

Because the Golf Course Isn't Flat

BY TRENT WEARNER

AT THE CLUB at Flying Horse, it's easy to find your ball resting on a downhill slope facing a short shot back to the hole. Your ability to hit a golf ball with varying trajectory can give you an advantage when you encounter this type of shot. How the ball spins and at what trajectory the ball flies is directly related to the distance the ball will travel. While there are many ways to make the ball go high or low, here are two ways you can play this dreaded shot.



LOW RUNNER

THE LOW SHOT can be used if you want to bump it up to a hole cut close to you or if the hole is on the far side of the green and you want to roll it to the cup.

Lofted clubs like a sand wedge or lob wedge are playable options for this low shot because the slope, your setup, and maintaining the relationship between your spine and the slope during the shot will reduce the effective loft on the club face when the ball is struck.

- Adopt a wide stance, which will help set your hips parallel to the slope and also support your upper body and provide balance as you tilt your spine relatively close to perpendicular to the slope.
- Keep your club face square and the ball favoring the back of your stance.
- Determine the length and pace of your swing based on how far away you are from your intended landing spot (just as you do in putting).
- Check to make certain you finish with your left arm and the shaft aligned.



THE HIGH ROAD

MANY OF THE best players maneuver their hands and wrists through impact in a manner that produces more loft. But for most players wrist action can vary the loft of the club face, producing a less reliable height and distance. When you find yourself needing to stop the ball quickly, here's a safe way to hit a high, soft landing shot.

- Choosing your most lofted club, position yourself in the same way you would for the low shot, but place the

ball more in the middle of your stance and open the club face and your feet. This is often called an "open face chip."

• To pull off this type of shot more consistently, become more aware of your finish position. As with attempting the low runner, keep your left arm and the shaft aligned into the finish. This will negate any "wrist" action through impact.

The ball position and open face will create sufficient loft in most cases. Plus, if the ball happens to go a few feet past the hole, the direction of that roll will assist you in your comeback putt.

2004 Colorado PGA Teacher of the Year Trent teaches with Golf Digest's "Best Teachers in the State" Dana Smith, Tom Talbott and Tim Odegard at the Meridian Golf Learning Center (303-645-8000; MeridianGolfLearningCenter.com).