

THE UP SWING

By E. V. HARTFORD

FOREWORD BY THE EDITOR

In a series of articles—of which this is the first—a 22-handicap man lucidly explains how, in the comparatively short space of 18 months, his game so materially improved that he is now in the Eligibility Class for the National Amateur Championship.

They represent the result of much painstaking study, combined with incessant practice ...the trying-out of the teachings of most of our best professional coaches, plus an acquaintanceship and profound study of the methods of the leading British professionals.

All were put into the melting pot, the various results noted and the cream, the quintessence alone retained.

As such they are offered for the serious consideration of the average golfer who, for the most part, has no time himself to sift the wheat from the chaff.

START THE CLUB back by twisting the left fore-arm to the right. Great attention should be paid to this as after keeping the head perfectly still,



it is probably the most important action in the golf-swing. Most of us have been taught to start the club back with the wrists. To most people this would mean *bending* the wrists. This is entirely wrong, as it would immediately take the clubhead out of the path that the correct swing must take.

The wrists must remain perfectly straight and must turn or twist clockwise.

The arms, principally the left, must then raise the club as far as they will comfortably go. At the same time, the twisting of the left fore-arm will start the body to pivot from the waist on the right hip. This will draw the left knee inward and cause the left

heel to *slightly* rise from the ground.

When the arms have raised the club as far as they can, the left wrist should *bend*, which will bring the club to a horizontal position back of the neck.

During all this time, the head should be perfectly still with the eyes on the ball, or better still, if you have the vision of a hawk, at a spot on the turf a half inch behind the ball.

The weight should be distributed between the right heel and the inside of the ball of the left foot and its big toe with the impression that the weight is more on the right heel.

As the club is taken back, as explained, there will be no swaying of the body to the right; if there is any movement, it should tend in the opposite direction toward the hole.

In the address, the hands should be low down so that the arms are just clearing the body. As the club goes up, the movement of the left hand and arm should make the *right elbow slide around the body*. This action is very important. The elbow should be close but *clear* of the body. Many swings are ruined, if in trying to keep the elbow close to the side, it causes it to stick into the ribs or waist. This prevents the club reaching the top of the swing perfectly or freely, and prevents a perfect arc and finish.

The indication that this is taking place is a foundered ball or a very low ball with a slice as it abnormally flattens the swing.

To cure the above trouble, start with the arms a little further away from the body. Be sure that the right leg is straight at the top of the swing, and try to *hold the right shoulder in its elevated position until the club is well started on its downward path*. Bring the club down with a lot of power and snap. If everything is done properly, more power at the right time means a longer ball.

The hands at the finish should be high up and the body twisted in the reverse position, like a corkscrew.

Try to visualize an arc of a wide, bold character and always a free sweep of the club, culminating in a perfect follow-through.

DOWN SWING.

WE WERE LEFT at the top of the swing with the fore-arms twisted clock-wise (principally the left) and the wrists *bent* so as to bring the club to a horizontal position behind the neck. Now the first thing to do to begin the down swing is to straighten or unbend the wrists. This will make the club head travel one quarter of the total arc to be described.

As this is done, *stretch out the left arm behind and smoothly let it come downward* and then sweep the club head through the ball. If this is done properly, the club-head will continue in a perfect arc, and a perfect follow-through will result.

This action of throwing the club-head behind and stretching out the left arm is very important, as it starts the club-head in the right path and prevents the body from unwinding too soon.

Most players want to get at the ball too quickly. Instead of aiming behind

them, they want to cut corners by throwing their arms forward. This takes the club-head out of the arc that it must describe to make a perfect shot, allows the body to unwind too soon, and the result may be a foundered ball, a wicked slice or a vicious hook.

Keep your head still and eye on the ball.

DIFFERENT FORMS OF SWINGING.

THE ART OF SWINGING, is, as far as I know, always divided into two classes, viz:

The flat and the upright swing. In my humble opinion, all swings have one distinctive point of difference that more widely separates them than the degree of flatness or uprightness of the swing.

No matter what form is used, the swing can be made flatter by standing further from the ball and more upright by coming in closer. Also, no matter what form is used, the flatness or uprightness can still further be accentuated by shortening or lengthening the swing.

For this reason, I think that there is another distinctive point that more clearly divides all swings.

It is as to whether we keep the left arm *straight* at the top of the swing, or reach there with the left elbow bent.

Many great players choose one or the other method and both attain fine results. Some of the most famous such as Vardon and Duncan use the bent elbow method, yet after a close study, I have put my faith in the straight left arm method.

What we are after is to attain the maximum distance and accuracy and most of all the longest drivers in the world use the straight left arm

method, and I also believe that it is easier to be accurate with it.

Harry Vardon is probably the greatest living golfer. But if we find a man of no stronger physique than him who can out-drive him by fifty or seventy-five yards and keep straight even if his reputation is only budding, are we not led to believe that perhaps the unknown has a sounder form than even the great Vardon.

Shortly after I had decided that the straight-arm method was the better, I had the good fortune to become well acquainted with one of the very longest drivers in the world—Jack Skully. He is still at this writing in Princeton University, is a member of the baseball team and one of the very best batsmen they have ever had, and he applies some of his successful ways of swinging a bat to his golf-swing. In checking up his swing, I found it was identical with my own, with the minor exception that he has his right toe pointing more outward.

He has a good deal more strength than I have, and on account of his youth, he can use a bigger percentage of it and still hit accurately, so it is impossible for me to attain the same result, although I use the same method, and I have to be content with my two hundred and thirty yards. I am satisfied, however, that I drive twenty yards further than with the bent arm method, and have much better control.

I have seen Skully drive three hundred yards almost all carry, and on the Deal course where we played, he holds all records for distance, although most of the best players in the world have played it.

As I said before, why study Vardon's swing, when we have another who attains greater results, with no disparagement of his wonderful play.

If the reader will try the two methods, he will find that it is much easier and more natural to get to the top of the swing with the bent left elbow, but unfortunately, the most natural way is not always the best way in golf. You will also find with the bent left elbow, there is much less tension, so if we think of the body as a spring wound up, we get less of this effect.

To compensate for this loss of tension, the bent left elbow class usually loosen the grip at the top, holding on with only the thumbs and forefingers.

Much of the snap in their swing is obtained by the quick throw of the club when the grip tightens. I think even Vardon would admit that the only excuse for this loosening of the grip is to obtain the extra snap and distance, and obviously, the swing is harder to control.

It will be readily understood that if we grip firmly with the left fingers throughout the swing, we naturally have better control.

Consequently, if it is possible to do this and still get the same snap and distance, does it not seem the sounder form?

My studies have convinced me it is.

I thoroughly tried out the bent left elbow and loosened grip way, and while I got very satisfactory results, I found it much more difficult to control, and that I got considerably less distance than by the straight left arm method.

From these facts and theories, there would seem little doubt as to the straight left arm method being the better, and if Vardon and Duncan gave this method a fair trial, they would find themselves with the newer form, still greater golfers.

THE RIGHT AND LEFT HAND

THERE IS an eternal discussion as

to the functions of the right and left hand in the golf-swing.

The experts are divided into two camps. Those who believe in thinking of the left all through the stroke, and those who think that the right hand should grip with equal firmness and be consciously put in to the downward swing.

I belong to the first camp and here are my reasons:

Most of the scratch men believe that the work of the hands should be equalized as much as possible, and this accounts for the popularity of the overlapping grip and even with the older two V grip the hands are placed as close together as possible.

The right is much the more powerful and constantly wants to control and mistime the stroke, so it certainly seems sound theory to think of the left and grip more firmly with it, so that its work may more nearly approximate that of the right, which is bound to perform the bigger portion of it, whether we consciously think of it or not.

This is one of the principal arguments in favor of the overlapping grip—that it automatically weakens the right hand.

The right hand camp claim that since the right is the powerful hand, most of the work must be done by this hand, and advise consciously turning

it over just before the club-head strikes the ball.

I agree with them, but I think there is an easier and safer method of doing it, and that their plan requires much more practice and skill.

If great attention is paid to taking the club back by twisting to the right the left fore-arm, this will naturally twist the right hand around until its palm is facing upwards.

Now what can it do when it is turned over in this fashion, but vigorously turn over in the down swing. I think that the right hand camp find it necessary to consciously do this, because they neglect, in taking the club back, to sufficiently force the right hand over by the twisting process of the left fore-arm.

What these right-handers usually do is to address the club with the face turned to the right, take the club back with very little of the twisting movement, and bring the face of the club back to right-angles with the line of flight, and obtain this very necessary turn over or "locking the door" as they call it, by deliberately thinking about it.

Isn't this method harder, than thinking of taking the club back by twisting the left fore-arm, thus forcing the right hand to a position where it is obliged to automatically do its necessary and powerful work?

(To be continued)

