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Golden Club - Strategies for Lowering Your Golf Score!

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Lesson #1 - Basics of the game - Putting

Putting is an essential, if not the most important, factor in playing golf. This is where the game is decided. Nerves of steel and lots of practice are needed to master the art of putting. Even professional golfers feel the pressure when it's time to putt and the game is on the line. Here are some tips to learn and improve on your putting.

First thing to do would be to take practice strokes next to the golf ball. This would help you feel the needed rhythm in putting the ball. You will need to do this as you don't want your shot to be too awkward or too strong.

Try to have some marker to help you focus and help you with proper alignment of your putt. A marker is where you will aim the ball as you putt. The position of this marker is dependent on the terrain of the golf course.

When getting ready to putt, be sure that your eyes are focused on the golf ball itself. It will help in lining up the putter with the golf ball. You must remember not to focus on the marker but more on how you will make your shot.

Proper putting stance is needed when putting. You don't want your balance disturbed by a sudden gust of wind. First thing to remember is that you should be comfortable with your stance. One way to do this is to separate your legs with about the same width as your shoulders. This is a standard stance and it should give you a comfortable and balanced posture for your putt.

You could try a wider stance as it will be more balanced but you would be less comfortable. Remember that the wider your legs are apart, the more balanced it is and the less comfortable you are. Just try to find your balance as you make your shot. If you feel you have to sacrifice your comfort zone to have more balance then do it.

You should also remember that your shoulders should be parallel to the direction of the putt. Your arms should just be dropped down straight from your shoulders. Your feet can be open or closed, depending on where you are most comfortable. Remember that the more comfortable you are, the more natural your shot will be.

Remember that all putts are straight. It is your aim that will change. When aiming at a flat green just aim straight to the hole. You should

practice so that all your putts just follow an imaginary line. When aiming in an elevated green, you should just putt the same. The difference is that you will aim directly at a point above the hole. What you want to happen is for the ball to stop at one point and to let gravity take your ball directly to the putt.

Long putts are more complicated but if mastered will help tremendously with your game. You should remember that a great long putt will eliminate the need for you to do short putts. The first thing to do is to sit down behind your ball and facing the hole. From that point of view you'll get to see the low and high points of the green. If it's a fairly straight green, you can just shoot a straight putt like the way you're shooting for small putts. If it's not, then try to evaluate whether to divide your long putt to smaller putts and putt accordingly.

Dividing a long putt depends on the terrain of the golf course. If you see a combination of straight and elevated terrain, dividing it would be better than trying to make your putt in one try. Try to eliminate the elevated terrain so you will just have to create a straight shot putt for your last shot.

Remember that nerves will always come into play when shooting your

putts. Just stay relaxed and focused on your shots and you'll do fine. Don't blame anyone when you miss your putt, stay focused and just prepare your next shot as if it's your first putt. Take a deep breath and don't let your anger get the best of you.

Lesson #2 - Basics of the game – Driving

Driving is one of the most important aspects of golf. A good drive will eliminate the need for chipping and for taking long putts. What you want is to lengthen your drive or give it more accuracy. Here are a few tips to start you off with driving.

Proper grip is important in driving. If you grip your club too tightly, you might get too uncomfortable to make an accurate shot. If you grip it too loosely, then you might see your club fly along with your golf ball. What you want is to grip it properly. For everyone, your less dominant hand (the one you don't use for writing) is essentially a strong factor. You don't want the club to be positioned too high in your palm and you don't want it too low either. A diagonal position is a preferred grip of the club with respect to your less dominant hand.

Your dominant hand should be less dominant. Don't let that hand grip

the club too tightly or too loosely. This will not help you with your drive. You want it to be loose and relaxed. You might want to put a gap between your first and second fingers. This will give you more power and proper angle to your shots making your drive longer and more accurate.

You should make sure your hands are linked together. Try sticking out the thumb of your less dominant hand and covering it with the palm of your more dominant hand. This will ensure that your grip is tightly secured by your two hands. It would also help your shot as your more dominant hand supports your less dominant hand and vice versa.

Proper alignment is needed. You should align your club's face to the direction you want your ball to go to. After that, align your feet with your club and as you prepare your drive just stay parallel with your club's face pointing your shoulder and hands in the same direction.

You should also have the proper stance with regards to your ball position. Try doing this if you don't know how. After aligning your shots, first put your feet together keeping them pointed to the ball. Then try to move your left feet outward a little. After that do the same thing with your right foot. Keep on doing this until you feel you are

comfortable with your stance. Just remember that your feet should also not be more than shoulder-width apart.

The next part is the swing. This is one where you need to practice doing it correctly. You want your shoulders and hands and feet to be loose and relaxed. Try swinging the golf club back and forth just to get into the proper rhythm and create a flow to your golf swing.

Remember not to sacrifice your accuracy just to bring in more power to your shot. A balance between the two is better.

To achieve more distance to your swing you want to go through these checkpoints. You must check if your upper body is coiling properly. Your base or your feet should be rock solid and stay intact with your lower body. Your left knee (or right if you are left-handed) must turn past the golf ball as you coil your upper body and your arms must be extended to their full length to achieve maximum swing.

Another trick to achieving distance is to tee your ball higher. This will help you achieve two things. The first one is a better angle on your launch as your club face will hit your ball at a lower place. The other thing is it will help you reduce friction from too much backspin from the ball.

Remember that driving is not easy to master. Even professional golfers have a problem with accuracy of their shots. The thing to remember is to check your stance, your grip and your swing. Don't be scared to ask for advice if you know you need it. You will also need to practice. Try practicing your swing before you play. Remember the checkpoints and ask for feedback from your trainer if you feel you are doing something wrong.

Lesson #3 - What golf equipment should you buy?

How do you know which golf equipment, what kind and type you should purchase? To make it easier for you to know which is which, the following are some tips you could keep in mind when you are shopping for your first set of golf clubs, golf balls, etc.

Do not forget to shop and ask

The best way to start is from your own home or set of friends, business partners or even your next door neighbor. They may be into golf as much as you are. Why don't you try asking their opinion and recommendations on the kinds of golf equipment you can buy?

Or you could casually walk into a sports shop and ask advice from there. You could also ask your neighbor who may be into golf also. They may have ideas to give to a new golfer like you. It is a very efficient and practical way to gather ideas.

Know your goals in playing golf

Be realistic about your wants and your needs. By being able to identify your goals before you actually go out there to shop, you make it easier for yourself to select the kind of equipment you should buy. It is impractical to buy a new set of golf clubs and to spend too much time and money selecting the best kind if you only will get to use it once or twice a year. Buying what suits you makes your shopping easier, plus you get to save money buying what applies most to your unique preferences.

Of all games that are available out there, why in the world did you decide to choose golf? Is it because you want to play at least twice a year with your business partners and you do not want to feel left out among their circle? Or is it because you are sincerely and devotedly interested enough to learn and play it for as long as you get the

chance?

Be aware how interested and dedicated you are to playing golf

Basically put, how dedicated are you? Okay, so you are willing to spend for your golf equipment. Now, just how much effort are you going to put in playing golf? How much do you plan to practice? For how long? Are you planning to take golf lessons? If your answer is an ambiguous “not much”, it is probably best that you buy the kind of clubs that are less costly. But if your answer is a resounding “yes”, and that you are so willing to spend the necessary time and effort to better your golf playing, it would not be a bad idea if you settle for the type of golf equipment that costs a bit higher than the regular ones.

Should you buy new or used golf equipment?

If in the past you are used to engaging in a new hobby and then a few weeks, months or years later decide to drop it like a bad habit, then the chances of your dedication to the game of golf may just as well be that – a passing fancy. It is best therefore to buy equipment that is slightly used. They are cheaper compared to the new but probably just as effective. If in case you do decide to take up golf seriously,

you could always have the equipment replaced with a new one, or if you are to drop the game altogether, you can always give them to others who may need it or sell it.

Be familiar with your options on golf shafts

To any one who is just beginning to play golf, it is important that he or she pay attention to golf shafts. The composition of the golf shaft – either it is steel or graphite – and the flex of the shaft – how much the shaft bends when swung.

Compared to steel, graphite is a lot lighter and could help create a quicker swing speed. Meanwhile, steel is a lot more durable and a lot cheaper compared to graphite.

Since graphite is easier on the swing and is a lot softer to flex, people who prefer to use these are women and senior citizens. However, men who are younger and a lot stronger tend to lean towards the regular and stiff shafts.

Choose your club

A good golf swing is priceless. Golfers who are just beginning to learn the tricks of the trade need to select golf clubs that lean towards those catered to higher-handicappers. It is best that you choose irons that weighed in perimeter and backed by cavity.

Try looking at those sets of hybrid. This is where the irons are long (usually 4- or 3- or 5-) and are usually substituted by utility clubs.

More discussion on equipment follow in the chapter.

Lesson #4 - How much should you spend on your golf hobby?

How do you know how much golf equipment you are intent to spend your money on? What kind and type should you purchase? To make it easier for you to know which is which, the following are some questions and tips you should ask yourself and could keep in mind as well when you are shopping for your first set of golf clubs, golf balls, etc.

Why are you playing golf?

Look deep inside you and find out.

Is it because you want to play at least twice a year with your business partners and you do not want to feel left out among their circle? Or is it because you are sincerely and devotedly interested enough to learn and play it for as long as you get the chance? Of all games that are available out there, why in the world did you decide to choose golf? Only you know the answer to that.

It is impractical to buy a new set of golf clubs and to spend too much time and money selecting the best kind if you only will get to use it once or twice a year. Buying what suits you makes your shopping easier, plus you get to save money buying what applies most to your unique preferences. Be realistic about your wants and your needs. By being able to identify your goals before you actually go out there to shop, you make it easier for yourself to select the kind of equipment you should buy.

How dedicated are you to playing golf?

Just how much effort are you going to put in playing golf? Okay, so you are willing to spend for your golf equipment. The next question is how much do you plan to practice? For how long? Are you planning to

take golf lessons?

Basically, the bottom line is: how dedicated are you? If your answer is an ambiguous “not much”, it is probably best that you buy the kind of clubs that are less costly. But if your answer is a resounding “yes”, and that you are so willing to spend the necessary time and effort to better your golf playing, it would not be a bad idea if you settle for the type of golf equipment that costs a bit higher than the regular ones.

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As we mentioned earlier, since graphite is easier on the swing and is a lot softer to flex, people who prefer to use these are women and senior citizens. However, men who are younger and a lot stronger tend to lean towards the regular and stiff shafts.

Compared to steel, graphite is a lot light and could help create a quicker swing speed. Meanwhile, steel is a lot more durable and a lot cheaper compared to graphite.

Know the club of your choice

Golfers who are just beginning to learn the tricks of the trade need to select golf clubs that lean towards those catered to higher-handicappers. A good golf swing is priceless. It is best that you choose irons that weighed in perimeter and backed by cavity.

Try looking at those sets of hybrid. This is where the irons are long (usually 4- or 3- or 5-) as we mentioned previously and are usually substituted by utility clubs.

Shop around the corner, ask around. It would not hurt to ask any of your friends, co-workers or relatives who are into golf about the do's and don'ts of purchasing golf equipment. It is best that you try asking their opinion and recommendations on the kinds of golf equipment you can buy.

Or you could casually walk into a sports shop and ask advice from there. You could also ask your neighbor who maybe into golf also. They may have ideas for a new golfer like you. It is a very efficient and practical way to gather ideas.

Lesson #5 - What are the rules?

Golf is played by hitting a ball using a club on an area called "teeing ground." Once the ball is hit, it usually travels fairways across and onto a next prepared area. A hole could be found in this area that is called a "putting green."

The objective of the game of golf is that one should be able to complete a hole by means of hitting a ball from a teeing ground and place it inside the hole of the putting green in as little strokes as possible. What is commonly referred to as a round of golf usually consists of 18 holes to be played in.

In golf, there are basically two kinds of play to choose from. The winner in one kind of play is determined by the holes that are lost and won, this is referred to as a match play.

The other kind of play is determined by the number of strokes one has taken to complete a round. This is called a stroke play.

When playing golf, there are basically two relevant rules to remember: as you find the course, go play it. As the ball lies, it should also be played as such.

If you find it hard to follow the above rule, at least try your best to do what is fair. How do you know what is fair? Below are the summarized rules to give you a good idea of how to play a good and just game of golf.

The Intro: Basic golf courtesy

Avoid moving, talking or standing too close to a golfer who is about to make a stroke.

Play with a minimum amount of delay. As soon as the players in the group that you are in have left, it is just as best that you do the same.

Try your best not to play until the group is already out of the way.

As much as possible, try to replace the divots. Also, do not forget to smooth any footprints found in the bunkers.

It is highly inadvisable to drop your clubs on the putting green, so don't!

The Rules of Playing

Before playing that all important round of golf, the first thing you should do is to read the local rules stated on the score card you are holding. After which do not forget to place an identifying mark on the ball you are going to use. Some golfers use the same type and brand of golf ball, if in case your ball is placed among these bunch, you will

have difficulty knowing which is which.

Label which ball is yours is more practical to do.

Make sure that you get to count your clubs before actual play. You should have a maximum of fourteen clubs.

When starting actual play, it is best that you tee off in front of the tee markers.

When you tee off a little bit off or outside this specified area and you are playing a match play, your opponent may have to ask you to repeat the stroke you just did. The good thing when one does this in a match play, you get to incur no penalty.

However, if in a stroke play, you then are given a penalty of two-stroke. You are therefore required to play in the appropriate area.

If while you are playing and your ball happens to lie in a bunker or a water hazard, you should not in any way touch the ground of the bunker or the water before you do your downswing.

The ball must as much as possible be struck fairly and should neither

be spooned or pushed.

It is okay for you to mark the ball that you are using. You could lift your ball, clean it and place it on the exact place where it was.

When dropping a ball, it is best that you erectly stand and then hold the ball at the length of your shoulder, and then you may drop it. If by dropping the ball it happens to strike your partner, you or your caddie, the ball must then be dropped again with no penalty.

It is also okay for you to lift your ball if by doing so you are able to assist another player. Or you also may lift any other ball as long as that ball interferes with your playing or interferes another player.

Lesson #6 - Should you hire golf pro to teach you the game?

There are golf pros and there are golf amateurs. And fortunately, the twain can and do meet, with very pleasant results for both parties.

Many would protest to the idea that golf is a game that should be enjoyed for its own sake and that a measure such as hiring a pro to teach you the game defeats the purpose of the game as leisure and

recreation.

But while (in the States alone) over 26 million people play golf, most of them hardly or ever get to break a score of 100. Many complain not only over a game less than exemplary but also of body aches and pains after playing.

Mastering the game by playing on one's own may work for some people, but perhaps not as efficiently as getting someone more knowledgeable (like a coach) to help you. Besides, getting to be good at golf AND enjoying it at the same time can only double the enjoyment the game already brings you.

The decision to get a golf coach is about as important as choosing your golf equipment. You'd need to know what your goals are, to what extent you're willing to pursue those and how much money you can put into the activity. Here are some things you may want to know about getting a pro to teach you.

- A big advantage in hiring a coach is that your specific weaknesses are addressed. Having identified these, your coach will be able to prescribe exercises to correct these and see to it that you're doing it

right.

- A golf coach should also help you take away some nasty playing habits that result to painful injuries such as the golfer elbow. He/she should also be able to lead you through a warm-up routine. This is by far the biggest advantage as the help you get goes beyond mere play and helps relieve pains you might not have to live with at all.

- Talk to the prospective coach on their take in playing and teaching golf. A pro worth his salt should readily tell you that they would build on the basics of golf and not go with the latest fads and quick-fix methods. A reply such as the latter may get you faster results. But more often than not, as soon as you stop working with them, your performance dwindles back to what you were before. The tried and tested fundamentals may take a while to learn but the results are more long-lasting.

- The average rate for a one-on-one lesson with a golf pro is about \$75 for an hour's lesson. Of course, the price can vary with the pro you'll be working with and with the golf club or school you'll be taking your lessons at.

- If the rates for an exclusive one-on-one lesson are too expensive for you, you may opt to go with a group of other golfers to share the expenses. However, try to go with a class that is no bigger than 4 students to a coach. That way, you get as much attention as a one-on-one session without spending too much. A one-hour group lesson for 4 people would cost about \$120.

- An important thing you should also remember when working with a pro is going for quality rather than quantity. After all, this is the reason you hired them in the first place. With a limited number of lessons, go for the goal of being excellent at a few good techniques than knowing so many but being unable to execute them properly.

- A good coach will teach you things you can eventually do on your own even without his/her supervision. The idea, after all, is so that you can play a better game on your own. That includes not only the playing proper but also your warm-up and stretching routine as well.

- Finally, even after your lessons and (hopefully) seen improvements in your game, it is still a good thing to come back to your coach at least once a year for him/her to check up your game and see if there are things you need to work on again. There's always room for

improvement, so as long as you can play you might as well play better.

Lesson #7 - How to practice effectively

Even with lessons, instructional videos and store-purchased aids, your golf game will continue the way it has been without consistent and efficient practice. Consistent because practice sessions involve exercises that are meant to develop muscle memory. Efficient because pacing your energy to the kinds of exercises you'll do is important as well.

Simple as this point may sound, it is one that is easily overlooked. Many golfers think that for as long as they spend enough time on the practice range, their score will improve. Unfortunately, that is not necessarily so. To get a better game, it is important that your practice sessions be as regimented as the way you play the game itself, if not more.

Before you groan about how boring practices are, it might help to think that practices are what build good playing habits when you hit the

greens. And if you approach your practice sessions as more than chores and see them as yet another fun aspect to your game of golf, the results can only be a game all the more fun than it already is.

First of all, think of your practice session in three parts consisting of:

- the warm-up,
- the fresh stage
- and the fatigued stage.

In these three stages, you will carry out different sets of exercises that when done in the right stages will make your practices more effective giving you results you can see on the greens as you play.

- Warm-up:

Many are deceived into thinking that golf requires no strenuous physical activity as it only involves swinging and walking. Nothing could be further from the truth. The very nature of swinging causes your muscle groups to work in ways not common to everyday routine.

Your upper torsos, arms, as well as your lower back muscles are the groups most worked when playing golf which only shows that it is important to warm up with some stretches. Start from the top of your

head and work your way down to your feet. Flexibility and getting your muscles' full range of motion is your goal. If you are unfamiliar with stretches, you may consult a trainer or the instructor in your club for some tips.

- Fresh Stage

After your warm-up, start working on exercises that build on a skill you haven't mastered yet, or on parts of your game that's been causing you higher strokes. This could be anything from putting, chipping or driving.

The idea is that when you work on these problem areas while you're still fresh and limber from a stretch routine, your body responds more positively to the exercises you're subjecting it to.

The thing about most people's idea of golf practice is simply spending time on the driving range without even considering whether or not driving is their Waterloo. But if you're aware that your short game is what's giving you problems, then you'd do best to hit the greens to work on your putts as soon as you finish warming up. (As an aside, it has been observed that more than 60% of a player's strokes take place on the green. Unfortunately, this fact is overlooked by many

players thus resulting in poor practice habits.)

- Fatigued stage

Once you start feeling winded from the earlier exercises, move on to work on facets of your game that simply need reinforcement. Since your body already knows this motion, this stage in your practice serves as maintenance to your form.

If any correction is necessary, your stressed out body isn't as pressured to master a difficult form. As in the previous example, only after working on your problematic short game can you then go to the driving range to give positive reinforcement to your drives.

Finally, here are some more observations and suggestions in carrying out your practice.

- To be able to see continuous improvement, a good practice-to-play ratio is about 2:1, which means giving twice as much time to practice as to what you would spend in playing.

- However, give yourself sufficient time to rest in between exercises and in between stages. While it is a work out, you should not be

winded down by the activity. Doing so may actually do more harm than help.

Your game should see improvements as you give your sessions a more defined structure. Be consistent and note the results of your exercises to step up that game one stroke at a time.

Lesson #8 - Practice good etiquette

Gold is considered a gentleman's game and since this is so, certain rules of etiquette in playing apply. Although these are not hard and fast rules, they show that the person practicing these has respect not only for other players, but also for the game itself.

Here are just some general rules of golf etiquette practiced at all levels whether they're amateur or professional. It is then followed by some specific rules at particular times during a game.

Quiet

- Keeping quiet as someone steps up to the ball is a sign of respect for the player as you are allowing him to concentrate.

- Do not run on the course. While this may not affect your own group of players, you may distract and bother others who are trying to play.

Safety

- Before swinging, check if anyone is standing in the general area your ball will go into. Do not assume that others will check to see if they're standing within range of someone about to swing.
- Similarly, it is not only unsafe to take practice swings in a person's direction, it is also considered rude.
- Do not swing your club when someone is walking around and conversely, do not walk around when someone is going to swing.

Pacing

- On a given day, you or your group may not be the only players on a course. That said, try to keep your pace of play at a rate that keeps up with the group ahead of you to avoid holding up the ones behind.
- It is very, very rude to hit into the group playing ahead of you. If it was unintentional, you had failed to observed safety etiquette. If it was intentional and you did so because they are playing slowly, it is

still no reason to drive a ball into their direction.

- When you need to play through a group, observe common courtesy by first asking permission to do so. But before asking, make sure that the next hole is vacant so that there is enough space between groups as you pass through.

- If the group allows you to play through, take the least amount of time to finish the hole and move on to the next one as quickly as possible.

When on the teeing ground...

...try to stay out of the player's line of sight as well as peripheral vision to allow him to concentrate. Standing behind him/her is the best way to do so, as well as keeping quiet as he/she prepares to swing.

When on the fairway...

...hitting some divots is perfectly fine, but avoid causing too many.

Furthermore, try to put a few back in by simply stepping on the divot into the hole.

...don't take too much time looking for a lost ball. The group behind

you may not appreciate the delay. If it can't be found within a few minutes, simply replace the ball.

When on the bunker...

...use the course-provided rake when you've finished with your shot to rake out marks left by you, your ball and your footprints, then leave the rake outside the bunker handle parallel to the fairway.

When on the green...

...avoid stepping on the ball paths of other players as this can affect the putt. Walk behind the ball on its direction to the hole or at least step over the imaginary line between the ball and the hole.

...repair ball marks made by the force of the ball landing on the green.

This shows courtesy to the player following you as you've taken the time to leave them an unmarked green.

...put your ball back on the green before picking up the ball marker just so you can avoid possible points of contention between another player as to whether you've properly positioned your ball or not.

When at the practice grounds...

...continue to observe the general rules of golf etiquette as you would on the course.

These rules are but a partial list of other good golfing etiquette practices. But these are the basics that are built on mutual respect for each other's safety and love of the game. The experience becomes all the more pleasant for everyone concerned.

Lesson #9 - Know your course: Weather conditions

Sunny weather can be very conducive for most sports enthusiasts. The scorching heat of the sun can even boost one's stamina to do better in any game. However, ever knew of any game that can be played even when there's a rainstorm? Not many people can enumerate any sport that can be executed even when it's raining hard.

All sports, especially those played outdoors are affected by the changes in weather conditions. The first to be really impacted upon are the players who have to adjust physically, mentally, and emotionally -- factors which often dictate what could happen at the end of the game.

Playing golf entails proper training in order to hit the tee perfectly under a gloomy climate. Weather conditions, for example, since it affects the growth and texture of the grass, have a big impact on the leveled surface vital to a golfer's performance. This is usually called "throwing darts", it means that the ball and the shots are not high enough which results in lower points.

Remember that the conditioning of the green can influence the game of the golfers and the golf course operation. That is why a change of strategy is helpful when playing golf during bad weather since golf is a game that is specifically dependent on the weather.

When there is low humidity and dryer soil, the greens are maintained more easily. That is why golfers often play during fall or spring. The favorable and consistent sunny skies and growth of the turf allows a considerable and reliable time for golfers to hold their tees.

The roughs can become heavier which makes it difficult for shots to recover when soaked in water. Water ends up between the ball and the clubface because of the fewer spins than a normal spin. Bad consequences are then more inevitable after an off-line shot. This is when a good golf playing strategy during wet weather is needed for it

will be more considerable to have the ball always elevated off the grass as fast as possible. During these situations, footprints and marks of the ball are deeper and the sad part is that scores tend to be lower. When this happens, extra effort is needed for the player to end with better scores.

Points to remember when playing in a wet weather condition:

- Make it a point to keep the grips and the hands dry during a rainy day. The caddy can bring one towel for grip drying and another one to dry hands.
- Ask someone to bring a cover for the golf bag. This will be a good idea since it will keep the grips of the tee dry.
- A golfer will be comfortable and can sustain long hours of golf game if the equipment and he himself is dry.
- Just be patient and the scores will be higher even during the wet weather condition.
- Strategize more and visualize the goal in mind prior to entering the game. This will prepare the player for any difficult situations he will need to face on wet and uneven fairways.

Golfers need to have the balls to land as close as possible to holes to

lessen the amount of rolls of the balls on wet grass. Balls will have to be hit harder to prevent breakage and to halt sooner.

Even expert golfers can surmount the challenge of playing on soaked grass field at times when the weather does not permit any good sunlight to watch over them. Rule of thumb is that even if a golfer is faced with such a difficult task, he must keep in mind that his competitors are too. When golfers are wet, the playtime is longer for the ball can't roll smoothly and far which is a plus for those who drive the tee off longer.

Weather conditions might affect the environs of the game, but a skillful and prepared player won't have a hard time thinking of ways to ward off the weather's bad effects on one's game. Enough determination to play well and a little knowledge on how to outsmart the weather will make playing golf a cinch even when the day's weather is not that good.

Lesson #10 - Know your course: Greens

Golfers are very picky about the golf course where they want to play.

They don't like playing in areas where the greens were just punched. That is why keepers of the greens implement a lot of methods to make sure expert care is given and golfers play golf without being annoyed.

There are a lot of problems that resemble a nightmare if no perfect trouble shooting tips are used. One aspect that is very important in keeping a good green is the drainage. Although, this is often overlooked, it is a vital part in keeping the green especially during rainy seasons.

A real golf course will eat up from \$65,000 or more for just a single green. A base layer to maintain the shape is required for a green. The drainage should be made up of crushed stones, a layer of sand, PVC pipes, and at least 13 to 14 inches of cheaper sand with peat for the root zone layer. The sprinklers should be available including bunkers. A more expensive part, which is the sod, is needed also for the surrounding area.

The labor needed in providing maintenance for the green is not for golf course owners who do not like cutting the grass more than once a week. The hard part of the work is preventing turf grass problems and being vigilant on how to maintain it as it should be. Cutting of the

grass should be made every two to three days or everyday if there are golfers who want to play on the green everyday. There is also other work that demands more time and cost such as aeration, fertilization, putting herbicides, top dressing, putting fungicides and/or pesticides. Below is a list of some methods and time frame needed in taking care of the golf course greens.

Care for Greens Activity and Scheduling

Irrigation: 1 - 3 days interval

Mowing: 1 - 3 days interval

Top dressing: 3 to 6 times a year

Aeration: Once a year

Pesticide: Only when it's needed

Herbicide: Only when it's needed

Fungicide: Once a month

Fertilization: Once a month

The types of grass that can be used are either the creeping Bentgrass or Bermuda grass. Bentgrass is considered by golf course owners in areas where the climate is moderate to cool while Bermuda is the type of turf recommended in tropical or sunny temperatures. Bentgrass is easier to grow and provides an income for a greenskeeper. Using

Bermuda in hot climates makes it more costly. The techniques used in maintaining the two kinds of grass are the same; the only difference is that it would be difficult to use Bentgrass in places that are tropical since it is hard to keep it moist. Only 22% of American golf course owners use Bermuda while 78% prefer Bentgrass. Here are the list of places and the turf type they use according to a survey made by GCSAA.

US State: Bentgrass/Bermuda grass

Alabama: 19/81

Arizona: 59/41

Arkansas: 60/40

California: 86/14

Florida: 2/98

Georgia: 49/51

Louisiana: 2/98

Mississippi: 9/90

Nevada: 93/7

Oklahoma: 90/10

North Carolina: 67/33

South Carolina: 14/86

Tennessee: 65/35

Texas: 50/50

Hawaiian owners are using one hundred per cent Bermuda grass while all the other US states are using a hundred per cent Bentgrass.

Southeast Texas is using Bermuda while Bent is being used in Northwest Texas.

Standard mowers, preferably the rotary types, are needed since the greens should be rolled and cut to a height of 4/16 inches. Others are still considering synthetic grass than Bentgrass for the golf course.

Although synthetic ones can be cheaper, some golfers may not like the idea. Here are the pluses and minuses of each type of grass:

Type of Greens: Pros vs. Cons

Real bent grass

1. Maintenance can be a hobby but skills and training are needed
2. More pleasing and attractive but can be time consuming
3. Whole locations can be changed but costly grass mowers are needed

4. Grows fast and cheaper than seeds but irrigation is needed

Fake grass

1. Maintenance is not needed but concrete holes are permanent

2. May look real during playing but can be discovered fake by expert golfers

3. Can take any weather condition but a bit more expensive than real bent grass seeds

4. Worry free maintenance but requires labor fees for installation

Lesson #11 - Know your course: Fairways

There is greater challenge in keeping a healthy looking fairway and green for the whole golf course. Because more than forty thousand golf players come and enjoy the whole fairway, damage to the grass is inevitable. The best advice that professional owners and caretakers can give to other golf course starters is to use the right fertilizer and maintenance technique to best assist them in managing the whole fairway and green.

Below are some of the highly recommended grass products for seeding and reseeding to have a consistent green grass color during winter or

fall.

Pennington Annual Ryegrass

§ Advisable to use on a temporary or seasonal area

§ Can also be best during warm weather conditions while overseeding the grasses.

§ The best time to plant it is at the beginning of fall

§ The seeding rate should be ten pounds per 1,000 square feet but only five pounds per 1,000 square feet when reseeding.

Fairway Classics Perennial Ryegrass Lawn Seed Blend Tournament Quality

§ These ryegrasses are used to blend with the grasses that are permanently planted for the lawns of the North or during the winter season and can be used for reseeding in the southern part.

§ The best time to plant it is at the beginning of the fall season.

§ The seeding and reseeding rate should be ten pounds per 1,000 square.

Here are the tips on how to maintain that healthy look of golf fairways:

§ By using the right fertilizer - for the fairway to get that great looking

green all throughout the year use the fertilizer that provides organic nitrogen to the soil when the grass needs it. It will be good to avoid too much growth that is the main cause of insect and other grass disease problems. By also using the right fertilizer, groundwater, lakes and the streams are not easily polluted with nitrogen.

§ Use fertilizer regularly - golf course owners regularly fertilize the fairways and greens. This is very vital with the use of best products prior to seeing that the whole soil and fairway is undergoing any stress. This makes the whole place maintain a condition best for playing.

§ Iron should also be present when selecting the right fertilizer - Fertilizers that contain iron are very helpful to plants since it maintains that very deep color of green for the whole fairway. This is not a nutrient that does not result in excessive growth which nitrogen can cause grass. Owners could choose between 2 kinds of iron filled fertilizer products in dry granules or in liquid sprays.

§ Do not worry about weeds, just control them - Quality golf courses are not susceptible to overgrowing weed problems since they do have a thick and tight turf. But some golf courses do. Remember that the

seeds of weeds propagate where there is a lot of light and moisture in the area. Once the whole fairway is thick enough with grass, the weed seeds may not be able to fit in since there is no adequate gap to get light and moisture.

§ Never leave a place for insects and grass diseases - the rapid growth of the fairway in golf courses result in an extreme growth of top. This invites insects and other diseases to feed on the top growth.

Fertilizers that release nitrogen slowly aid in limiting excessive top growth.

§ Make sure that the blades of the mower are sharp - golf course owners and caretakers make it a point to keep the blades of the mower sharp enough in cutting the grass to prevent grass tear. When the grass tears, the whole fairway will result into a gray looking spot. Another down side of this is that torn grass invites diseases to infest on it. Remember also that the stress is lesser if the grass is mowed frequently.

§ Excessive watering can also cause damage - too much watering of the fairway and green results to a pale green color. To maintain that healthy looking green color and for the nutrients to be absorbed much

better, try to frequently but just shallow water the grass for this keeps the roots of the grass near the top layer of the soil.

Lesson #12 - Know your course: Tees

Since its inception, golf has been the world's most elegant sport. The rules and the discipline entailed in every golfer is the main reason why the game is considered to exude sheer combination of style and sportsmanship in the game.

However, golf will not be complete without its basic components. These things are used to facilitate the process of playing the game.

One of the main components of golf is the tee. On its basic concept, golf tees are those used as stands that hold the golf ball during the player's "first stroke" in each hole.

Tee is also used to unofficially refer to the area from which the player hit his or her primary stroke. It is formally known as the "teeing ground". Such that when a player is said to play on the golf course'

ninth hole, the player is said to play from the “ninth tee” to the ninth green.

Consequently, the first shot hit by the player from a “teeing ground” is known as a tee shot. For lengthy holes, tee shots can be done using a driver; while for shorter holes, it is best to use an iron.

Typically, using tees while on the verge of hitting the ball is not allowed after the tee shot has been done. However, there are instances wherein some rules of golf allow this kind of technique known as “teeing the ball.”

Too complicated? Read on.

Information on golf tees may range from the simplest to the most complex information. This is because the term “tee” is being used to refer to many things in a golf game.

Therefore, for people who wish to know more about tees, here is a list that can be used in order to understand the concept and importance of tees in golf.

1. The act of teeing is beneficial for drive shots.

Teeing, on its basic idea is considered as advantageous for players who do drive shots. In this case, teeing is allowed most of the time.

Alternatively, teeing is not allowed after the tee shot has been delivered. Any shots where tees are used will be considered illegal.

2. Tee shots can be executed without the use of tees.

As mentioned, tees are used when the first shot is played on the hole of the teeing ground. If in the event that the first shot is considered as a chip, a short “approach shot” of low flight usually strike from next to the green, the player can have his or her tee shot without using a tee.

3. Normal size of golf tee

The typical size of a golf tee is 2.125 inches in length. However, tee sizes may vary depending on their length, and on how they will be used in the game.

4. Forward tees are best for beginners

It is highly recommended by experts that forward tees should be used by beginners. Forward tees are usually used by high or middle handicap seniors and women.

5. Three different set of tees with three different functions

There are three different set of tees available in golf. These are the back tees, middle tees, and the forward tees.

Each set of tees has its special function.

In choosing which set of tees are appropriate for a certain type of player, it is best to consider the player's handicap, or the amount of strokes that he or she must subtract from his or her real score. This is usually done to initiate players who have different capabilities to contend on an equal level.

Hence, for those who are low-handicap, it is best to use back tees, also known as championship tees. For middle to high handicap men, long-hitting or low-handicap seniors, and low-handicap women, it is best to use middle tees.

On the other hand, forward tees are best for beginners and low-handicap seniors and women.

With all of these things in mind, every golfer should realize by now how important tees are in the game. Without these tees, the game cannot officially start with the first hole.

Therefore, even if it is relatively complicated to understand the basic concept of tees, still, it is important for a golf player to know its concept and the rules that surround it in order to achieve something in golf.

Lesson #13 - Know your course: Hazardous areas

Golf can be a pretty demanding game. This is because anyone who wants to be an expert golfer or at least be considered as a golfer should first educate himself or herself about the concept of this particular sport, the rules of the games, and the conditions of the environment where the game is played.

For this reason, experts say that it is extremely important for every golfer wannabe to familiarize him or herself with the different aspects

of golf, one of which is the golf course.

Golf course, basically, refers to a piece of land where the game will be played. Usually, golf courses have a chain of holes. These holes primarily refer to the physical hole in the ground, where the ball is placed and hit. It can also refer to the full vastness from the tee or the first hole where the primary shot is played, up to the green, or the area around the physical hole in the ground.

Normally, golf courses have nine holes up to a maximum of 18. Aside from these holes, golf courses are divided into different parts where each player must learn to play their best in spite of the disadvantages of each area and the trouble that awaits them.

The area where the grass is cut almost near to the ground that provides every ball a good playing area is known as the fairway.

On the other hand, the rough is that part of the golf course wherein the grass stands slightly taller than those at the fairway, or the area in which the grass is maintained uncut.

The last part of the golf course is the so-called hazards or those that

are considered as hazardous areas in the course. These hazardous areas are the most feared part of the golfers because it is assumed that if a golfer's ball had fallen into one of the hazards, he may or may not win the game.

Therefore, for people who want to know more about the different hazardous areas in the golf course, here is a list of some facts that could be used.

1. Bunkers

Bunkers, also known as "sand traps," are one of the hazardous areas on the golf course. As its other name suggests, bunkers are burrows that are usually full of sand.

Here, the player will have a difficult time playing his best shot in the game. This is because golf balls are hard to control and manipulate when in the sand.

As a rule, players are not allowed to touch the ground, which is still a part of a hazard, using a club. Hence, beginners must know this rule by heart or else they might not be able to finish the game.

2. Water hazards

Water hazards are typically small bodies of water that are incorporated in the golf course like ponds, lakes, etc. Usually, water hazards are placed between the hole and the "tee-off".

These water hazards, like the bunkers, are also considered one of the hazardous areas in the golf course. This is because once the ball has landed on the water hazards, there is a possibility that the overall performance of the player's game will be affected.

Basically, even if the ball has landed on the water hazard, the player can still opt to play the next stroke provided that the player must hit the ball as it is.

If in the event that the ball is considered lost, in which this particular issue is a subject of numerous debates in the course, the player may hit another ball that can either be played from the area where the ball was previously hit before it hit the water hazard or by dropping another ball from behind the water hazard.

In reality, there are many rules that govern the cases of water hazards. However, the rules mentioned here are the basic rules in water hazards, so it can be very useful especially to those who are planning to start their career in golf.

Indeed, the performance of a player that refers to his stroke and style can be curbed with many obstacles like the water hazards and the bunkers. Hence, it can be concluded that golf players should try with all his might to avoid these hazardous areas as much as possible.

Lesson #14 - Know your equipment

Know your equipment and beat your opponent with the right stuff. For so many years now, golf equipment has definitely developed in terms of elegance and the right tactics. From golf balls to the more complex golf items, it has gradually become a complete big industry out there.

Since its inception, back in the 15th century in Scotland, golf has intricately fabricated itself in the social market as the sport of the leaders and the privileged entrepreneurs. No wonder why most of the bosses and the managers find time to conduct tournaments and matches in spite of their busy schedules.

In fact, in the United States, golf is informally acclaimed as the sport of the “business world”. There are many instances wherein most of the decisive moments of the board meetings have been carried out during golf matches and games.

For this reason, golf experts contend that because golf reflects the elegance and classiness of the business world, it is best to use only excellent equipment in the game. That’s why golf clubs appear like the majestic millionaire’s cane that has been elegantly crafted for the chic sport.

However, in order to obtain the best golf equipment in the world, one has to use hefty amounts of money because these babies have very steep prices.

Nevertheless, golf equipment is still the most important thing in a golfer; hence, it is just important to pay close attention to them.

Let’s review some of the different types of equipment:

Golf clubs

Next to the crowns of kings and queens, golf clubs are said to be one of the most elegant and valuable pieces the sports world has ever known. It reflects the sophistication that golf has long been known for.

Generally, golfers carry several types of golf clubs in a game. The rules of golf allow a golfer to carry up to a maximum of 14 clubs. This may depend on the type of move they are going to play.

Golf clubs are categorized into four key types: irons, woods, putters, and the hybrid woods.

1. Irons

Irons are usually used when shorter shots are required or when the play involves shots that are moving towards the greens. The sizes of irons usually range from 36 inches to 40 inches long. The iron heads are characterized by hard and even "clubface".

Basically, irons are used for detailed shots from rough as well as from the fairways.

2. Woods

Woods are typically long and are usually used in long shots, usually those shots that run from 200 to 300 yards. It is characterized by its shaft length that range from 40 inches to 46 inches, or longer like the "Black Rock's Killer Bee," which has a shaft length of 50 inches.

As its name suggests, woods are originally made from maple or persimmon wood. However, as time goes by and as golf develops, contemporary club heads are now made up of hollow titanium or steel.

3. Hybrid woods

Hybrids are innovative types of woods that blend the "straight hitting" feature of irons and the "low center of gravity" attributes of woods with higher lofts.

Hybrids are typically used for long shots in a challenging rough area. Players who have difficulty in generating a "ball airborne" when using long irons use hybrid woods instead.

4. Putters

Putters are generally characterized with very low shafts, which are also short sometimes. This type of club is usually used to play the golf ball on the greens. However, there are instances wherein players use them especially when they are playing from the hazards or for a few "approach shots" on the course that have compactly trimmed extremes and fairways.

Golf Balls

Golf balls are the celebrities of the game. This is because without golf balls, the concept of golf is totally vague and useless.

According to the "Rules of Golf", golf balls should weigh 45.93 grams or less; have a diameter of 42.67 mm or less; and should be symmetrically sphere-shaped.

The complexity of golf balls is based on its transitional period of changes and innovations. This is because the physics of golf balls are based on the materials used.

The details of how the ball was created and the materials used greatly

affect the historical development of golf. From wooden golf balls to contemporary golf balls, each invention has contributed to the development of golf.

Today, golf balls are more effective in terms of its physical performance, unlike before. Contemporary golf balls have 300 to 450 dimples. These dimples are the primary characteristics that make the balls fly high in the air.

Other Equipment

There are still many kinds of golf equipment and not just clubs and balls alone. In golf, the right kinds of clothes are also required.

Included in a golfer's get up are the special kinds of shoes known for its spikes that are fastened to the soles.

Golfers also use special gloves because this will help them on gripping the clubs.

Then there are the golf carts, which are used to transport golfers from one hole to another and the tees, which are used to support the golf ball during tee shots.

Indeed, golf equipment is relatively a mixture of classiness and pure sportsmanship. And every player's move is dependent on the kind of golf equipment he uses. That's why it is extremely important to consider the vital factors when choosing golf equipment.

Lesson #15 - What do doctors have to say about golf

Believe it or not, golf is actually good for your health. Even the United States Golf Association thinks so; they also advise that you should walk the golf course and try to avoid – as much as possible – riding golf carts.

Although riding golf carts is the most convenient way to get yourself from one hole to the next, it will actually be good for your body if you walk your legs along the greens. Doing so pumps your heart, circulates the blood all over your body, and is a good and fun way of exercising.

David Fay from the United States Golf Association also thinks that the most pleasurable way to play golf is by walking. Riding carts, he said,

should as much as possible be stopped now.

Walking is a good form of exercise. It is the most basic and easy program of getting fit which almost anyone could do. Simply put, walking is good for you.

Although some believe that walking the golf course is a very unhealthy thing to do because of the nature of the game – the start and stop process of golf playing. In actuality though, there have been scientific studies as well as evidence of people actually telling their personal experiences on the positive effects of walking through a game of golf.

In Sweden in particular, there are researchers who discovered that walking through a game of golf equals to about forty to seventy percent of intense workout in an aerobics class. This is assuming that about eighteen holes were played.

In another study by a cardiologist named Edward Palank, golfers who walked were found to be in a better state of health because the level of bad cholesterol in their body decreased. Meanwhile, the level of their good cholesterol was steady. Those golfers who settled to ride their way across the golf course on golf carts, however, did not show

these same positive health results.

Also, according to Golf Science International, four hours of golf playing was found to be comparable to attending a forty five minute fitness class.

Another golf association, specifically the Northern Ohio Golf Association, stated that when a golfer walks across a course, it is roughly equivalent to walking for three to four miles. This included walking around hills, over greens and tees.

Not convinced yet? Maybe you should try doing the following activities and see, as well as feel, the difference for yourself.

During a round of golf, try to walk along alternating holes so that by the end of your round of golf you should be able to have walked through a total of nine holes.

If you are feeling not up to it yet as fully as you should, that is okay. Maybe you could try walking on a set of nines while you can ride the other set.

If you have a golf partner and he or she insists that you ride along with him or her, make sure that you only ride on the path of the cart. You can then walk down to the fairway towards your ball and then your partner could bring the golf cart up.

Are you convinced yet? If not, try to look at it this way. If your health is not good enough for you to settle to walk those legs and pump that good old heart of yours, then at least take pity and be considerate of the damage that golf carts do to fairways.

Believe it or not, golf carts do create damage around sand traps and around the greens. Even if carts are not supposed to ride along these areas, sometimes though, depending on who is behind the golf cart's wheel, they still at times do.

For the sake of the greens, go walk! Because of advances in technology, there are now grasses that are able to grow on areas that they originally are not supposed to grow on at all. As a result of this, golf courses look as amazing as they were before. Unfortunately, these same golf courses are as subject to a lot of wear and tear as well.

Driving a golf cart along these beautiful greens subjects them to unnecessary damage. So now that you know, it would not hurt you to consider walking along, across, over, or through those greens now would it?