into the back of the cup. I make sense that contacting the ball slightly on the upswing will reduce the distance which the ball will skid along the irregular surface of the green before it picks up overspin and rolls true to the target.

In the rare event you do not believe that there are irregularities on even the best greens, just watch film of a putt rolling in slow-motion. The only other routine golf shot in which you want the club to be slightly on the upward path in its arc is the drive. Otherwise, there would be no need to place the ball on a tee.

Next week we will look at some ways to install the fundamentals and the principles discussed above into your putting habits. There are also some very quotable quotes from both teaching professionals and playing professionals which I want to share with you.

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Foursome Wins OIB Captain's Choice With 60

Steve Borget, Kay Dodge and Bob Davidson fired a round of 60 to win the Ocean Isle Beach Golf Association Father's Day captain's choice tournament June 16.

Finishing five shots back in second place was the team of Ed Tilley, Carol Smith, Vince Prugel and Maddie Hoellman.

Placing third with a 66 was the foursome of Kemp Causey, Betty Tedesco, Bill Prugel and George Withohn.

Fourth place went to the team of Tony Belda, Sara Williams, Jim King and Walter Dodge with a 68.

Course professionals Borget, Belda and Tilley joined the golf association members to form seven teams for the event.

Closest to the pin winners at the 13th hole were Jim King for the men with a distance of 9 feet, 6 inches, and Betty Tedesco for the women with a distance of 9 feet, 10 inches.

Brierwood Ladies

Elsie Rickbeil birdied the third hole and chipped in at the fourth on her way to a net 24 and a top finish in the Brierwood Ladies Golf Association crossover tournament last week.

Other top finishers in the first flight included Marie Dolan and Hilda Hall with scores of 27.5. Both women birdied the ninth hole, and Mrs. Dolan had low putts in the flight with 28.

Virginia Gibson led the way in the second flight with a round of 25.

GOLFING ACTION

Runners-up were Maureen Farley with net 27 and Jane Flieg with 27.5. Marian Johnson had low putts with 32.

Third flight winners were Esther Smith with 24.5, Janice Owens with 25.5 and Kay Quackenbush with 28. Marian Corbin had low putts in the third flight with 30.

In the fourth flight, Peg Steiner had the low net of 25.5. Ginny Anzelone, who chipped in at the 10th hole, placed second with 27.5. Jennie Ward was third with 29.5. Mary Nicol had low putts with 35.

Other birdies during the tournament came from Ann Causer at the second hole, Jan Loflin at the fourth, Ginger Sugrue at the sixth, Nearle Einstein at the ninth and Marje Roach at the 13th.

Brierwood Ninettes

Ann Polson and Helene Baker tied for first place with net scores of 10 in the Brierwood Ninettes golf tournament last Friday.

Golfers counted scores on par threes and par fives only and used one-fourth of their handicaps in the nine-hole event.

Joyce Rose and Liz Bruce tied for second place with scores of 11. Harriet Schuler had low putts with 16.

Brierwood Men

A foursome that included Odie

Rotary Golf Tourney Awards Four Teams

The foursome of Al Laughinghouse, Robert Cox, Tommy Phillips and Glenn Humbert captured first place in the fourth annual South Brunswick Islands Rotary Club Golf Tournament Saturday at Sea Trail Plantation's Willard Byrd Course.

Taking second place was the team of Paul Dennis, Bryan Griffin, Linda Harless and Larry Brown.

Bill Benton, Rennie Clark, Rick Ward and Jimmy Sanderford teamed up to take third place while the foursome of Dave Kelly, Mike Reeves, Don Hughes and Jim Prevatte finished fourth.

Some 17 teams participated in the event that helps raise funds for various Rotary charities. The 18-hole, captain's choice event also featured 40 different door prizes at the post-tourney party and had 29 hole sponsors.

Ned Eddy won two of the four closest-to-the-pin contests during the tournament with Rick Ward and Mason Barber winning the other two.



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Sea Trail Ladies

Shirley Helmke fired a 44.5 to win the Sea Trail Ladies Golf Association "tee to green" low net tournament last week.

Joanne Rowe placed second with net 45. Other top finishers were Louisa Nicol with 48.5 and Elsie Bolick with 49.5.

Closest to the pin winners were Nancy Mehne at the third hole, Ruth Kivett at the fifth, Pat Burkhardt at the 11th and Betty Dawley at the 17th.

On June 12, the team of Betty Dawley, Mary Penfield, Lois Pike and Rosemary Walker shot 131 to win a two best ball event.

Finishing two shots back in second place was the foursome of Nancy Mehne, Jane Bye, Carol Peters and Elsie Bolick.

Sea Trail Men

Doug Mehne, Bill Pike and Dale Stanton teamed up to win the Sea Trail Men's Golf Association's "Dick Zinzer Open" June 18.

Second place in the three-man captain's choice event went to Keith Curry, Louis Grace and Hugh Bolick.



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