

# Nothing Patented in Looking at and Analyzing the Swing

1. As far as you are concerned is there a certain place or part in the swing that enables you to detect just what it is that a pupil may be doing wrong?
2. About how far away from the pupil, and at what angle from him, do you think an instructor should stand to get the best view of the pupil's swing?

Going on the theory that the teaching of the swing sequence, from the grip through the followthrough, is pretty well standardized, Golfdom recently checked with seven of the country's ablest pro instructors in an effort to determine if there may be any patented way of detecting swinging errors, or if there is any particular vantage point from which errors may be detected.

Upon reading the opinions expressed by these men to the two queries above, you undoubtedly will be impressed by the idea that no two teachers look at their pupils (or their errors) exactly alike, and while all may follow something of a general pattern in studying the swing effort, there are enough variations to definitely remove any suggestion of standardization from this part of the teaching routine.

Possibly none of the pros queried summed up the pro's task in checking the pupil's swing any better than Harvey Bunn of Forest Hills CC, Cornelius, Ore. In answer to the first question, Bunn said:

"While I recognize that the swing in the final analysis is the result of a series of rhythmic motions, I have always felt that the teacher has to look upon it as being made up of a group of separate motions. My point is that from the teaching standpoint, the parts of the swing aren't as closely interrelated as we may have been led to believe. The stance, the grip and the backswing each are separate and distinct parts. When the pupil gets to the top — what happens? He pauses or should. Then he introduces motion in an opposite direction. The downswing and followthrough probably are the only closely related actions in the swing, or should be from the teacher's viewpoint."

#### Sum of Small Parts

Continuing, Bunn says: "If the swing was completely fluid, and not the sum of a lot of small parts, anyone could analyze and then correct it. The real knack in teaching comes in being able to look closely at all the parts and detect what may be wrong with one or all of them.

**Don't Be Too Hasty  
in Trying to Make  
Those Corrections**



George Aulbach

Al Beister

... you have to move around

The so-called positive method of teaching, in which the pupil is told what to do, actually is the easiest part of instructing."

George Aulbach, veteran Lufkin (Tex.) CC teacher, maintains that with the average or below-average player, the faults that develop generally result from an overall breakdown of solid swing fundamentals. In most cases, a complete overhauling of the player's game is in order, but the pro usually has a hard time impressing this on the pupil. In such cases, Aulbach recommends at least going back and checking the grip and then reviewing the complete swing sequence.

"This," says George, "is a kind of quick-patch job, but it's usually what the player wants. When his swing goes sour again, which it probably will in a hurry, the player will try his 'correct-it-yourself' methods for a while. Then, completely tangled and kinked, he comes to the pro for another treatment. Usually," concludes George, "there isn't much point in going through a prolonged analysis. The best thing to do is go back to the fundamentals and hope that the pupil will come back often enough to eventually catch up with all of them."

**Says It's a 'Hand Game'**

Jack Schneiderman, pro at the CC of Natick (Mass.), feels that analysis properly starts with the hands (and wrists) and that the teacher should concentrate on determining whether they are in a concave or convex position when they are about hip high. He should also have the pupil swing the club often enough so that it can be determined whether the clubface is being opened or closed at the top. "The reason for concentrating on both these

points," says Schneiderman, "is because golf has developed into a 'hand game' or one, at least, in which the hands are the dominant factors in the hit."

What amounts to secondary positions or considerations, but are almost as important in the swing as the hands and should be studied very closely, says the Natick headmaster, are the start of the downswing in which the uncoiling of the body is triggered by supple footwork; position of the left arm (straight or bent) at impact; and the arc of the club going through the ball to determine if it is relatively level or if it describes a kind of swooping arc. It is thus apparent that Schneiderman's method of analysis is concentrated on the hands (or wrists and arms) in what he considers four of five major positions.

**Advice For Young Pros**

Another who puts great emphasis on the study of hand action is Guy Bellitt, pro at Whittier Narrows CC, South San Gabriel, Calif., who is so highly regarded as an instructor that he has regularly appeared at West Coast PGA Business Schools as conductor of the teaching sessions. "As far as I am concerned," Bellitt declares, "it's the hands all the way — in the address position, at the top and at impact and followthrough. I've always encouraged young pros to devote as much time as they can to acquiring the knack of catching hand action which, because it is so fast, is certainly not an easy thing to do. I also advise them to spend more time than in anything else in properly positioning the pupil's hands at address."

An interesting departure from total pre-  
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occupation with hand action is advanced by John Walsh, the shopmaster at Joliet (Ill.) CC. Walsh says that he closely studies the pupil's actions at the very start of the backswing because success or failure largely hinges on the way the club is taken away. "If this part of the swing is properly handled," says Walsh, "everything else will pretty well fall into line. Footwork, the pivot and the follow-through actually aren't too hard to teach, even to the most unathletic individuals, because all of these things are a kind of outgrowth of the backswing. Some people may not be as graceful in performing them as others, but nevertheless you can get 99 out of 100 golfers to do a pretty fair job of completing the swing after it is properly started.

### Emphasizes Good Start

"So," continues Walsh, "I keep asking the pupil to take the club back until I am reasonably sure that he understands that it should be done with both the hands and arms and in what we call 'the one-piece motion.' In addition, I ask him to make a conscious effort to keep the left arm straight so that the club will be swung back on a straight line. If he can do this, there usually isn't too much of a problem with footwork and the pivot unless the pupil is unusually awkward. That isn't to say, though, that we may not have to work to refine his footwork, pivot and overall balance and get him to pause at the top. But with that good start, the pupil won't be breaking the wrists too soon, he'll stay down over the ball and he won't sway."

Al F. Beister of the Fremont (Neb.) GC gives more attention to the top of the backswing than any other part because as he says "it is there that you become aware of the impending downswing and hit." Beister states that he not only tries to determine if the clubface is open or closed, but looks to see if the left arm is straight, and where the clubhead is in relation to the pupil's head and shoulders. He adds, incidentally, that it is wise to take several and not just a few looks at the pupil at the top of the swing before attempting any adjustments. "The idea," says Al, "is that flaws that sometimes appear to be there aren't always there. Don't always be too hasty in trying to make corrections."

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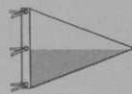
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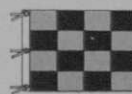
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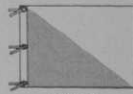
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### Check for Tension

Like any good teacher, the Fremont pro doesn't judge the swing merely in what he sees at the summit. "I like to take a good look at the student at address," he points out. "The more I teach the more I realize that the pro should show more patience in checking the grip, alignment of the shaft at address, weight distribution and posture. One thing that probably all of us neglect, possibly more than 50 per cent of the time, is to check the student for tension when he is standing in front of the ball."

Gus Salerno, pro at Hampshire CC in Mamaroneck, N. Y., who qualified for the 1961 USGA Open, concentrates on three phases of the swing: the start; the start of the downswing; and impact. He finds that the average or poor player snatches the club away in the upswing; throws the club from the top; and, coming into the hit, turns over the face, causing it to close. He feels that the latter is due to too loose a grip. Accordingly, he works with his pupils to first learn to drag, and then swing, the club away from the ball; tries to get them to turn the body and then pull the club from the top; and, finally, to swing through the ball with a straight left arm and a firm hold on the club.

### Move Around to Watch Swing

As for the best position from which to view the swing, the pros cited here generally feel that they see more by standing directly in front of the ball and player and then moving to their left to a position behind the player's right shoulder or diagonally opposite his right foot. Harvey Bunn more or less reverses this order by starting opposite the right foot, moving in front of the golfer and then viewing his swing from a spot behind his right shoulder. Most pros prefer to stand about five or six feet from the student, although Al Beister prefers to make his observations from a distance of about 10 feet.

While the above are accepted as the preferable positions from which to study the swing, it may not be a bad idea, as George Aulbach suggests, to occasionally ask the pupil where he thinks the pro should stand. This didn't occur to George until one day when one of his students requested that George get completely to his rear and study his swing. It seems that when Aulbach stood in front of him it made the fellow feel self-conscious and it also didn't help his concentration.