



Managing Your Game “ON COURSE”

From your position on the tee box to wind compensation and proper aim, a few simple techniques on the first shot of every hole might make the difference between shooting par and experiencing big-time trouble.

Article by Nancy Quarcelino

I have always stated that the most important shot on every hole is the shot from the tee. This sets the tone for the entire hole. If you put yourself into trouble right from the start, you may never recover and prevent yourself from shooting par.

Try these simple techniques to help you hit your first shot where you want, in the middle of the fairway or close to the pin.

► Your first order of business is teeing the ball in the proper position on the tee box. If you tend to hit your ball to the right, you will want to tee up on the right side of the tee box and aim to the open fairway to the left. If you hit the ball to the left, tee up on the left side of the tee box and aim to the open fairway to the right. By doing this, you give yourself the widest angle to hit your target.

► The same goes if you have trouble on the left or right side of the fairway. The rule of thumb is to tee up on the same side as your trouble. Again, by aiming away from the trouble, this gives you the widest angle to hit your target.

► Now look to your green. If you can see the pin and it is located on the right side of the green, your best approach shot will be from the left side of the fairway. You should tee up on the right side of the tee box to aim to the left side of the fairway. The opposite applies if the pin is on the left side of the green. Your best approach to the pin is from the right side of the fairway, so you should tee up on the left side of the tee box.

► Always try and find a flat lie on the tee box. All ground settles and even though the tee box should be level, sometimes it is not. Your feet need to be level with the golf ball when you tee up—otherwise you could miss-hit your shot. You have a two-club length option in back of the tee markers in which you can tee up your shot.

Sometimes it is best to step back in order to pick a level lie.

► Before you set the tee in the ground, find an intermediate target within 18 inches in front of your ball to line the ball. This could be a divot, broken tee or discolored piece of grass. Then line your ball directly in back of that target. Now point your ball using the name or a line already on the ball directly to that target.

► Check the elevation of your tee box and your landing area. Are they level? If the tee box is higher than the landing area, you may need to take a shorter club as the ball will fly farther in the air to the lower landing area. If the landing area is elevated higher than the tee box, you will need to take a longer club to reach that elevated landing area. This becomes very critical when you are on a par 3 using a shorter club.

► If your landing area is hilly, you will want to hit your ball to the flattest part of the hill. You will want to know what distance that is to choose your club properly. Many times we hit the ball too far without any regard to the position of our next shot.

► Check the position of the tee markers. The scorecard may not always be accurate, especially on par 3s as the tee makers are generally moved daily. Make certain you walk off the distance from a permanent tee marker to your tee box.

► When waiting to tee off, look at adjacent golf holes you will be playing. You will be able to see pin placements on the green that you may not be able to see from the tee or the fairway. Mark those pin placements on your scorecard so when you arrive to that hole, you will remember where the pin is as you approach the green.

► Choosing the proper club on par three holes is critical if you plan on reaching the green. After you have determined the distance to your target and the elevation changes, look to the sky to help make your final club decision. Wind will play havoc with your ball and sometimes the flag is not moving with the wind. Look to the top of the trees to see if the trees are moving because of the wind and then make the necessary adjustment.

► Last but not least, never aim yourself into trouble. Just because you hook the ball from right to left on occasion, sometimes you can hit the ball straight. If you aim into trees hoping you will draw the ball you may hit the ball straight and land in the trees. Always aim to the right or left sides of the fairway so even if you curve the ball too much it will still be in the fairway.

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For information about instruction call the Nancy Quarcelino School of Golf at 615-778-8823 or go to www.qsog.com.

