

The Play of the Game

MAINTAINING YOUR GRIP

By STANLEY E. (TED) BISHOP

USGA AMATEUR CHAMPION 1946
MEMBER OF USGA WALKER CUP TEAM 1947

The most important thing I have discovered about the golf swing concerns the grip. I stumbled on it while trying to recapture my game after three years in the Army, and I fully believe it was responsible for my winning the Massachusetts, New England and USGA Amateur Championships in 1946.

When we were learning to play golf, we all were told about the necessity of taking a firm grip on the club, particularly with the left hand. The result is that we are inclined to take that firm grip as we step up to the ball—and thereafter to concentrate on the swing and forget the grip.

The discovery I made was that it is equally necessary to *maintain* that firm grip *with both hands* throughout the swing.

For years, the weakest part of my game was my play with the wooden clubs. I consistently hit a high ball with a fade.

One day I happened to check my grip after I had finished a shot and discovered it had changed considerably from the grip I had taken when I stepped up to the ball. Most important, my right thumb, which I place on the side of the shaft touching the forefinger, had slipped to the top of the shaft and the forefinger had curled under the shaft.

Using that as a point of departure, I analyzed a series of shots and concluded that my grip, in the course of the swing, habitually loosened and shifted. This tended to open the face of my club and undoubtedly caused the high fade.

In any case, I forgot everything else while I concentrated on *maintaining* my grip throughout my swing. At the end of a week of practice and concentration, I found I had cured the fault. Each time I checked my grip at the finish, my hands were in exactly the position they had been when I started the swing. From that point on, I had my best season in golf.

CONCENTRATION

By MISS DOROTHY KIRBY

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1939 AND 1947

When anyone asks me what I consider the most necessary thing in golf, the word "concentration" immediately comes to mind. I believe you will find that true with most golfers who play competitive golf.

Concentration is an ability that seems to come more naturally to some than to others. This could explain why some players progress so much more rapidly than others. I find it difficult to concentrate for a complete round, and consequently run into bad holes or lapses which can only be explained by lack of concentration.

To me, the first step in hitting a shot is to have a clear picture in mind of where I want the ball to go, and, without any other thought, to try to hit it to that spot. It is essential to good golf not to linger mentally over shots that have been played nor to anticipate those yet to be played, each stroke being thought of as a separate shot.

I have heard many ideas on concentration from tournament golfers, and they all vary. I think this comes from different temperaments, hence we play and think slowly or quickly according to our temperaments. So to each person concentration is likely to have a different meaning and to be brought about differently.

To me, golf is so mental that it is a battle with oneself to hold the right frame of mind in making each shot, and it follows that if one's concentration is good, one will play good, positive golf.

It is purely an individual job to reach championship form, and concentration is the most necessary quality that I have found. I would hate to count the number of matches I have lost through wrong thinking. So, from past experiences, I now try to set my own pace mentally and play golf.