

Control and Balance in the Swing

By ERNEST JONES

AUTHOR OF "SWINGING INTO GOLF"

To do anything well you must have control. Of course, everyone agrees on that; but when you ask what is meant by control and what is it you must have control of, the answers are, to put it mildly, very confusing and contradictory.

What you must have control of is the club itself. One of my very good pupils when asked, "What do you swing the club with?", replied, "With authority," which is the perfect answer. Control means to be in charge, to be in authority, to know what you are doing with what you are using.

The clubhead is what you hit the ball with. It is the implement which you must master. Until you are perfectly clear as to the way it should be used, there will be very little hope of having any definite sense of control. Many golfers seem to have the idea that control means keeping a straight left arm, or cocking the wrists at the right time, transferring the weight properly, and so on. All these things are the *result* of proper control of the club, and not the cause.

The next thing to consider is balance. If you are not properly balanced, you are under a handicap in one form or another. There is a difference between static balance and dynamic balance. Balance at rest is simply an even distribution of weight, and the comfortable feeling of poise or "suspended animation" that results.

I keep pointing out to a pupil that anything that can be overdone is not good. You cannot overdo what is right—you can only reach it, not go beyond. Your hands, being the only possible medium through which you can have control of the club, must be in a perfectly balanced position. The only true balance is when they are brought together, palms facing, and exactly in the

center of the body. Then I place the right hand on top of the left, and bring them into the position where they would be when holding the grip of the club.

Next, I hold the end of the club between my index finger and thumb and let the head of the club hang naturally. This, of course, is straight down, like a pendulum at rest. The club, to be balanced, is midway between the two feet—which is a perfectly balanced position for every shot. If the clubhead is off-center, something must be off balance. It may be a little or it may be a lot, but there is no logical reason to practice knowingly anything that can be overdone.

Balance in Motion

So far, I have been describing positions of balance at rest, or static balance. The next thing is to consider balance in motion. As soon as you start to move the club the right way, everything is set in motion. I invariably ask the pupil to place his hand on a table and to draw a line with his finger around the thumb in the manner of drawing a circle with a pair of compasses, the thumb being the pivotal point. No one has any trouble in doing this. Then I casually say, "Well, that wasn't hard. But tell me quickly what you did with your thumb."

The answer three times out of four is, "Nothing — I kept it perfectly still."

Then I say, "Just try it again," and, of course, the pupil instantly realizes that the thumb has to move: it is impossible to keep it still—it has to act as the pivot.

This is exactly what happens when you swing the clubhead around your body. Holding a club as I would a baseball bat, I swing it fast, horizontally, so that the force carries my body around in a



Ernest Jones sits down to play a stroke in illustrating his contention that, if the player is aware of swinging the clubhead with his hands, all else will follow in natural order—hips, legs and other parts of the body will do their jobs in responsive action, but they should not initiate the swing.

full-circle pivot. The pivot is the result of the swing and not the cause.

If you wanted to make a top, or any other kind of body in motion, maintain a state of balance, you would have to learn to spin it. The faster the motion, the better the balance. Balance in motion is not a position, but a state or condition governed by centrifugal force.

Next, I ask the pupil to hold a club horizontally out in front of him, at arm's length, with the hands apart, roughly about two feet, and get him to swing the club backward and forward, first to the right and then to the left, letting himself give naturally with the motion.

Of course, when these things can be demonstrated, they are much easier to understand.

As the swinging to and fro continues, I ask, "What are you doing—trying to keep your arms out or swinging the club?"

If he says, "Swinging the club," I ask, "Can you swing the club without your

arms going out?" Of course, it becomes obvious that he cannot. So then I point out: "You are using your power to swing, and not putting it into your arms to keep them straight. The pivot is the result of swinging; no conscious effort is needed to make the body pivot."

Last, but not the least important, is to realize that when the club is swung to the right, the left side, knee and foot give naturally with the action; and when swung to the left, the right side, etc., respond naturally to the leftward motion.

After a little practice at this, so that the body pivot is felt as the result, not the cause, of the swinging motion, I then have the pupil hold the club in the regular golfing position. I take care to explain how to hold the club in the hands, primarily with the control in the fingers, realizing that the most important finger is the thumb. When the club is held properly, the space between the tip of the thumb and the

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series of ineffectual efforts to cut his way through to the ball, he suddenly decided to shift his tactics. By this time the sole of the niblick was red-hot and dented badly, but the shaft, of real stout hickory, stood up magnificently.

"Barnes, as one of the favorites for the title, was, of course, bearing up splendidly. He did not say how much he enjoyed the performance, but he never left his observation post.

"As I have said, Willie changed his tactics. Now instead of striving to play toward the green, he chose to chip the ball away from the rock. This he did after the second effort. After a little more hard luck, Willie reached the

green, perspiring; and then, as always when things are not going well, needed three putts. I am not sure whether or not Jim got his 3, but I do know he was thoroughly chilled waiting for his turn to play.

"Now came the real test. Willie tried his best to count his strokes, but since he had been working in the bottom of the ravine for the greater part of 30 minutes, he was not sure how many he had taken. As he was exhausted, he turned to Jim for help.

"'Willie, you took 18 for the hole,' said Barnes.

"'Oh, Jim, that cannot be so,' was Chisholm's reply. 'You must have counted the echoes.'"

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first joint of the index finger forms a V, or triangle, and the apex of the V is on the top center of the shaft when the club rests on the ground. This is true for both hands.

I am definitely in favor of the little finger of the right hand resting on the index finger of the left hand, in what is known as the overlapping grip. The so-called interlocking grip I don't like and never advise, because it robs the left hand of part of the control.

Summing Up

To recapitulate:

1. One categorical imperative: "Hit the ball." No minor absolutes.

2. Only one thing hits the ball: the clubhead.

3. The clubhead must be moved to produce the greatest force coming into contact with the ball — centrifugal force.

4. Only one medium through which power can be transmitted to the clubhead: the hands and fingers.

5. Balance is the result of good swinging.

6. Power is used to produce speed in the clubhead, not wasted by bracing against anything. The straight arm, cocked wrist, pivot, firm left side, head

still, etc., are all results of a true swinging motion.

7. Brevity being the soul of wisdom, as of wit, everything is the result of "Swinging the Clubhead."

This is the last of two articles by Ernest Jones. This material must not be reproduced, in whole or in part, without the consent of the author.

A Caddie's Pay

Rising pay rates for caddies have been made official in Massachusetts. The Commonwealth's minimum wage commission, in establishing new rates for workers in the amusement and recreation field, set minimum fees of \$1.25 a round for experienced caddies and \$1 a round for inexperienced boys.

Four-Ball Event for Juniors

Last year the Myers Park Club, of Charlotte, N. C., instituted a tournament which it calls the "National Junior Four-Ball Championship." It will be renewed soon—June 27 through July 1. The Club's announcement states:

"Again we sponsor this fine event to promote better play, fellowship, sportsmanship, and the general advancement of golf among our champions of the future."

The tournament is open to players who will not have reached their 19th birthday prior to July 1.