

Pre-Shot Routine

by Trent Wearer

A large part of our success as golfers has to do with what we do before we even hit the golf ball. In the weeks before, these articles have given you a solid foundation for the fundamentals to your setup. We have discussed the grip, posture, and ball position. This week we will discuss one more pre-swing fundamental ... *the pre-shot routine*. There are several distinct reasons for having a routine.

A routine allows for a consistent physical and mental pattern to occur. This sets the player at ease internally which promotes a clear focus and intention. A routine of any type is comforting by nature and while no two are alike, it can help you deal with any self-perceived pressure you may feel on the golf course.

Do you ever wonder what the professional golfers are thinking and doing as they stand next to their caddy planning a shot? They are going over all of the factors that go into choosing an appropriate club. The pros know if they properly evaluate the following preparatory items, their chances of hitting a more solid and accurate shot are increased, while a poorly hit golf shot will still have a great chance of ending up in an acceptable location. These are items that need to be evaluated in order to choose your target and club:

Club Selection

- Yardage of the shot and/or total yardage of the hole
- The lie of the golf ball (it may be on a slope, in a divot, in the rough, on the fairway, in the sand, etc.)
- Elevation change (your target may be above or below you)
- Wind/weather
- The location of any hazards/obstacles
- How well you've been striking the ball
- Any curvature the ball will have
- The surface of the landing area

All of these factors will help you choose a proper target and club that is more accurate and beneficial to having an acceptable outcome to your shot. You can utilize the yardages that are printed on the sprinkler heads (Photo #1), a yardage book (Photo #2), and the hole signs that are at the beginning of each hole (Photo #3) to help you make a more educated decision.



A routine will also promote alignment to your intended target. Notice how the golfer in (Photo #4) has made his club selection and is standing behind the ball choosing the line he wishes his ball to travel on.



Photo #4

In (Photo #5) the player has approached the ball and is aligning his clubface to his intended target. He will then position his body so that his feet, knees, hips, and shoulders parallel the line that the golf ball will travel on.



Photo #5

Creating your pre-shot routine will be a fun and rewarding experience. Try to remember that when creating, throw the rules away, make up your own rules, this is yours to create, own and use. Finding your pre-shot routine is about self-discovery, what you like and dislike, what works and what does not.

While we have included fundamental starting points, you may have more or less. That is up to you. Experimenting on the practice range and then testing on the course is how you will make your decision, once you have found your pre-shot routine it will lead you to a more consistent and relaxing day on the golf course.