



*National PGA  
Teacher of the  
Year 2001*



*Golf Digest  
America's 50 Greatest Teachers*



**Craig Shankland**

**2013 North Florida PGA Hall of Fame  
2014 Met Section PGA Hall of Fame**



# *June 2015 Newsletter*

## **Comment**

### **Course manners**

There was a very good article in the June Golf Digest about cell phone use on and around the golf course, "Do me a favor and shut the darned thing off." The one thing missing was, it is all about you; what about your playing partners? iPhone users on the course should realize a good golfing experience is also about the people you are playing with. Their playing and golfing experience can be seriously affected by your inconsiderate manners. They may not say anything but they may be mad as hell. They too should be considered. Put your phone on vibrate, leave it in your golf bag, and check messages at the half way house. "Immerse" yourself for 4 hours in the wonderful world of golf; not your cell phone. Think of others!

Great wins for Ricky with a 5 under for the last four holes at TPC and Rory looks like the future of golf is safely in the hands of the fearless youth. Both players are not huge guys by any means but they both hit the ball over the 300 yard mark. You don't have to be 6'8" to hit the ball far. You do have to have arm acceleration. Both Ricky and Rory generate serious arm speed into impact with no wasted energy. Note there is no loss of balance or the appearance of violence. The swing balances them. I think if Ricky putts as well as Rory, he will win more times. Rory is a "master" putter and a great green reader. He hits all his putts at a wonderful pace, the pace you need to make it, and a simple stroke, which are three good things to have.

### **What is having fun at golf?**

Playing with great people, playing on a course you love, hitting solid shots, hitting drives past your playing partners, having the ball go where you aim, having a consistent ball flight pattern, spinning your wedge with backspin, having a simple swing, playing with a clear mind, making some long putts, never three putting and finally, wanting to go back out and do it all again is having fun at golf!

## **Challenged always**

Golf is a total challenge from start to finish, are you ready to face it? Keep an open mind and be ready for anything golf throws at you. You just never know in golf. Ricky Fowler was not on the radar until the last six holes, when birdies and an eagle won him the Players Championship in a memorable playoff.

### **Pressure management**

*It's not the event that causes our reactions but how we interpret the event, which makes us confident or anxious. Crisis or challenge!*

### **Pressure starts with the handle**

How much effort does it take to pick up and hold a 14 ounce club? When you pull the club from the bag and address the ball, the first thing you hold is the handle. Where you hold provides several choices: at the very top, an inch down, in the middle of the handle, or at the very bottom even onto the shaft with wedges. What grip pressure you hold the handle in the fingers is a big issue. The tighter you hold the club, the less freedom of movement you will have. Grip pressure should be enough to stop the club from spinning in your hands during contact with the ball.

*Loose to tight, is better than tight to tighter.*

Which hand should have the most pressure? Moe Norman said, "I draw blood with my left hand." Greg Norman said, "If I held your neck I would choke you to death." Some say grip the handle like a bird while some say like a tube of tooth paste. The best way is to feel "equal" finger pressure. A comfortable pressure without "grimace" or facial tensioning! This should be done before you swing.

### **Closer to the ball for accuracy**

If you find your shot dispersion getting wild, stand closer to the ball. To keep a putter on the line longer, stand as close to the

putter and the ball as possible, like the handle on chest does. The same closer to the ball set up would apply to the full swing. The closer you stand to the ball the more the arms are closer to you, working more as a "connected" unit. Much like the spinning skaters do at the performance end, bringing their arms in tight to the body. You should feel like the upper part of your arm from the elbow to shoulder is nudged lightly against the chest. This will control a consistent distance from the ball and will also control the arm "fly away" and "chicken wing" finish. The big gain here is the direction of shot patterns. Standing in closer to the ball with the arms closer to the body will promote a straighter ball flight. It may take some getting used to but allow time to get comfortable. It is a better way to "sync" the arms and body. When the arms are too far away and "over reach" they get too independent.

Result : You may have the best iron shots you have ever heard!

Chuck Cook, a friend and top teacher, tells the story of Payne Stewart winning the US Open at Pinehurst when he told his coach, Chuck, that he was coming over the top on some shots in the first three rounds, which was pulling the ball left. So going into the last round, Chuck told him to stand closer to the ball, because he knew Payne could not come over the top when he stood closer and go to the right if anything, but not left. Stewart won the Open.

### ***For God's sake hit the darned thing!***

Take less time over the ball and you will see more consistent results, why? It will make your attempt at hitting the ball more "instinctive". The best time to think is in your rehearsal swing. Get organized then go! What I see are "Archeologists". They look like they are studying something down there. Aim the club-face, aim yourself, and then swing for God's sake. "Golf is not a game of perfection," stated Bob Rotella. Stop trying to be perfect because golf is a game of misses, lessen them if you can!

### ***FYI***

Driving distance Men's Tour average - 287.5

Clubhead speed Men's Tour average - 113.4

### ***Does air affect the distance?***

Yes. For example, if you play at the coast, the ball flies less distance due to temperature and humidity; if you play in the desert, the ball will fly farther in dry air; if you play a mile high and above, the ball travels even farther (sometimes up to 15 percent farther). In Florida we are faced with heavy humidity and when people come here to play they lose some distance because of the dense heavy air. You just have to adjust your club selection.

### ***Blistering shots***

When you start the frantic golf season and pound buckets of balls, be ready for blisters and calluses. There is a great product called "gauze tape" that you can get on line. It sticks to itself, not to you. Gauze tape withstands rigorous ball hitting and protects the fingers from blistering. Before practice or play, wrap gauze tape around the key fingers that take the brunt of re-gripping and hitting and you will not suffer. Many tour players use it as a wrap on putter grips and to keep fingers from blistering from a hard days practice and golf.

### ***Ball below your feet***

Restrictive with a higher degree of difficulty

To hit this shot well you have to have three things; all of which you do before you swing:

1. Hold the handle at the very top of the club you are using. This allows the club to reach the ball more easily as the ball is farther away from you;
2. Bend from the waist a little more than you normally would. This will allow you to get to the ball, as standing up or getting taller before impact is a no-no; and
3. "Spongy" legs that remain flexed and bent through impact to allow the body and the clubhead to get at and under the ball. You can stand on your head after that if you want to!

Shot patterns from this situation will tend to be with a slight ball movement to the right or fade coming from a more upright swing, since you are bent over and more weight is toward the toes from gravity of the slope. Always allow for a fade. The worst scenario you will hit it dead straight, which often happens.

Stay lower longer, until the ball has left the spot it was sitting on.

***"Chance favors the prepared mind."***

### ***Chipping***

The most preferred club for chipping, yes chipping, is the sand wedge. This club with the ball played nearer the right foot for more roll, has a controlled roll out, a little check up on landing then a release of the ball to run, but under control. If you use a putting technique for your chips, an 8 or 9 iron is a good choice. The faster the green surface that you are chipping onto, favor the sand wedge.

### ***Handle visuals***

People like visual things, so imagine when you are putting well, the top of the handle remains equal to the bottom. This way the bottom part of the handle will not pass the top. If it does, it is called "flipping". Good iron shots come from the ability to lead the forward swing with the top part of the handle, butt end facing down the fairway at waist high, and at impact the top gets to the ball first, the bottom of the handle catches up to the top and equalizes. How can you miss?!

How can you control the club head if you don't know how to control the handle?!

## ***Moe's Corner***

Moe always said, "No one should copy my swing because you can't be me. How can you be me? You don't know what I think, what I see, or how I see things. If you did copy me, the guys in the white suits would come and take you away!"

Moe was a math whiz. Moe told me, "When I was in school I knew more than the teacher. When he asked a question about a math problem I knew the answer before he finished the question. He put me the corner. Can you imagine?? He put me in the corner for knowing the answer!"