

Chipping and Pitching

By CARY MIDDLECOFF
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The golfer who thinks he can play winning golf by spending all his practice-time on the driving range is wrong. Long and true wood and iron shots can be turned into a winning game only by supplementing them with accurate close-up shots that pay off when the ball hits the green and stays there.

Chipping and pitching are known as the stroke savers in golf. The ability to score hits or misses on the cup from off the green will save strokes on the green. And these short pitch and chip shots are often completely overlooked during practice sessions.

While the pitch shot is highly lofted and played to drop dead on the green, the chip is used to pitch and roll the ball up to the pin over ground that is reasonably level.

The chip is played with a comparatively straight-faced iron, preferably a No. 5. Avoid all body movement during the stroke. A chip shot is best executed exclusively through hand and arm motion. Also, there is little break in the wrists, with the line of the clubhead being almost parallel to the ground instead of forming the usual wide arc.

The secrets of a good chip shot are judgment as to where to land the ball on the green and knowledge of how much roll to allow for when the ball moves toward the hole. The shot itself is easily executed. But practice in aiming and allowing for the roll is essential to the mastering of the chip shot.

Pitching, like chipping, is another valuable stroke saver. The pitch shot is used for slightly longer distances than the chip, but especially to clear obstacles of all sorts—trees, water hazards, traps and so forth. A well-lofted club, preferably a pitching niblick although a No. 8 or No. 9 iron will do, is used.

In the stance, the feet are close together, with the ball played off the right foot and the weight resting mainly on



Cary Middlecoff

the left foot. The hands and arms, which do most of the work on this shot, are held close to the body, which is bent at the waist, not crouched over the ball.

Again, the hands and arms do most of the work, while the body remains comparatively unmoved.

The pitch shot is not an easy shot and requires delicate timing and accurate judgment. Thus, the backswing must be smooth and deliberate to avoid upsetting the shot. Hitting the ball is not merely a matter of scooping it up into the air. Rather, the ball should be squeezed against the turf as it is struck.

Of course, the general principles of follow-through, concentration and head down must be observed in pitching and chipping. One of the most prevalent faults in these shots is a lack of confidence which causes the golfer to be psychologically defeated before he starts. Hit the ball—don't baby it or be afraid of making a poor shot—and you will improve your short game.