

The One and Only Way to Excel at Golf

*A Unanimous Verdict from a Jury
of the World's Golfing Experts*

Collected by H. B. MARTIN

GOLF is a really very simple game, after all. There is only one great and important thing to remember if you wish to become a par-wrecking player. Recognizing this, Vanity Fair is delighted to print the opinions of a number of the leading professionals of the world as to just what this crucial point really is. The reader will not fail to note the remarkable unanimity of their responses to the question "What is the *one* essential thing in golf?"

HARRY VARDON says: "In its fundamental principles, the golfer's swing is the same for all strokes. Its length varies from fullness to shortness, according to the distance that has to be covered, and the disposition and movement of his feet are governed by the same consideration."

C. W. SINGLETON says: "The important thing to remember is this: When you take your stance your left arm from the shoulder should form a straight line with the club just as if the whole thing were one piece, with the wrist forming a sort of tension spring. You bring the club back in that same straight line, never bending until it gets to the right shoulder. Here the left arm and wrist crook a little to let the club go back."

JAMES BRAID says: "I do not believe you can ever become a long driver if you stand close to the ball."

HARRY VARDON says: "Don't be afraid to hit hard; if you are swinging correctly, hard hitting is not pressing."

TOM BOYD says: "Successful iron-club play requires steadiness on both feet, and at the same time a comparative absence of body action; the turning of the body is allowable only so far as it prevents a purely arm shot.

"The right leg must be kept stiff. The work should come rather from the left shoulder. If the command of the shot be entrusted to the left hand the risk of a topped shot is greatly reduced.

"When playing with iron clubs, the wrists must supply the sting at the moment of impact. This may be acquired to a great extent by practising wrist shots only at an imaginary ball."

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THE IDEAL CADDIE

An etching by Herbert Whydale, the English etcher. In this plate the artist has admirably achieved the illusion of distance and plein air

GEORGE McLEAN says: "In match play don't allow your opponent to influence your game. Play the game as if you were playing for medal score. That is, play for the pin instead of attempting to get inside of your opponent's shot."

BOB McDONALD says: "Keep something in reserve. Don't waste all of your energy in slugging the ball. Hit easily and freely and you will get the results you are after."

JAMES BARNES says: "The trouble with nine-tenths of the golfers is that they move their head when playing a shot. Keep your head still and it matters little if you keep your eye on the ball. Try practicing with the sun at your back so you can see by your shadow when you move out of line."

WALTER HAGEN says: "When taking up golf try to relax. Most players are too stiff. The hardest thing to teach a man is to get his wrists or forearm into the shot. You cannot get a long ball if you hold the arms too rigid."

JACK HOBENS says: "Keep the left arm straight in the back swing. The golfer who starts in this way will never overswing."

BEN NICHOLLS says: "Keep the left wrist well under the club at the top of the swing. This is something the beginners—especially the women folk—not used to athletics fail to do."

ISAAC MACKIE says: "The real secret of the long drive and also the straight drive is contained in these three words, *grip the ball*. Hit the ball squarely and in such a way that there will be no suspicion of a glancing blow.

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"Try to remember, in every single wooden shot, to hit deep and push out after the ball.

"Don't lift your club from the ball before it has received the full force of the blow."

GEORGE LOW says: "A great deal more importance should be attached to the finish of the stroke. Unless a man finishes right the shot is rarely a success. In finishing the drive do not let the left knee bend, but finish with a straight left leg just the reverse from the top of the swing."

JOHN DUNN says: "A very simple remedy to prevent slicing is to *reach for the ball*.

"If you will address with the toe of the club about opposite the middle of the ball you will find that, the natural tendency being to fall forward slightly, you will hit the ball at exactly the right place. The club is then going into it in an absolutely straight line."

GIL NICHOLLS says: "All long drivers have a left arm that is almost as well developed as the right. You must make this arm do its share of the work.

"Wrist action in golf is mistaken for the strength you apply to the shot with your fore-arms. When taking the club back, turn the face of the driver away from the ball. This is done by turning the left hand slightly over the right; coming onto the ball, turn your right hand over. This adds fifty per cent to the power you put in the blow."

MACDONALD SMITH says: "If I were to advise a beginner, especially a man who was taking golf up rather late in life, the one thing that I would try to impress upon him would be relaxation. Don't be too stiff in your swing, a long loose and easy swing will get you far better results, and is less wear and tear on the brain and the body."

ALEX SMITH says: "I can't emphasize this too strongly; the important point is learning your own game and not some other player's."

TOM McNAMARA says: "The correct pivot is the secret of the long ball. Pivot from the waist up, and look at the ball at the top of the swing over your left shoulder."

WALTER STODDARD says: "A good shaft in a club is most important in these days of the high cost of hickory. A whippy shaft in an iron club is a great mistake and will cause many well-intended shots to go astray."

GEORGE DUNCAN says: "In playing a short hole take a club that you are sure you can get to the pin with, instead of making a great effort with a club with which you must overtax your strength.

"Players make the mistake of teeing the ball too high for the short shot."

TOM SMITH says: "In driving, be

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sure to keep the left shoulder down and look at the ball over this shoulder while making the stroke. Don't, under any circumstances, look up before the ball is hit. Old advice, of course, but it is

seldom heeded. Get your wrists into the shot if you expect to get any distance and be sure to finish on the left leg, showing that you have put the full power of your body into the blow."

JAMES FRASER says: "Most golfers are inclined to dance too much on the tee. Keep your feet still and you will play your shots better. I would advise wearing a heavy pair of shoes to correct this fault."

T. R. WHITEHEAD says: "Keep the right elbow in close to the body during the back swing. Players who do this are sure to hit the ball correctly."

WILLIAM DUFFY says: "Most golfers pay too much attention to the follow through and not enough to the back swing. If this part of the stroke is correct the follow through will usually take care of itself."

JACK HUTCHISON says: "The player who learns to use his mashie will show the greatest improvement in his game."