



THE THONG ADJUSTER



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What's in a name?

What we need are better nicknames

One of the reasons we become involved in sports is because it's fun. One of the reasons it's fun is because of nicknames. But where have all the great nicknames gone? Where is the 2008 version of Dick "Night Train" Lane, or Lou "The Toe" Garza, or "Crazy Legs" Hirsch, or Lou "The Iron Horse" Gehrig, or William "The Refrigerator" Perry, or "Shoeless" Joe Jackson?

We used to have great nicknames in golf, too. There was Jack "The Golden Bear" Nicklaus, Lee "The Merry Mex" Trevino, "Champagne" Tony Lema, "Slammin' Sammy" Snead, Craig "The Walrus" Stadler, Ernie "The Big Easy" Els, and also some guy named Eldrick who we call "Tiger."

It seems to me that the Iron Thong needs some good nicknames. So here are my choices:

John "Bad Mammajamma" Hernandez

John "The Signature" Hancock

Darren "Most Improved" Howard

John "Tied Up In" Knotts

Eric "The Red Hot" Lavigne

Johnny "Look At These Guns"

Martinez

Willie "No Mo" Mojica

Steve "The Slammer" Schlemmer



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Go to <http://www.IronThongGolf.com> to view the current issue.

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Just 'fore' laughs



"I know this is a rough course, but are those tires really necessary?"



"I'm not quitting! I may never get another chance to break 100!"



FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions about Golf

Can you use a club other than the putter on putting green?

You sure can. You might remember Phil Mickelson pitching from the bottom part of a two-tiered green to the top part during the 2002 Ryder Cup.

Unfortunately, unlike Phil Mickelson, most of us won't be able to take a perfect divot that can easily be replaced. Most of us would dig up a good portion of turf and damage the green.

So before you try something similar, ask yourself - if you're not a highly skilled player - if it's really worth the potential damage to the green.

But, according the Rules of Golf, there are no prohibitions on the type of club to be used on putting surfaces.

Do the rules of golf prohibit changing balls during a round?

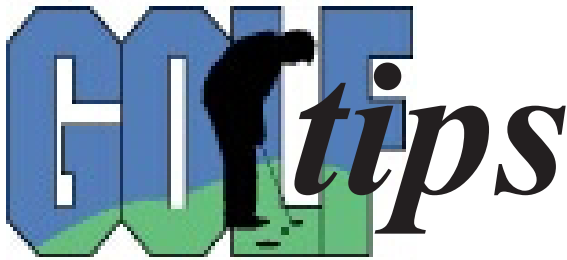
There is nothing in the Rules of Golf that prevents a golfer from changing to a different golf ball (i.e., from a Titleist to a Maxfli) on every hole on the course - so long as the change is made between the play of holes.

However, there is something in the Rules of Golf that says a tournament committee can impose such a rule. It's called the "one ball condition" (in the rulebook, it's in Appendix 1, Part C). As you probably know, all Tour events are played under the "one ball condition." And any rules committee may adopt the "one ball condition" for its competitions.

The "one ball condition" requires the player to use the exact same brand and type of ball throughout the round. For example, if you tee off No. 1 with a Titleist Pro V1x, then that's what you must play throughout the round.

If the "one ball condition" is not in effect, however, golfers may swap out different types of golf balls at any point in a round of golf, so long as the change is made between holes rather than during the play of a hole.

Rule 15-1 states: "A player must hole out with the ball played from the teeing ground ..."



Quick tips for reading greens

(Editor's Note: The following tips for reading greens are from Harold Swash, one of the top putting instructors in the world and founder of Harold Swash Putting Schools of Excellence.)

Key points

The ability to read the correct line and speed of a putt is an important skill to develop. To help develop such a skill, consider the following points.

Speed

Controlling the speed of your put is vitally important.

The quicker the ball is rolling, the less the ball will break.

The optimum pace to hit a putt is one that would take the ball 15 inches to 17 inches past the hole. This speed ensures that the ball holds its line.

True down slope direction

The momentum of the stroke makes the ball roll along a straight line initially (we have stated the relationship between speed and break).

However, as the ball gets closer to the hole the ball begins to lose its speed. As it loses its speed the ball will start to look for and go down the true downslope of the green as gravity starts to take over.

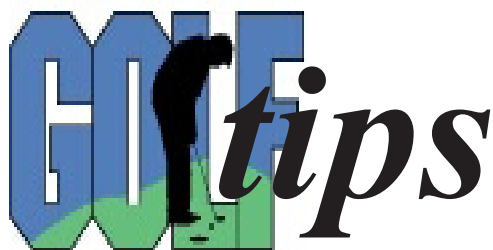
Assessing your putt

Target point

Every putt is therefore effectively a straight putt, it all depends on how hard you hit it as to whether it takes any break.

With your pace of putt in mind, pick the break you envisage the putt will take. Then pick your target out as a straight line and hit the ball at the right speed so that it takes the break.

When you approach the green it is important therefore to look at the contours and assess the slopes and lie of the land.



Reading (greens) is fundamental

Continued from page 4

Uphill or downhill

Downhill putts

With less momentum from the strike on a downhill putt, gravity will act upon the ball sooner on its run towards the hole and force the ball down the direction of the true downslope.

On downhill putts, therefore, we need to allow for more break.

Remember: less speed equals more break.

Uphill putts

Uphill putts are much easier than downhill putts because they have less break due to the momentum of the strike required to hit the ball up the hill.

Remember: more speed equals less break.

The ball will take any break when it starts to “die” (loses speed), this is when gravity starts to take over and the ball will follow the true downslope.

Side slopes

Side slope putts

It is important to note that putts hit across any side slope are uphill on the first part of the putt and then downhill on the second part of the putt.

Once you have assessed whether the put is uphill or downhill (to help you determine the pace of the putt and initial starting line) then focus on the area around the hole where the ball will die and gain an understanding of the direction of the true downslope, as this is where the slope will have the greatest influence on your putt.

By building up a picture of the contours you will build up a picture of the line and pace you will need to hit the ball on for it to go in the hole.

Practice reading putts in the same way you practice your mechanics. This will help you learn to assess the effects different slopes and speeds have on your putts. Building up such experience will help you make more decisive and accurate reads out on the course.

About the instructor

These tips, which appear courtesy of Pocketbooks “Putting Fundamentals,” are from putting guru Harold Swash. Swash, the founder of Harold Swash Putting Schools of Excellence, is one of the top golf instructors in Europe, having coached, among others, Pádraig Harrington, David Howell, Nick Faldo and Darren Clarke. He is also the inventor of Yes Golf’s C-Groove putter.

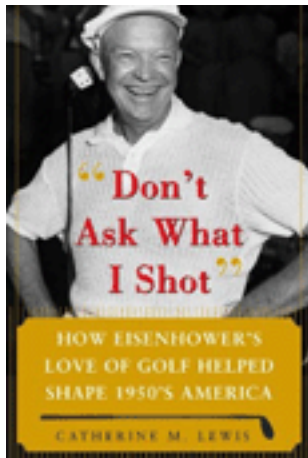
It's February, and we celebrate President's Day this month, so here's the lowdown on Presidents and Golf.

Hackers, duffers and cheaters

PRESIDENTS AND GOLF

Presidents are different from the rest of us. Their high office gives them power and control over policies and people. But the office does not give them control over a golf ball. When presidents pick up a club and swing at a golf ball, their swing determines the flight of the ball. Just as it does the rest of us, golf humanizes and humbles presidents.

Fourteen of the last 17 presidents played or play golf. The three who did not play were one-term presidents, and, contrary to Teddy Roosevelt's warning that "golf is fatal," golf seems to be fatal only to the election chances of presidential candidates who do not play.



Some presidents, notably Dwight Eisenhower, have been passionate players. Democrats criticized Republican Eisenhower for playing too much golf, but his successor, Democrat John F. Kennedy, played often as a candidate and as president, secretly, so as to avoid similar criticism. Decades earlier, Democrat Woodrow Wilson played "every day but Sunday," more than any other president.

Most published accounts list Ike and JFK among the purists golfers, Wilson and Ronald Reagan among the worst off the tee, and Richard Nixon and Bill Clinton as "cheats."

JFK rarely finished an 18-hole round, instead playing only the middle holes to avoid press attention to his presence on the course. As any golfer knows, a projected low handicap for the full 18 holes

based on a partial round is suspect. In contrast, Reagan had a respectable 12 handicap as a young man, but was among the worst presidential golfers because of his high handicap as an older man who played rarely.

During the 1995 Bob Hope Classic, there was a foursome of Bob Hope, President Clinton, and former Presidents George Bush and Jerry Ford, the first such presidential game. They were joined for the pro-am by the defending Classic champion, Raleigh native Scott Hoch.

When the three presidents were



together in another setting, Nixon's funeral, they quietly talked golf. Earlier, when Ford had faced deciding whether to pardon Nixon, Ford also had to decide whether to attend the grand opening of the World Golf Hall of Fame in Pinehurst. Ford did both, pardoning Nixon and then playing Pinehurst No. 2 and driving his first tee shot 270 yards. During Reagan's presidency, when he was playing at Augusta National, a terrorist took over the pro shop. As the Secret Service whisked Reagan away from the course, Reagan quipped that he preferred "to play through."

Presidents Bush were the first to be at a golf outing involving a past-president father and a sitting-president son. Their golf caps bore the designations "41" and "43." Bush 41 had an 11 handicap in his prime, and now is around a 22. Bush 43 plays at about a 15 handicap. According to spectators, Bush 41 plays very fast, Bush 43 "goes for the green," and both play by the rules.

An Iron Thonger by any other name is still an Iron Thonger continued from page 1

Mike "Do You Have Change for a Five?" Linares
Paul "2-2-2" Garcia
Ron "Back in the Boonies" Boone
Steve "I Used to Know How to Play This Game" VanWert
Pete "The Complete" Cliburn
Mike "Collateral Risk" Fisk
Jesse "Porous" Flores
Hershel "Big Bomb" Krigbaum
Al "Don't Call Me Lou" Menchaca
Lou "Don't Call Me Al" Menchaca
Gary "Master of the Munis" Muniz
Richard "Double R" Roberts
Carl "Trigger" Rogers
Jon "Talk Quietly But Carry a Big Stick" Alvarez
Rudy "I Can't Play The" Castaneda
Jim "Embarrasin" Harrison
Leon "The Lion" McLin
Robert "The Rocket" Perez
Stan "The Invisible Man" Singleton
Dan "The Man" VanWert
Bill "Full Turn" Turner
Scott "The Shot" Williams
Sam "Fierce" Pierce

Let me know if you have different nicknames for our ITG golfers, and I'll print them next month, if they're printable.

Dear Abby



Dear Abby,

I've never written to you before, but I really need your advice. I have suspected for some time now that my wife has been cheating on me. The usual signs. Phone rings but if I answer, the caller hangs up. My wife has been going out with "the girls" a lot recently although when I ask their names she always says, "Just some friends from work, you don't know them."

I always try to stay awake to look out for her coming home, but I usually fall asleep. Anyway, I have never approached the subject with my wife. I think deep down I just didn't want to know the truth, but last night she went out again and I decided to really check on her. Around midnight, I decided to hide in the garage behind my golf clubs so I could get a good view of the whole street when she arrived home from a night out with "the girls."

It was at that moment, crouching behind my clubs, that I noticed that the graphite shaft on my driver appeared to have a hairline crack right by the club head. Is this something I can fix myself or should I take it back to the pro shop where I bought it?

Signed, Perplexed

Dear Perplexed,

Get a grip. It looks like you're getting shafted in more ways than one.

A Golf Pro's Prayer

**The Pro is my Shepherd, I shall not Slice.
 He maketh me to Drive Straight Down Green Fairways;
 He leadeth me Safely across Still Water-Hazards;
 He restoreth my Approach Shots.
 He Leadeth me in the Paths of Accuracy for my Game's Sake.
 Yea, though I chip through the Roughs in the shadows of Sand Traps,
 I will fear no Bogies. For his Advice is with me;
 His Putter and Irons, they comfort me.
 He prepareth my Strategy for me in the presence of mine Opponents;
 He anointeth my head with Confidence:
 The Cup will not be runneth over!
 Surely Birdies and Eagles shall follow me all the Rounds of my Life,
 And I will score in the Low Eighties**

Amen