
HINTS ON PLAYING

What seems most important to you in playing? What do you concentrate on, either in a single stroke or in a whole game? Mrs. Vare and Mr. Turnesa give their views.

By MRS. EDWIN H. VARE, JR.

USGA WOMEN'S AMATEUR CHAMPION
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MEMBER OF USGA CURTIS CUP TEAM
1932-36-38-48, CAPTAIN 1934-36-48

TO be able to concentrate fully on the game in progress and to lay aside every other consideration is to me the most important factor in good golf.

During a round of golf it is not only necessary to have your mind occupied with each stroke as it comes along, but between times it is of utmost importance that the problems of the next stroke be analyzed.

A mind that wanders leads to shots that wander.

There are so many factors to consider in making a golf shot that only a great deal of thinking beforehand will reduce the shots themselves to a pre-determined mechanical effort—without effort.

These in-between thoughts revolve around wind and weather conditions, contour of the ground, distance to be covered and selections of clubs as to the best way of hitting the shot, i.e., low into the wind, running, high and such like.

Having reached a decision that seems best under all circumstances, it is then possible to hold the mental picture intact while the stroke is being made.

And with this comes another kind of concentration. At least in my own game, I have to think of swinging back slowly and firmly, keeping my eye on the ball and following through on the line, forcing my weight from the right foot to the left.

This ideal situation is almost like getting inside of a bubble that must not be pricked by any agency from outside. In putting it is essential—a definite decision as to line and distance to be covered has to be made and there can be no hesitation or last-minute changes.

Good golf demands clear thinking and clear thinking commands good golf.

By WILLIAM P. TURNESA

USGA AMATEUR CHAMPION 1938
BRITISH AMATEUR CHAMPION 1947
MEMBER OF USGA WALKER CUP TEAM 1947

I HAVE been asked time and again: "What seems most important to you in playing a round of competitive golf?"

This question, of course, is quite general, since eighteen holes of play is capable of creating many situations and in each one a different matter may seem paramount.

However, I believe the outstanding quality to be "the ability to keep the mind functioning in the positive state."

This is what I like to term as "straight-line concentration between the tee and green." If this can be accomplished, you immediately eliminate the trap on the left, the out-of-bounds on the right and the water hazard in your mind.

These hazards being removed, you are now capable of focusing your mind on the target without fear and, by the same token, without over-taxing the nervous system.

We have witnessed in several of our championships incidents where competitors of unusual skill and talent breeze along in machine-like precision for seventy-one holes without showing the slightest signs of faltering, but for some unknown reason and at the most critical time, when fame and fortune appear to be a certainty, the unbelievable usually takes place.

Why? Because the ability to concentrate on the execution of the drive or the putt is definitely lost. The mind has detoured to the negative side and, as a result, strict caution is employed, bringing back to mind many more hazards than exist.

This is bound to cause nervousness and most likely embarrassment since you are thinking in the negative while trying to accomplish a positive objective.

In other words, the fear of missing is usually the direct cause for failure.