

Teaching Body Control to Cut Bad Shot Percentage

By DALE ANDREASON

I love to teach. It's the hardest, most interesting and challenging part of golf, in my opinion. I've played the tournament circuit and I have done well in merchandising golf goods and arranging and conducting programs as a club pro.

The problems in those other phases of the professional's business are not as intriguing as the problems of instruction. To my temperament, as that of many other professionals, the greatest reward in golf is that of getting some pupil who doesn't look at all promising and out of that material develop a very good player.

Financially too the rewards of effective teaching are highly satisfactory. This year I've learned that particularly. From a club pro job at an excellent Chicago district private club I came to Bill Hart's range at Long Beach, Calif., where I am busy all day long with my own clientele, specializing on instruction. The net return financially is most satisfactory. The results of this specialization on pupils are highly pleasing to them and to me. And the multitude and variety of a club pro's problems have ceased to vex.

I owe a lot, which I here, and again, want to acknowledge, to my fellow pros for their understanding and help in teaching me to become the kind of a teacher I aspired to be.

One of the important lessons I've learned from observation and experience on the tournament circuit and in my own teaching is that of what I call "percentage" golf. It means hitting the ball so the percentage of making bad shots is tremendously reduced. That is one of the unrecognized "secrets" of big-time golf.

Tommy Armour commented in his book that the ordinarily good golfer hits some shots just as well as the greatest golfers do, but what keeps the ordinary golfer scoring high is that he hits more bad shots than the stars do.

I believe that a basic objective of good teaching is to materially reduce the percentage of bad shots. This isn't a negative way of looking at the teaching responsibility but a sound constructive job.

When I first started to get the finer points of golf from top pros like Sam Snead, Jimmy Demaret, George Fazio, "Dutch" Harrison and other outstanding players and teachers, I became hungry for true knowledge. I talked fundamentals with every outstanding teacher and player I could find.

"Missed It Bad"

While in the Navy during World War II, I was stationed at the Naval Training Station in San Diego. Sam Snead was in charge of the 9-hole golf course and every chance I got I would go down and play or practice with Sam. In fact, we spent all our week-ends playing and practicing. I



Rain or shine, Dale Andreason went at his work of learning how to teach golf effectively.

remember Sam would always say, "Boy, when you miss one (meaning hitting it on the heel or toe of the club), you really miss it bad." And he was right!

I never thought much about this statement of Sam's until years later when playing the tournament circuit.

At this time, Ben Hogan impressed upon me the importance of good body action to control the ball better. I remember while playing at the Phoenix CC with Ben, Lew Worsham and Jimmy Demaret, Hogan explained this to me. He expressed the idea that if my body had control of the swing I wouldn't be in the bushes so much. With this thought in mind, I headed for the practice fairway and after just about wearing myself out, I finally gave up. No apparent result.

A couple of weeks later we were practicing for the Texas Open and I noticed Byron Nelson coming down to practice so I waved my caddy in and went right over to watch Lord Byron.

I didn't watch the ball but kept my eyes on his body action. I noticed that his left heel stayed down throughout his swing. He braced his right leg before he started the backswing. His backswing started with the left shoulder and left arm and his downswing started with his left hip.

When he stopped to rest, I questioned him on this action and he brought out the thought that when he missed a shot he wanted to make sure it still went straight, so he tried to set the body in control of the swing.

After watching Nelson practice I finally realized what Ben Hogan had been trying to get into this thick head of mine: How to use my body to control the club in order to hit the ball anywhere on the club face and still hit it straight.

Teaching the Large Muscles

In teaching I work with the large muscles so that they will blend through the hands to the club.

To illustrate, bring the club up in front of you with the hands or wrists and have some one push down on it. You will see that they can push the club down with their fingers. So we find that if the club is controlled by wrists or hands only we are going to hit plenty of wild shots.

Now bring the club up again; only this time do it with the shoulders and arms. In this way you set large muscles in control and you will find that you can hold the club in a solid position and anyone pushing down on it with their fingers will not bother the control.

If we use good body action the weight of the ball hitting on the heel or toe will not deviate the action of the club.

As Hogan said on television a short time ago. "Stop worrying about your hands and wrists and concentrate more on body action for control."

Ben Hogan and Byron Nelson, who are the most consistent players I have ever watched, use many of the same basic fundamentals of body control, although Hogan's arc of swing is flat and Nelson's is upright.

They both brace the right leg to set up a strong foundation. The left shoulder and arm push the hands back in order to have a full arc. The left heel stays down so that they can get a full stretch out of the left side and also have an anchor point. In this way they will not sway too much and when they start the left hip down it pulls the arms and hands down and through the ball. In doing this, they keep from hitting from the top of the swing. This action gives them a full arc and wonderful control.

Begin Census of Golfers In United States

"How many men, women and junior golfers are there in the United States today?"

The answer to this question is being sought this month through the annual Golf Census of the National Golf Foundation, Inc. The more than 5,000 golf courses in the country will be circularized for this information. Rex McMorris, Foundation director says:

"The interest in the game by the press, radio and television has multiplied the demands for facts on golf in America today.

"This increased interest is directly reflected in the tremendously accelerated activity in golf facility construction all over the country. In the past eighteen months alone, 80 new golf courses have been opened for play. As of July 1st, 1954, there are 192 golf courses under construction and an additional 357 are in some stage of planning.

"We want to know how many golfers there are and where they are, in order that the Foundation may pin-point its program of services in the development of golf and golf facilities where they are most urgently needed."

McMorris pointed out that present statistics on golf activity have been rendered obsolete during the past year by the recent increased interest in the game.