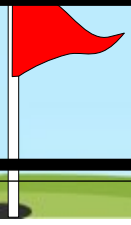


PLAYING THROUGH



“Sorry Chuck Berry, We Are NOT Not Doing the TWIST” A Lesson In Putting

Putting strokes are typically considered a very individual thing in golf; as long as they work. Unlike the full swing where you see a lot of cookie cutter instruction, Putting seems to carry an ‘anything goes’ mentality for better or for worse. Even at our club, I can count dozens upon dozens of different styles of putting. That is fine, but in my opinion there are some fundamentals that have to be met.



The main fundamental I want to address in this session is stability of the putter through the stroke and the ball. Sorry Chuck, this is where I part from you on the TWIST. ‘Come on Baby, let’s get rid of the TWIST!’ To get rid of the twist, there are two main aspects we need to consider (and likely fix).

First is the position of your arms, and particularly your forearms. Second, and equally if not more important is your GRIP.

As with anything related to stability, the closer you stay to the core of the motion, the stronger your position. For example, if you extend your arms far from your body in a straight line

method (arms are straight from shoulder to wrist) and attempt to swing the putter, you’ll notice that the arms are working independently, the putter feels heavier, and keeping the putter on the path you desire requires a lot of intentional focus. This usually results in the putter either going inside or outside the path you desire, and the putter-head itself will have a mind of its own. At impact, the putter is likely to TWIST at impact because YOU are not in control. To combat this, it is best to have your upper arms (above the elbows) directly under your shoulders in a straight line perpendicular to the ground. From there, the forearms should be relaxed and have a slight angle away from your upper arms and elbows.

The second part of this pertains to the grip, which also correlates to your forearms. The putting GRIP SHOULD BE DIFFERENT than your full swing grip. The full swing grip is placed more in the fingers to allow for speed, whip, and power through the shot. That is NOT what we are looking for when we are putting. The grip of the club in the putting stroke should dissect the middle of the PALM in your lead hand. If done properly, the butt of the club should point up your forearm line, or very close to it. IF THE BUTT OF THE CLUB IS POINTING UNDER YOUR FOREARM, YOU ARE SET UP TO DO THE “TWIST”! When the butt of the club points under your forearm line, the club and resultantly, the clubhead have to TWIST during the stroke, and it only amplifies when you strike the ball. The trail hand grip can vary, as you see the pros using a variety of grips for that like the saw, or claw grips. It is still very IMPORTANT that your trail forearm align with the angle of the shaft at address, and the same with your lead arm.

There are other fundamentals like alignment, ball position, posture, and length of backswing to through-swing, but I believe if you fix these two things first, it will aid you in the others. If I have the opportunity for another article, I’ll address those others. In the meantime, employ these two fundamentals and you will notice that the club feels like the Titanic through the stroke, not a jet ski.

- CHRISTIAN SMITH

