

**WHICH HOLES  
MAKE OR BREAK  
YOUR ROUNDS?**

**BY TRENT WEARNER**  
with Matthew Rudy

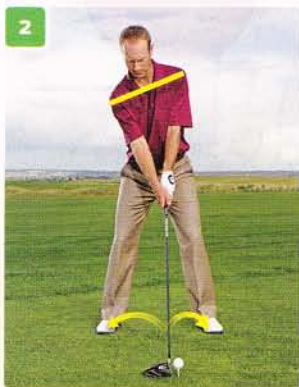
**A**LL PLAYERS HAVE certain types of holes that tend to ruin their scores. These holes vary based on your skill level, but they all expose swing faults or strategy errors. So your practice should include range sessions and rounds focusing on course management.

For the 100-shooter, lower scores come from playing the par 5s better. You need to make consistent contact and stay away from big numbers.

The 90s-shooter can gain the most ground by playing the par 4s better—mainly from improving shots into the green.

The player trying to get into the 70s needs a better way to play long par 3s and to pick the right time to be aggressive.

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**SETUP/SWING**

**DON'T DRIVE YOURSELF NUTS**

**S**TRINGING TOGETHER multiple shots on a par 5 is something that gives the average 100-shooter fits. To get into position to hit a few good shots in a row, you need to start with the driver.

Stand with your feet together and the ball in line with your left instep (1). Side-step with your left foot so the ball is a few inches inside your heel, then sidestep with your right foot and let your shoulders and head tilt away from the target (2).

By getting into a proper stance, with your feet just wider than your shoulders, and tilting behind the ball, you're in position to hit a solid drive.

**STATFACTS**

Average 100-shooters hit less than three greens a round and make only two saves on more than a dozen short-game opportunities. The quickest fix: a better short game.

—PETER SANDERS / shotbyshot.com

**PRACTICE DRILL**

**IMAGINE HITTING UP**

**O**NCE YOU'RE IN A good setup position, it's time to visualize a better route to the ball.

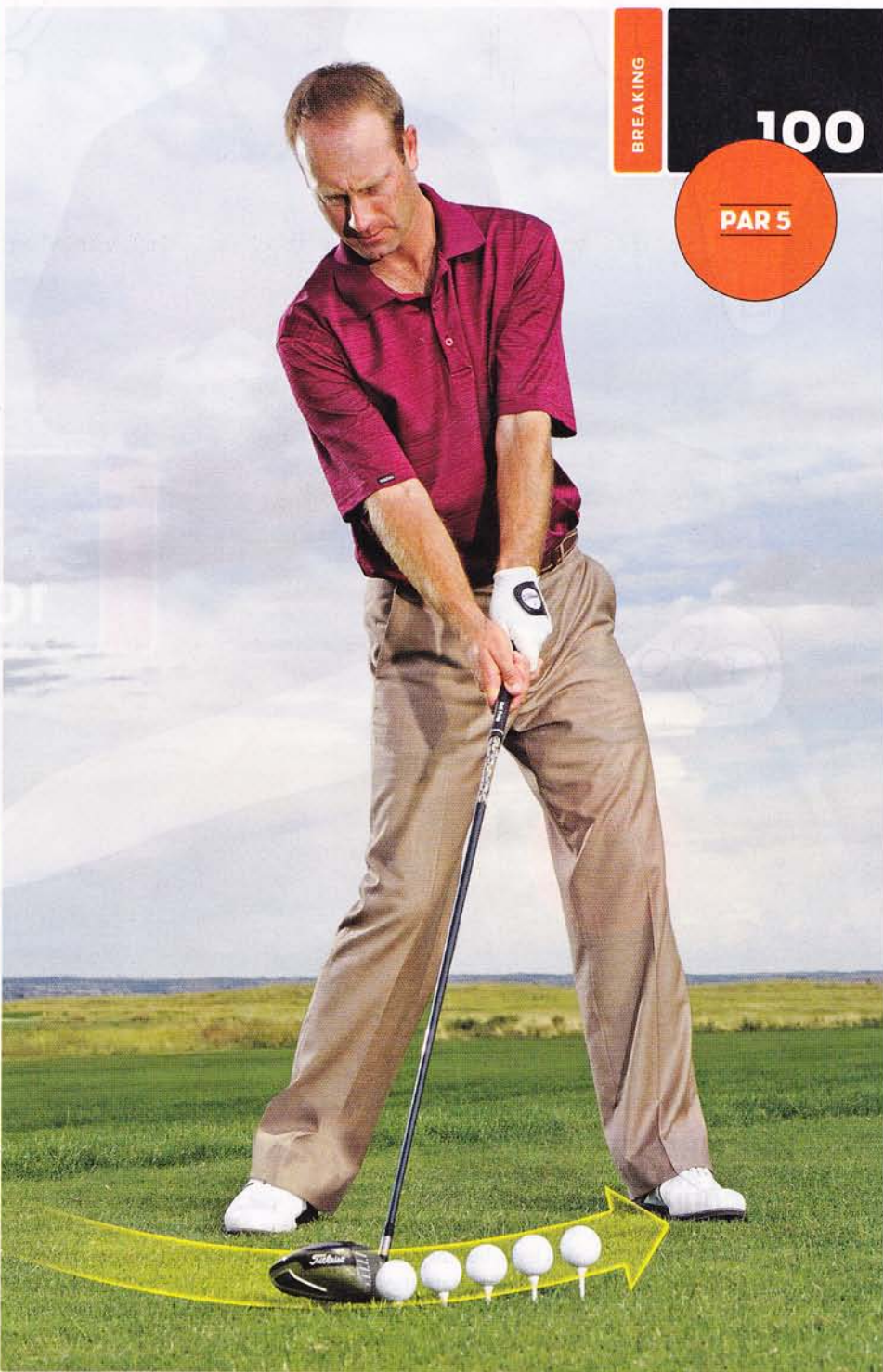
Many players struggle with an out-to-in swing and end

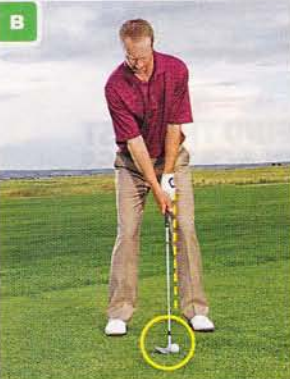
up chopping down on the ball through impact. One way to get into a better impact position is to visualize a set of balls on increasingly taller tees as they get to the actual ball you're hitting. As you can see below, the bottom of the swing arc with a driver is

BREAKING

100

PAR 5





**▲ SETUP/SWING**  
**TEST YOUR TRAJECTORY**

**B**EING ABLE TO VARY the height of your short approach shots gives you more flexibility when it comes to knocking it close. You can make the wind less of a factor or get to a back pin. To adjust trajectory, the swing stays the same; only the setup changes.

To hit a low shot, move the ball two inches back of center, stand closer to the ball for a more upright shaft angle and turn your right toe inward to lean your body and the club toward the target (A). For a high shot, move the ball two inches forward of center, open the clubface and turn your right toe outward slightly to help set your head a few inches behind the ball (B).

**STATFACTS**

On approaches within 50 yards, 90-shooters miss the green more often than they get within five feet (19 percent versus 16 percent). Avoid risks, and hit the ball safely on.

—PETER SANDERS

**ON COURSE**  
**PLAY BEST AND WORST**

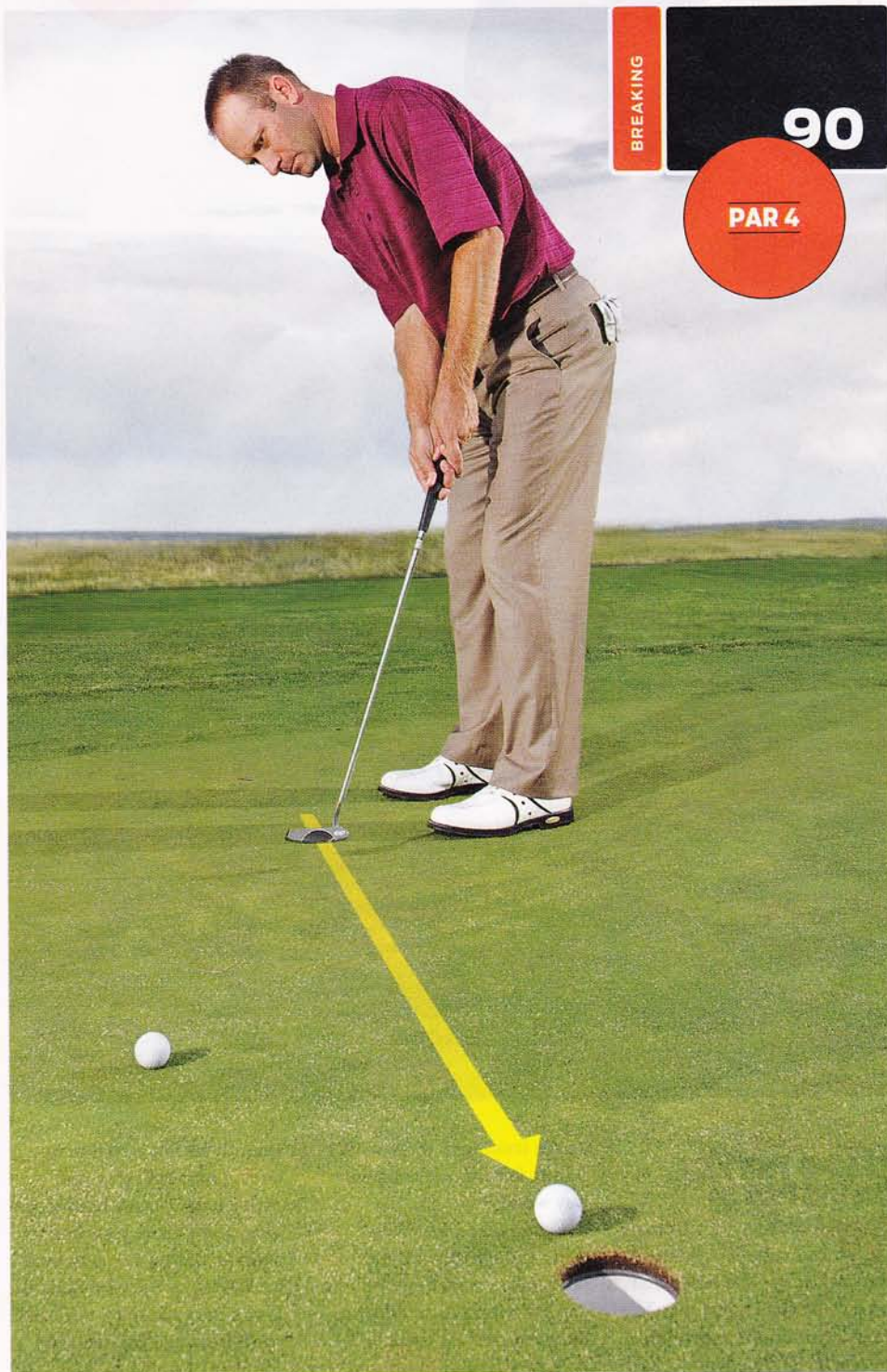
**I**F YOU MISS EVERY GREEN in regulation, chip or pitch your ball on and then two-putt, you still shoot 90 on a par-72 course. This means if you can get up and down just

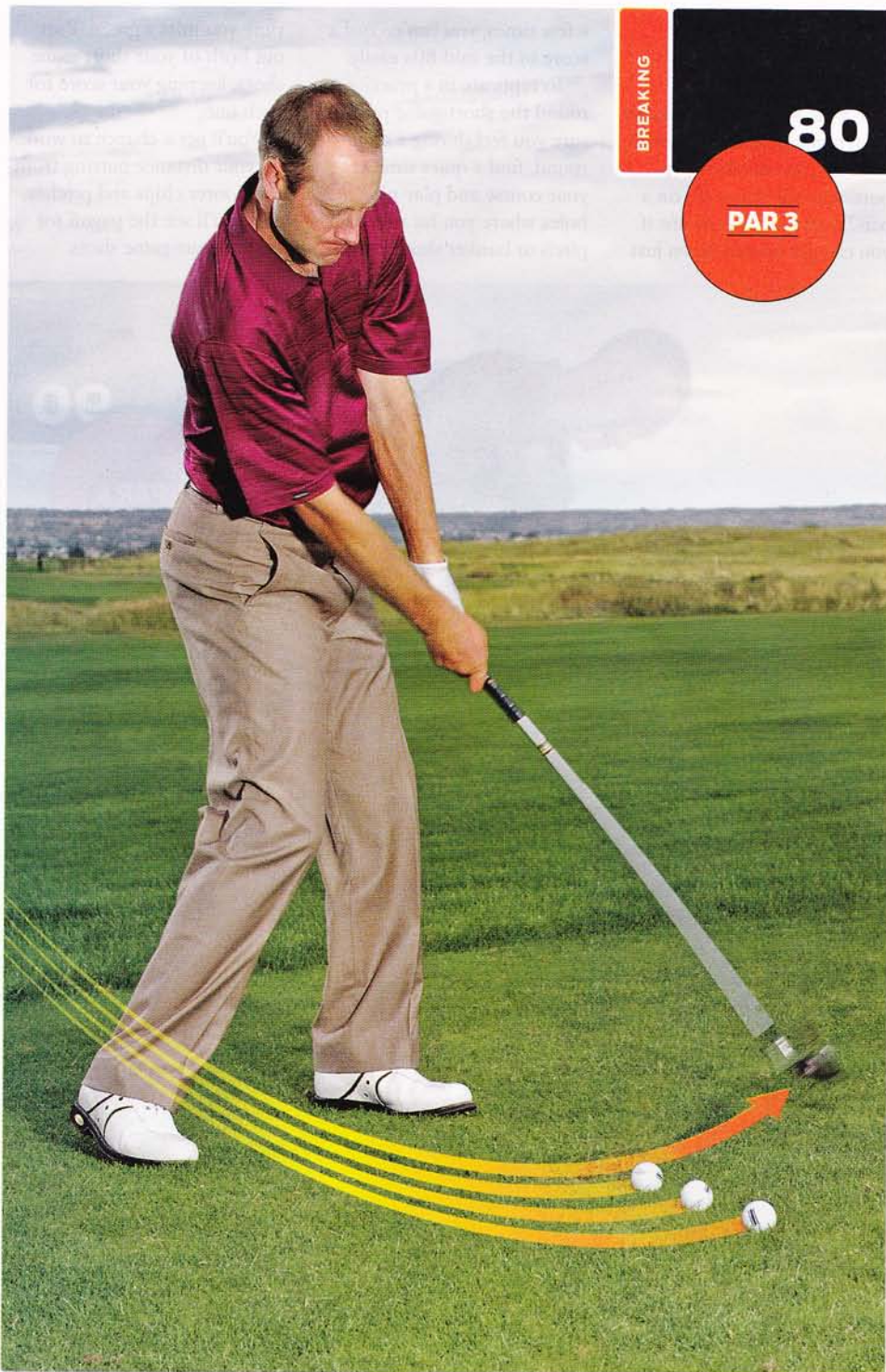
a few times, you can record a score in the mid-80s easily.

To replicate in a practice round the short-game pressure you feel during a real round, find a quiet time at your course and play nine holes where you hit two chip, pitch or bunker shots every

time you miss a green. Putt out both of your short-game shots, keeping your score for each one.

You'll get a chance to work on your distance putting from the poorer chips and pitches, and you'll see the payoff for better short-game shots.





BREAKING

80

PAR 3



ON COURSE

FIND THE BEST PLACE TO MISS

**A** LONG PAR 3 FORCES you to understand that you won't be as accurate with a hybrid as you would be with a 7-iron. Look at the area around the green, and figure out the best place to be if you don't make it to your target on the green.

One way to recognize the most forgiving target area is to play the flagstick-drawback game. If your shot ends up within 20 feet of the hole, finish out. But if you're outside that distance, walk off the green at the nearest edge, and drop a ball one flagstick-length off the fringe. Play it in from there—even if you're in bad rough or a bunker. You'll learn to measure risk, and take bogeys off your card.

STATFACTS

Players who shoot in the low 80s average two double bogeys or worse for every birdie they make. Rather than focus on creating birdie opportunities, try to eliminate big numbers.

—PETER SANDERS

PRACTICE DRILL  
TEMPO THE KEY ON BIG PAR 3s

**W**HEN YOU'RE TRYING to break 80—from the back tees—the holes that used to be the easiest, par 3s, are now often the most difficult. They're usually long, and

you're coming at them with a 3-iron, hybrid or even a fairway wood.

First, make sure you're using enough club so you don't take yourself out of your natural tempo in an effort to muscle a shot up there.

A great drill to reinforce

smooth tempo is to practice hitting four balls in a row with a long iron without stopping, going from your finish position of one swing to your backswing of the next (*above*). If you start swinging too hard, you'll lose your balance, and you won't be able to do it.



SNAP IT



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