Judging Distance When Chipping & Pitching

There is a significant differ—To achieve the best results from chipping, ence between chipping have less loft and will produce more roll and pitching, but when ask my students what they think the difference is, always get a variety of answers. Chipping can be When you see tour players around the edge defined as a short, running shot played from a position where your ball has landed around the edge of the green, while pitching is a higher, softer landing shot when your ball is played distance when you chip and pitch? If there farther away from the green. Pitching is also less than a full swing shot. Both chip and pitch shots are very important in your game and require you to think before you make your club selection. These shots can actually account for 18-20% of your total score.

consider using a 7 or 8 iron. These clubs once the ball lands on the green. You can use your pitching, gap, sand or lob wedge when you are pitching the ball onto the green as these clubs provide the most loft and the ball will roll less once it hits the

of the green and in short, fairway grass, you may see them bump the ball just on the green with an 8 iron and let the ball roll to the pin. If those same players are in the rough or higher grass around the edge of the green, you may see them take a lofted wedge and play that shot like a bunker with more of a full, very wristy swing. One of the most important issues of these shots is distance. How do you determine was an easy answer to this, we would all be shooting lower scores. But, there is a way you can develop a feel for distance, then the rest is up to you. You must practice, practice, and practice.

Judging Distance With Feel

If you are an athlete and grew up playing sports, this method may work best for you.

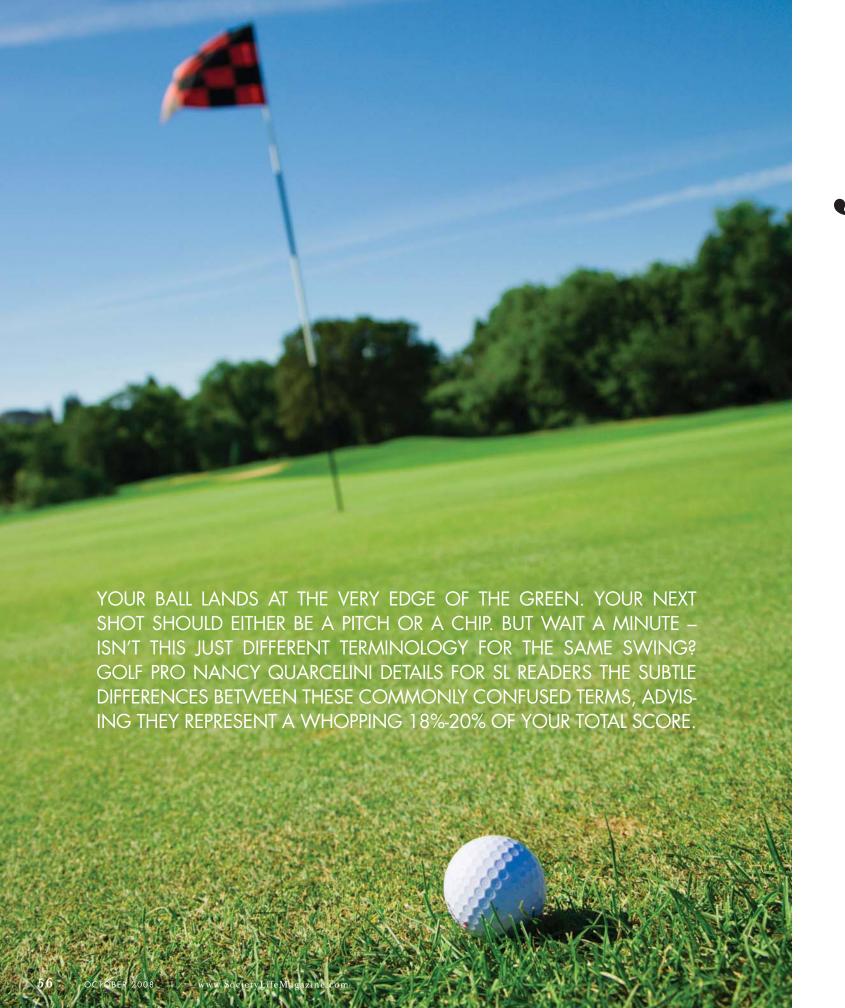
When you began to develop hand/eye coordination at a young age, you developed a great feel for throwing balls and swinging bats. Now, when you look at a target you can get it close pretty easily.

So if you know what your clubs are supposed to do when you hit a golf shot, all you have to do is pick a target on the green and strike the ball to that target. The club will then do the work by allowing the ball to fly to your target. It sounds easy enough, but you must have developed this coordination at a young age. You can develop it now, but you will still have to practice for the feel of the shot.

Judging Distance With the Same Club

You can use one club, for example, your sand wedge around the green. When you place the ball position in your stance off





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your back foot, you will hit the ball lower with more roll. As you move the ball position to the middle of your stance, the ball will fly higher and roll less. If you were to play the ball forward in your stance, and open your club face, you will hit the ball very high with very little spin. This is a very effective way to develop distance control around the green.

Judging Distance with the Same Stroke And Different Clubs

If you can develop the same back swing and follow through, you can easily change clubs in order to change distance. For instance, I carry 4 wedges in my golf bag. I have a pitching wedge, gap wedge, sand wedge and lob wedge. Each wedge has a 4 degree gap difference, providing me with different distances when I hit each club. So if I swing the same with every club, I will get different distances.

I use a clock face and the alphabet to help you understand this method of learning distances with your short clubs.

A "V to V Stroke" is what I refer to as a chipping stroke. To execute this shot, use no wrist action and keep the height of the stroke under your hips. You can see the V is formed with the arms and hands holding the club.

If you visualize your body as a clock face, you see your feet are at 6:00 while your head is at 12:00. Your lead arm will help you determine the distance for each club. One distance for your V to V shot is moving your arms from 7:00 to 5:00. Or, you can hit each club a different distance if you move your lead arm from 8:00 to 4:00. With just these two V to V shots and if you have 4 wedges, you will have 8 different distances for your short game.

Now let's see what happens if you form an L with your lead arm and club on the back swing. Now your lead arm is at 9:00 on the clock face. By following through to a V position and changing clubs, you will have 4 more distances that will fill in the gaps for your short game.

So when it comes to the short game, only you will know which distance style suits your game. Good luck with your practice, which will hopefully bring more birdies and pars!

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