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Golf

Your Turn for Success

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FOREWORD

BY JOHN W. GEERTSEN, SR.
CLASS "A" PROFESSIONAL, TEACHER OF JOHNNY
MILLER AND TONY LEMA

There is no greater game than golf, but to enjoy it to the fullest, you must know the game. Golf is no harder to learn the right way than it is by trial and error or hit and miss.

The ideal, of course, would be to get started at seven years old, as I started Johnny Miller, with the fundamentals, as described in this book by my son, John Geertsen, Jr. The important thing at any age is to get started properly and learn to understand the game.

Study John and Garth's book carefully, and you will have the solid base necessary to enjoy golf for a lifetime.

BY JOHNNY MILLER
PGA PROFESSIONAL

Ever since I was a small boy, I have had the good fortune to be able to call John Geertsen, Jr., my friend. He has always impressed me in his love of life and devotion to excellence in all that he endeavors to accomplish.

His devotion to teaching the game of golf has resulted in a crystal-clear presentation of swing techniques that are flawless and easy to understand. I am excited about the compiling and writing of this fine book. I know that all who read and study it will get positive results and derive more pleasure from this great game.

BY MIKE REID
PGA PROFESSIONAL

How often, throughout my career, I've heard John Geertsen tell me, "A good golf swing is beautifully simple and simply beautiful." I would expect nothing less than a very simple, yet thorough explanation of the golf swing.

How happy I am to report that this book is indeed a detailed, yet *simple* approach to golf.

This edition also reflects the tireless research and practical application of my friend, Dr. Garth Fisher. His continuing quest for improvement, combined with his love for the game, make him a delightful addition to any foursome.

While skeptics may not believe this, speaking as a fellow who earns his living playing this game, I promise you: *The swing needn't be any more complicated than explained herein!"*

This book will certainly be a valuable and well-worn volume in my golf library.

Keep em in the fairway!

PREFACE

The question might be asked, Why *another* golf book? We might answer that we discovered a key to better play and want to share it with our readers. However, there is no one secret in golf, so that cannot be the answer. We might say that no other golf book presents the fundamentals of golf clearly enough. However, there are many fine golfbooks, and all of the ideas we will present have probably appeared in one or another of them.

The truth is, we wrote *Golf: Your Turn for Success* to present all of the basic information you need to be a successful golfer in one complete package. We wanted to emphasize important principles and connect them with other principles to explain in full what this game is all about. Together, we have many years of successful teaching experience. We wanted to share some of what we have learned about teaching and learning golf.

The more important question might be, Why *any* golf book? That question is easy to answer. Golfers need information about the swing. There simply is not enough time in anyone's life to discover the principles of effective golf by trial and error.

Our goal in this book is to present certain truths about the swing that, if followed, will allow a golfer (or golfer-to-be) to make fast and efficient progress, without all of the detours associated with the trial-and-error method. For instance, if you know the proper hand position at setup, you will not be tempted to try some new hand or body position to correct a bad shot. If you understand the basic positions and feel of a proper swing, you can work on the important factors of turn and motion without feeling a need to change or experiment.

In terms of content and organization, we have gone right to the swing as the first order of business in Part One. Some instructors and some golf books start with putting, work up to the shorter shots (chipping and pitching), and finally get to the full swing. Advocates of this approach feel that a beginning student does better when he/she begins with small, controlled actions and works up to larger, more fluid actions; supposedly, with this approach, a transfer of learning takes place that makes the full swing easier to learn. There is no question that activities such as putting and chipping allow a high initial

success rate because less total body motion is involved. From a psychological standpoint, this may be an advantage of this approach. However, the full swing differs significantly from the short game; motor-learning experts have found little transfer of learning.

Since the full swing is the most important element of the game of golf and sets the stage for playing the game well, we feel it should be emphasized from the start, along with the skills involving less motion. Interestingly, students who take private lessons almost always begin on the driving range with the full swing; the golf professional knows how important the swing is to playing, and the student enjoys striking the ball with a full swing and watching it go. Another reason to present the full swing first in a class situation relates to allowing sufficient time to develop the most difficult skills. For instance, a good volleyball instructor usually starts working on the spike the very first week. Easier skills, such as bumping and passing, are also presented, but the more difficult skill of spiking continues to be practiced as the class progresses. We think that golf should be approached in the same way. If students begin to learn the full swing along with shortgame skills, they will learn the whole game of golf more effectively.

We don't think anyone should begin actually playing golf until he/she has made some progress in the basic skills. But once students show an understanding of the basic skills, they should begin studying Part Two, "Learning to Play." This section introduces the game, explains scoring, and presents the basic rules of golf in an understandable way. Part Two also introduces specialty shots and practice tips to help students become better players. A discussion of equipment is included to broaden the student's understanding of and appreciation for the game. This discussion will also help the student in making his/her selection of the equipment needed to be a proficient golfer.

"Advanced Topics" are presented in Part Three, including a discussion of the mental aspects of golf and some recommendations for preparing for tournament play. Although at the outset this material may be too complex for the average beginning student, we feel that this type of information will be important for anyone who continues to play golf; in fact, sooner or later, this information will be critical to the advancement of the serious golfer. We included this information so that the book would not limit your progress. Use this material when and how you wish, but do not be overly concerned with it until you have mastered the basics of the game.

Part Four contains a series of golf swing exercises that can help you understand and learn the basics. They have been compiled in one section to simplify the basic presentation and keep the text readable. We will refer you

to each exercise at the appropriate spot in the discussion, and you can decide when to use them.

We hope that your experience with our book is positive and that the principles we present will make sense to you. If you follow these principles, you will make good progress. If you understand what really happens in the swing, you will make great progress. We wish you the best in your new experience.

PART ONE

BASIC SKILLS

Some games can be played from the outset without learning a set of basic skills; unfortunately, golf is not one of them. People who have their first exposure to golf as players on a golf course are doomed to failure and will find little enjoyment in the experience.

Part One introduces you to the basic skills of golf: the proper way to address the ball, the full swing, and the principles of the short game. You should understand these skills before going to the course to play.

Note: To avoid confusion, all instructions in this book will apply to right-handed golfers. Left-handed golfers will need to reverse the instructions.

The Setup

Most instructors are aware of the importance of proper setup and emphasize that aspect of the game. However, Dr. Ralph Mann, a biomechanics expert who has studied the golf swing with high-speed photography and computer analysis, contends that a good swing is impossible without a proper setup. In both the pros and amateurs he studied, Mann could trace most swing errors or compensations to mistakes at address (*Golf Digest*, July 1986).

Because of the importance of a proper setup position to a good swing, we will present the basics in some detail. Please don't get discouraged trying to learn this information. It is not as exciting as hitting the ball, but time spent on proper setup will pay rich dividends when you begin learning the swing.