

The Mind Controls the Swing

By MISS LOUISE SUGGS

USGA WOMEN'S AMATEUR CHAMPION 1947, BRITISH WOMEN'S CHAMPION 1948,
NOW A PROFESSIONAL GOLFER

The more golf clinics I give, the more I become convinced that, although the average player has a sincere desire to improve his game, he is too anxious to see good results on the scoreboard before he has absorbed the principles of the swing, in mind and muscle, on the practice tee.

"What actually makes your game tick, Louise?" is a common question. The answer I give is that, first, I attempt to understand what I am trying to do. Secondly, I work on the practice tee to coordinate my muscles along this line of understanding, so that I get a feeling in my swing which is more or less natural and free. Finally, I venture on the course, which is my proving ground.

Acquiring an understanding of the principles involved in the golf swing is the most important single factor in building a sound game. It is the mind which puts the muscles into action.

When a player can stand up to a shot and say, "I am going to execute as nearly perfect a swing as I know how, regardless of where the ball goes," he will realize the most marked results from his efforts.

This shift of emphasis from the flight of the ball to the swing entails a workable knowledge of the fundamentals of the swing. I cannot overemphasize the importance of working with a professional at this point. The player whose head is bursting with disconnected pictures of a thousand details is defeated at the start, for one mind cannot send so many different messages to so many parts of the body during an uninterrupted swinging motion.

The second phase, coordinating the muscles with the correct mental picture of the swing, is too often overlooked by Mr. Average Player. He probably does



Miss Louise Suggs

not have all the time in the world to spend at the club, and, after all, his primary interest is in spending as much available time as possible on the course with his friends. I have found, however, that it does me more harm than good to attempt to work out flaws in my swing on the course. It is continual repetition of the correct swing and complete concentration which bring progress, and the practice tee and a bucket of balls comprise the ideal setting for this second phase.

The average player will find that golf will assume a new fascination and satisfaction for him as he develops a curiosity as to what actually makes the swing go 'round.