

Addressing the Ball

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Before you can play golf, you must first have a grip and stance. More important, before you can improve your game, you must have the *proper* grip and stance. To me, the mastering of these two fundamentals is the basis of the entire game.

Two predominant grips have evolved over the years—overlapping and interlocking. A few good golfers use neither, preferring to keep their hands apart. Others use a combination of both. But the great majority of the top golfers use one or the other, perhaps with slight variations.

It is my contention that your hands will determine the type of grip you can best use. The overlapping grip is preferable only if you possess the hands to make it work—that is, big hands. Harry Vardon, the great English player who introduced the overlapping grip, had abnormally large hands. His little finger was longer than the average person's middle finger. I always have been an exponent of the interlocking grip because of my small hands.

In my judgment of the proper grip to use, I consider two essential factors. One is the size of the hands. The other is the proper relation of the hands and clubhead at the top of the swing. Once these two factors have been developed correctly, the player, so far as the physical angle is concerned, has a golfing future. The character of the man's game is built around his hands. His body and all other components respond to the hands.

The most important item in the grip is the position of the left hand. It should be so placed as to have three knuckles in his view. This is important because the left hand is the controlling hand. The right hand provides the power but would

Sarazen's Grip



Note interlocking of right little finger in left forefinger.

be of little use if the left hand did not guide the club to its mark.

Now let's look at the stance. To me, the most important feature of the stance is this: on all long shots, make sure that your right shoulder is back of your left shoulder, with reference to the line of aim. The same applies with reference to your right foot. It must be slightly behind your left foot, along the line of aim.

However, the stance for the most part can be boiled down to this: the length of the club will determine the stance. On long shots, with longer clubs, a closed stance is used and the ball played off the left foot. With medium-length clubs, the ball is played between the feet. And on short shots with the shorter clubs, the ball is played from more of an open stance—right foot slightly ahead of the left—and off the right foot.