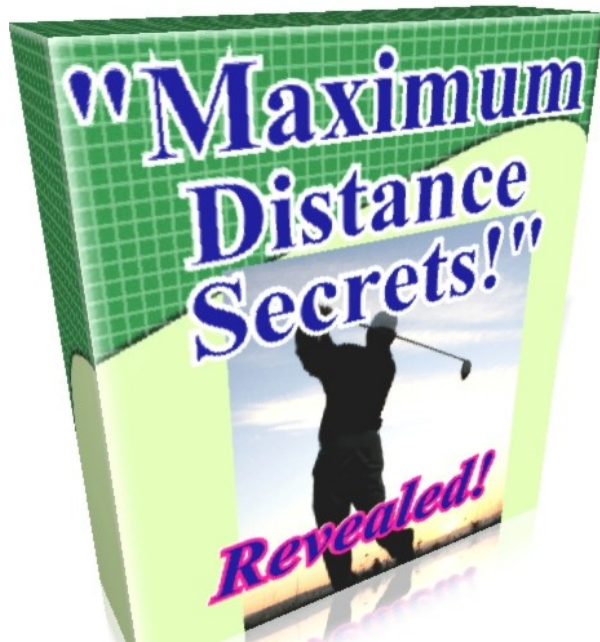


Strictly Off The Record
"Beyond Basic Strategies!"
Mini-Report



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I. Introduction- Live Strategy

Watching a pro golf tournament live is a perfect way to spend a few days of entertainment with fellow avid golfers. So, if you ever have the opportunity to watch a professional golf tournament....take it!

These tournaments include the PGA, LPGA, & the Senior Tours.

Future Tours and the *Buy.com Tours* also schedule competitions throughout the country. There are also golf tournaments' regional tours, also called "*mini-tours.*"

If you can't afford to get to any of the above mentioned tournaments, then you can check out the games on television too. There's always something on.

Not only do the major sports channels like ESPN carry professional tournaments, but you can also subscribe to any number of 24-hour golf channels that air today.

As I've stated in other of my minireports, it's not always easy or practical to emulate the pros at, but watching can sure be good entertainment!

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II. Your Clubs

A. Measuring

Do you know how each of your clubs will perform during ideal conditions (distance wise)? In the past, golfers would just go by *feel* when choosing a club for their shots....

But, by now, you probably realize just how effective it is to *know your clubs*, so to speak. You need to know them so that you can hit your ball as close to the intended target as possible.

If you do not have a clear idea of approximately how far you will hit the ball with each of your clubs, you will repeatedly hit shots that are either too far or too short. And, your scorecard will show it...

Do yourself a favor and take the time to remove the guesswork. Not only will your score improve, but your accuracy & concentration levels will increase as well.

Even though specific clubs are designed for long shots & others for short ones, the distance that different players can hit with the very same club can vary tremendously.

This is why so many beginner golfers do not get the results that they want from a club that is *supposed* to hit the ball a certain distance. It varies by player.

The best way to learn what you can accomplish with each specific

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club is to find a large field that is big enough to handle the distance of your longest drive. Make sure that it isn't too windy & make sure that the field is empty (for obvious safety reasons).

In order to measure the distance correctly, you need to measure it in yards. First, take out a yardstick & lay it on the ground. Take one step forward & see how many yards (or more likely fraction of A yard) you've step covers.

Now, take out each club & hit 7 to 10 shots with every one. After each shot, measure the distance by pacing off how far each ball traveled.

All you have to do now is convert the distance of each ball from your paces to yards to learn exactly how many yards each one of your clubs will likely hit the ball during a game.

Make sure you record the average distance that each club hits it for. Average is best because you never know what could happen. But, long term, things ALL tend toward averages.

B. Room For Error

A real golf game will not have the same ideal conditions that you used during your tests. You'll never be able to make contact with the ball perfectly square & hit the sweet spot every time.

But, since you recorded an *average* above, you'll have a pretty good idea of a general range of where the ball will land. And if you are

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playing against regular players, it's doubtful they've EVER done the exercise in **A.** above.

Now that you have an idea of how far each of your clubs will cause the ball to go, your strategic planning abilities should improve tremendously.

A lot of the guesswork is now taken out of your shots. You now have knowledge of your capabilities in terms of how far you can hit the ball with whatever club you should choose to use.

III. Facing Difficult Shots

A. About Tough Shots

One of the key aspects to becoming a better player & producing targeted shots on the course is developing a variety of shots from different angles & from a multitude of disaster areas.

Unexpected circumstances are bound to happen on the course & being able to adapt to them so that you can make a clean shot is the hallmark of a good golf player.

For example, let's say that you need to hit your tee shot to within 125 yards of the green. But, there is an unavoidably low hanging tree branch that may deflect your shot. If not for the tree, you would normally use the 7-iron here.

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So, what should *you* do in this situation?

A skilled golfer would choose to hit the ball at the same distance, just with far less height. This way the ball should pass safely underneath the tree branch.

Choosing the right club for this shot is what counts.

Instead of using a 7-iron, it might be best to use a 5-iron. You could lower your grip about 2 inches & move the ball towards the right of your stance by approximately 1 inch.

B. The Result

Gripping lower on the 5-iron club should reduce the distance that the ball travels. And by playing the ball to the back of your stance, a lower shot will make the ball pass underneath the tree branch. If done right, the shot should travel very close to the 125 yards needed.

In addition, the ball will take a lower travel profile, thus rolling more at the end.

C. Many Paths To The Same End

The above example is just one way to skin a cat. Many players in the same situation may try something else & use a different club to get the ball to the same place. It all boils down to adaptability on the course by knowing your clubs well.

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Take some time to practice. Put your ball into sticky situations and try to work your way out of them. Try using a 4-iron & use a $\frac{3}{4}$ th swing to get your ball out of a troubled spot.

Try the shot with your 3-wood or lower. Use the 8-iron to hit the ball the same distance that you would your pitching wedge.

All of these practice swings can come in handy. By developing the skill of adapting to the game, you will be able to make a great shot out of any unfortunate situation.

IV. Mental Game

The fundamentals of golf are very different than many other sports.

Take baseball for example.

When you get up to bat to swing, you need to adjust to the pitch based upon on how it's thrown at you. In other words, *the game is built around your reaction towards what someone else is doing*. You don't make your move until the pitcher throws the ball.

In golf, however, you are in control. You are in charge of making every move. The ball just sits there, waiting for you to take a shot.

You are responsible for every play that happens, disregarding natural elements of course. You cannot blame a bad play on a pitch, another teammate (unless on a team), or anything else. It's kind of a solo

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endeavor.

This is what makes golf so difficult, challenging, & yet fun to play.

And on top of that, you have people watching you, all in complete silence.

Talk about the need for focus!

A. Positive Mindset

Golf requires that you focus & think about every shot you try.

Golf requires so much attention to what you are doing that any type of negative thought or worry can have a dramatic effect on the outcome of your game.

Doubt can easily seep into your mind, especially if you are a beginner. Once this happens, your body may firm up, you may get nervous & jittery, & the next thing you know, your ball has landed in the rough.

Consider it to be the equivalent of stage fright. Yes, golf can be this difficult, if you let it.

How can you prevent negative thoughts & feelings from arising on the course? The answer is extremely simple, yet it may be difficult to comprehend at first.

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All you have to do is *take action*. Take action faster than your mind can start thinking about bad swings. That's the thing about golf – you can literally *think* your way into a slump. But quick action can help get you out it!

Stick with the basics and focus on simple repetitive movements.

Keep your body loose & as you prepare for your shot, shift the weight of your body from foot to foot: back & forth.

Wiggle your club a bit & loosen up. Have fun & stop worrying about negative consequences.

Just learning how to play a stress-free game may be the hardest lesson you'll learn in golf...

But wait!

There's A LOT MORE than was presented here!

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