

Straight Ahead

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“Common Questions”

I thought for this week's session, I would answer some of the most frequently asked questions I get. I am always amazed at how often these same ones keep popping up.

In no particular order, here we go:

Q: I want to get a ball flight that is higher, how do I do that?

A: I'm not one to start fiddling with ball position in order to create the various shots we want. Unless it's an extreme circumstance and I need to alter my ball-position, I find the easiest way to hit shots that fly on a higher path is to simply visualize a higher trajectory. If there are clouds beyond my target area, I will aim at them. You may have to use trees if there are no clouds in the sky. The body will adapt and adjust to what it has to do in order to accommodate and create this ball-flight. You see it commonly on the PGA Tour. Conversely, you can do the same to create a lower trajectory. Pick a target that is visually lower. It's simple, effective and I think you'll find it works!

Q: I'm always getting a slice with my driver and the longer clubs. Why?

A: Because of the longer shafts and lower lofts, imperfections in your setup and swing are being magnified. In a nutshell, these clubs are less forgiving. They accentuate any flaws or inconsistencies that may be present. For this reason, try not to spend the majority of your practice time hitting these clubs. Instead, develop a reliable setup and swing using the mid-irons to develop clarity and confidence, before graduating to the less forgiving clubs. Most golfers also tend to grip tighter and swing harder and faster with longer clubs. They strangely bring out the beast in many of us! And, of course there's always that memory recall we seem to have about our previous bad experiences with those clubs. Learn how to be in the moment. Don't dwell on the past.

Q: I seem to be hitting shots that are periodically fat or thin. How can I cut down on this from happening regularly and get to that stage where I am striking shots at the same consistent depth.

A: I find that many golfers seem to have this common issue. Depth variations are even more prevalent than shots that don't start and fly along their intended target line. If you're either fat or thin, your distance control is compromised. The strokes can really add up when you're constantly coming up short or hitting way beyond your intended target. Here are a few simple things one can do to cut down on these occurrences:

- Cut down on your lower body movement; get "quieter" down there!
- Reducing the length of one's swing will help considerably too. The raising of the body usually takes place near the top of the golf motion. We are swinging beyond a point that we can comfortably reach. Subsequently, because of this change, it's a case of "what comes up must come down". Once that downward motion has been initiated, it's difficult to stop this from descending to a level that is lower than desired. The bottom line: a fat shot. There's sometimes an attempt by the golfer to correct and pull up prior to impact. This is sometimes overdone and can produce a thin shot. These compensations are just subconscious reactions. You're not really thinking at this stage. Nonetheless, they result in wasted movement and contribute to the development of a golf motion that is anything but efficient.
- Another simple way to cut down on the fat and thin shots is to swing at a slower tempo.

Q: I can never seem to shift my weight.

A: This is an interesting area to discuss. In reality, most golfers, during their Forward Motion, are too busy correcting the detours they made in the first half of their swing. If they do manage at all to get their body mass moving in the right direction, it's a little too late. I really don't get hung up on the well-discussed area of "weight-shift". In my world, this is something that takes place naturally when all of the components of setup and the golf motion are done in a correct and orderly fashion. This so-called weight shift is merely a by-product of good swing mechanics. Bottom line, learn your Address Position and then strive to initiate the Transition from the first half of the swing to the second half, with a slight and smooth initiation of motion in the "A" side. Remember, that side of the body which is closest to the target should move toward the intended target area first. Hitting down at the ball is never a good thing!

Well, that's all for now folks. I hope this session has answered a few of the questions that you too may have had.

If you have any questions regarding the areas we have discussed today or have any queries pertaining to past articles, contact me at 613-885-9883 or by email at northstring@gmail.com.

Until Next Time...Straight Ahead!