

A New Idea in Pivoting

By GEORGE W. GREENWOOD

OF all the many and varied strokes in golf, none is more fascinating to the countless thousands of ordinary players than the drive. To them it is the very essence of their golfing lives; so long as they can hit the ball decently, and with a fair degree of consistency from the tee they are perfectly happy and contented. But, in point of fact, very few do, or ever will, because they have got a totally wrong conception of the swing, or, in other words, the movements necessary to produce the shot known as the drive.

At least, that is the belief of James Herron, a young professional attached to the Worplesdon Club, where those two gifted players, Miss Joyce Wethered, and her brother, Roger Wethered, play most of their golf. Herron has made a deep study of the complex body movements that go to make up the ideal golf swing, and he is of opinion that the most important of all the movements concerns what is known as the "body pivot." It is because the word "pivot" has been accepted in too literal a sense that so many golfers have gone hopelessly wrong.

We constantly hear the glib phrase, "In order to drive reasonably well and far you must pivot correctly." Now, what is meant exactly by "correct pivoting"? The golfer says to himself, "I must turn the body on an axis, because a pivot is something which rotates." This is where he goes astray, though, of course, he is right in the strict interpretation of the meaning of pivot. While it may be possible to pivot the human body on an axis, such a turning movement is useless for the golf swing, because the club head is performing an oblique circle round the trunk. Geometrically, the point of contact of a circle with a given object is no larger than a pin head, so that if such a swing is made at a golf ball the inevitable result is either a topped, or a half hit shot. Actually, the period of contact is too short to drive a golf ball. The only club that would be of any assistance for a swing following a pivot of this kind would be

a lofted iron, which, on its way round, would merely pick up the ball. This is what happens to the drives of a good many players; truly miserable efforts due to a misapprehension of what is required in pivoting.

For the proper driving of a golf ball the club head must follow as far as possible with the ball on the required line of flight. This long contact, says Herron, cannot be obtained by throwing the hands out while pivoting, because if the body is pivoting the hands and club must perform the circular movement to which reference has already been made. A practical illustration will serve to explain the point. Supposing one used a circular movement to drive a nail, the result would be negligible owing to the shortness of the contact between the hammer and the nail. On the other hand, if the contact is long the object is obtained.

How then are we to secure this long contact with the ball? There must be some movement other than mere body pivoting which will enable us to achieve the desired end. If you watch Hagen, or Mitchell, or MacDonald Smith you will be struck by the manner in which they use their hips, and it may be that you have heard the remark without

in the least recognizing its significance, "Good gracious, how he puts his hips into the shot!" It is this hip movement, declares Herron, that assists enormously in obtaining the long contact. In the case of Duncan, for example, one sees an elongated movement of the hips, and not a pivot; in other words, his hips perform a lateral movement, first from left to right and back again.

This can best be illustrated by holding a piece of elastic at both ends and then pulling backwards and forwards from the centre. To grasp properly the idea of the movement one must eliminate the word pivot entirely from the mind, and concentrate on the lateral swinging of the hips parallel to the line of play. A few moments' practice in this swinging movement of the hips, with the arms held out and the hands clasped, will serve to show the vast difference between turning and pivoting, and the lateral or elongated process. Now, let us apply the movements, in themselves supremely simple, to the swinging of a golf club. The first of these is the carrying, or the swinging, of the

right hip sideways—not backwards—at the same time releasing the left ankle, which, in turn, compels the knee to bend under the body, thus making the left side of the body somewhat like the hoop of a barrel.

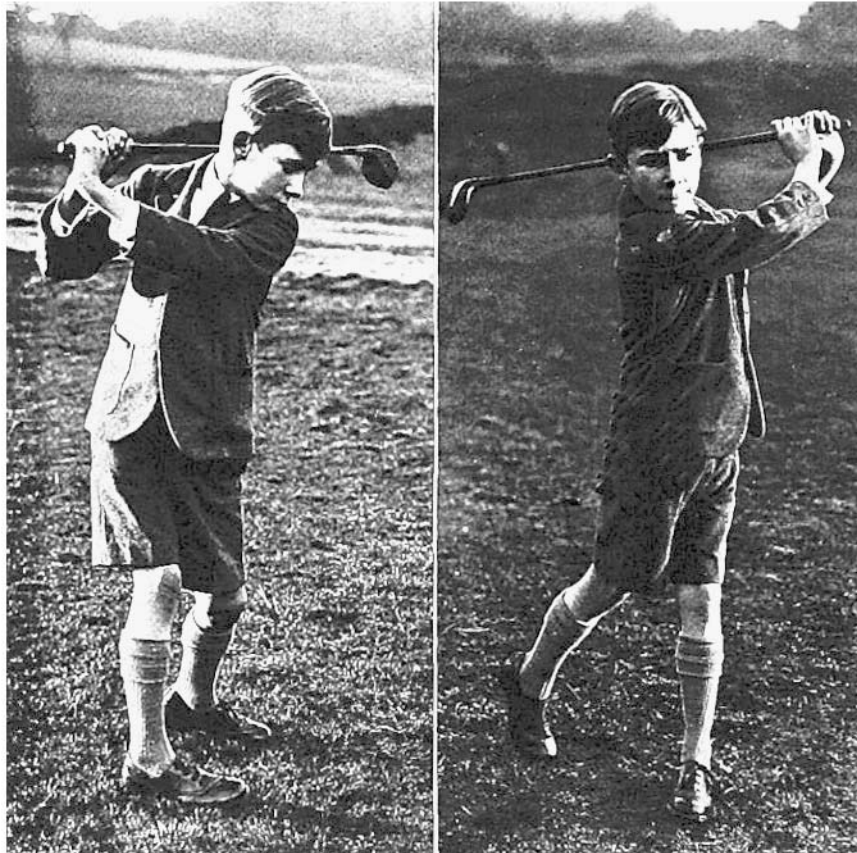
While this movement is in progress the wrists sag, and the arms begin to pull the club, which is making a lateral movement parallel to the lines of the hips. It will be found that when the right hip has gone as far as possible sideways the right side is resisting the swing of the club, which, in turn, moves in a vertical fashion, bringing the left shoulder round in a slight downward and forward movement to a position where the left shoulder points at the ball just under the left chin. The club head will have continued its course until it is parallel and above the shoulder behind the head.

We are now ready for the downward, or what Herron terms the forward movement, which, in reality, is the converse of the one that

brought the club to the top. It is begun with a sideways swing of the left hip, again parallel to the line of play, which will pull the arms and the right shoulder down towards the ball. The sideways motion of the hip will continue until checked by resistance from the left side of the body, and then comes the pull of the arms, the club being compelled to follow a course parallel to the hips, and straight through the ball on the line of play.

At this point it may well be asked why the club head does not come into violent contact with the ground by this downward movement of the right shoulder. The answer is, says Herron, that if the left hip goes forward properly it should force the left shoulder up, which, after all, is the centre of the swing, and if it is in its right position it will be found impossible to dig the ground. Continuing the movement, the club describes a vertical motion to the finish over the left shoulder. In this backward and forward swing of the hips a space of six to eight inches in width has been covered, and it is this which produces the "long contact," and, consequently, the long ball.

It should be stressed that this lateral motion (Continued on page 66)



WHERE IMITATION PRODUCED PERFECTION OF SWING

George Duncan when last in this country said that he had never given his young son a lesson, but furnished him with clubs and George, Junior, followed his dad and copied his movements. His swing is considered perfect by experts. The top and finish of the brassie swing is shown.

A New Idea in Pivoting

(Continued from page 18)

of the hips has nothing in common with a sway; it is no more than a sideways swing. A sway involves the sideways movement of the shoulders as well as the hips, and this is certainly not intended. Herron advises practising the movement in front of a mirror, so that the idea may become firmly fixed in the mind. Once it is performed smoothly and automatically, and becomes a fixed principle of the swing he predicts happy and surprising results. The slogan is "Swing the hips and the rest will look after itself"