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*Improve Your Golf Game
Easily & Quickly*



Play "In the Zone" with Joan

LESSONS FROM GOLF

With the golf season drawing to a close in most parts of the country, this is a good time to reflect upon your progress and successes. What is your attitude about your golf game now? What have you learned about yourself and your game this summer? Following are some stories that we can learn from.

Slow Play:

An American golfer, outfitted in fashionable clothes, showed up at the first tee at St. Andrews with his huge, heavy leather bag, complete with new high-tech clubs.

He hit his ball off the first tee well down the fairway. When he reached his ball, he picked up some grass and threw it into the air to check the wind. "What do you think?" he asked his caddie.

The caddie likewise picked up a few blades of grass and tossed them in the air. "I think the wind's come up gov'nor," said the caddie. "You'd best take out your sweater."

The Scots have a particular loathing for slow play, as Tommy Armour, a native Scotsman, was reminded one year when he was playing

in the British Open. He asked his caddie for the line of his blind approach shot to the green.

“See that mast off in the distance?” said his caddie. “Just aim for it, and you’ll be on the green.” Armour hit what he thought was fine shot, but when he reached the green his ball was well off to the side of the putting surface.

“I thought you said I should hit it at the mast,” said Armour.

“Aye, I did, but you took so long to play that the ship had sailed,” said the caddie.

Club Selection:

Playing in Dallas one day with an assistant professional, Ben Hogan was repeatedly asked what club he was using. Finally, Hogan, facing an approach shot from 150 yards out, gave the ultimate playing lesson. He emptied all the balls from his bag and hit the green with every club in his bag, except his putter.

Honesty:

In the 1925 U.S. Open at Worcester CC in Massachusetts, Bobby Jones called a penalty upon himself, stating that his ball had moved when he addressed it. Nobody but Jones had seen the ball move, and the ensuing one-stroke penalty put him into a playoff with Willie Macfarlane, who beat him the next day.

Later, when Jones was praised for his sportsmanship, he bristled. “There’s only one way to play the game,” he said. “You might as well praise a man for not robbing a bank as to praise him for playing by the rules.”

An American golfer playing in Scotland slices his drive off the first tee into the gorse where it is unplayable. His caddie hands him another ball which he drives straight down the middle of the fairway. The golfer turns to his caddie and says that in the U.S. the second ball is called a mulligan. He asks the caddie what they call it in Scotland.

The caddie retorts, “Laddie, we call that a THREE.”

Self Management:

Bob Toski described golf champions in this way: “Some people try to argue that golf isn’t really a sport, because there is no physical risk. But they’re wrong. Physically golf is a nonviolent, no contact sport, but all the violence is inside you. Look at Bob Jones. He’d lost tremendous amounts of weight in the course of a championship. At the end of a round his necktie would be so knotted with sweat that he’s have to cut it away. Bryon Nelson couldn’t keep food down prior to a round. That’s what makes a player like Nicklaus, who thrives on pressure, so remarkable. The champions in this game are the players who can control the violence inside themselves.”

Patience:

If Palmer had been good with the galleries, he was exceptionally patient with the press, which is in some ways even more impressive when you consider how many times he's been asked the same and often dumb questions.

In the 1961 Los Angeles Open, he came into the pressroom and was asked how he managed to make a 13 on one hole. "It was easy," he said. "I missed a twenty-footer for a 12."

Perspective:

For almost all of his adult life, both as a champion and as a teacher who could command unprecedented fees, Tommy Armour was used to the respect and adulation of others, and he was able to keep it in perspective.

"It's nice to be a good golfer and win championships, but hell being the finest golfer in the world never cured anyone of polio," he observed.

Visualization:

John Cook came to the PGA Tour in 1980 on the heels of an amateur career that saw him win the 1978 U.S. Amateur and twice be named as an All-American at Ohio State. He won the Bing Crosby National Pro-Am in 1981 and came to the final hole of the 1983 Tournament Players Championship with an excellent chance to win the tournament and the ten-year exemption that goes with it. He might have won, if it hadn't been for a nice old lady who was only trying to help.

As he approached the 18th tee, the lady caught his attention and offered him some advice; "Now young man, whatever you do, don't hit it into the water."

Cook hooked his tee shot into the lake. He made double-bogey 6. Hal Sutton won the tournament.

Accuracy:

Ted Williams and Sam Snead were having a heated debate about which was more difficult, hitting a baseball or a golf ball. Williams argued that hitting a round ball traveling 100 miles an hour with a round bat was the toughest task in sports.

"Maybe so," said Sam. "but we've got to play OUR foul balls."

Moe Norman, the Canadian Pro noted for his pinpoint accuracy was about to tee off on the first hole of a practice round for a Canadian tournament. A few days earlier Moe had lost a tournament because of his usual quick-putting style that sometimes led to him missing short putts in crucial situations.

A sports writer asked what he was going to do about his putting. In typical fashion, Moe didn't answer the question right away. Instead, he

pulled a club out of his bag, hit the ball, then turned to the reporters and announced, "I'm not putting today." The ball went in for a hole-in-one.

Creativity:

Walter Hagen was playing in a tournament when one of his approach shots landed in a paper bag that had blown into a bunker. He called for a ruling and was told he wasn't allowed to take a free drop and, therefore, would have to either play the ball or take an unplayable lie and a one-stroke penalty.

Hagen had other ideas. As the gallery and the official looked on, Hagen calmly lit a cigarette, took a few drags, and then dropped it onto the bag, setting it aflame. Moments later, he hit the ball onto the green and made the putt for a routine par.

Letting go:

Walter Hagen had a well-deserved reputation as a happy-go-lucky raconteur, but tragedy visited his life one day when he was in St. Paul for a tournament. As he drove along a downtown street a young boy ran into the road. Hagen's car hit him, killing the boy instantly. Hagen was taken to jail, where a group of players found him sobbing inconsolably in a cell.

"I couldn't help it, fellas," he cried. "It all happened too fast. I hardly saw the boy."

The players posted bail, and Hagen shot the next two rounds in the 60s. Following each round he retreated to the privacy of the locker room, where he broke down in tears. A fellow player, Herman Barron, sat with his friend and asked him how he was able to play so well under such painful conditions.

Herman, said Hagen, when you've got a job to do, you do it. It's the only thing that's helped me forget the tragedy."

There were two Zen monks going home from the Monastery and they came to a river. A woman was standing by the river and she was crying. The one Monk said to her, "My dear lady, why are you crying?"

She said, "My dress is long, the river is swollen, and I am to be married. I can't go across the river without getting my dress wet. What can I do?"

"My dear lady," he said, "jump on my back and I will carry you across."

So they went across the river, and he put her down on the other side and bowed to her. He and his brother Monk continued on their way back to the Monastery.

About a mile before the Monastery he noticed that the other Monk has said nothing. He turned to him and said, "My dear brother Monk, what is wrong? What is troubling you?"

The second monk said, "You know we Monks are allowed to have nothing to do with women."

The first monk replied, "My dear brother, I put that woman down on the banks of the river five miles back. It has been you who has been carrying her all the way back to the Monastery."

Course Management:

Ben Hogan had just finished his round at the Masters when a young amateur approached him.

"Mr. Hogan," he said, "I was wondering why you didn't try to reach the (par 5) green on 13. You hit a good drive, and you could have easily reached the green."

Hogan looked at him for a moment and then answered tersely, "I didn't need a 3."

Superstitions:

- Ben Crenshaw only uses balls numbered four or less because he never wants to score higher than four on a hole.
- Nancy Lopez never uses a tee somebody else has discarded.
- When he plays a par 3, Tom Weiskopf will search for a broken tee.
- Phil Rogers warms up with even-numbered clubs on even-numbered days and odd-numbered clubs on odd-numbered days. The only exception is on the first day of a tournament when he'll hit only odd-numbered clubs.
- If Bruce Listzke begins a round wearing a sweater and is playing well, he'll keep that sweater on for the remainder of the round, no matter how hot and uncomfortable it becomes.
- Jack Nicklaus always plays with three tees and three pennies in his pocket. He occasionally carries the Ohio state flower, a buckeye, along for good luck.
- Sam Snead would never chew gum on the course or sit down during a round.
- J.C. Snead will never use a number 3 ball. It might lead to 3 putting.
- Australian David Graham always carries two English coins he was given by a friend.
- Gene Littler was playing in Las Vegas one year and the singer Frankie Laine followed him, mostly because he had a big bet on Littler. In the first two rounds Laine wore a pair of bright red pants and Littler played very well. In the third round Laine wore a brown pair of pants and Littler played poorly. The next day Littler made sure that Laine was back wearing the red pants. He won the tournament and Laine cashed in handsomely.
- Tiger Woods wears a red shirt on Sundays because his mother told him it was his power color.

"Golf is deceptively simple and endlessly complicated; it satisfies the soul and frustrates the intellect. It is at the same time rewarding and maddening -- and it is without a doubt the greatest game mankind has ever invented." ---Arnold Palmer

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