

The Sport of Missing Men

By Grantland Rice

Are you in danger of being entombed in a sand trap? Would you like to see more daylight while playing golf? This is Mr. Rice's attempt to get the game above ground

THE general estimate is that something like four million people, young and old, male and female, fat and lean, tall and short, are now playing golf in this land of the tee and home of the bunkered slave.

Of this number less than three hundred are rated good enough to play in an amateur championship. There are approximately five thousand golf professionals. There are several thousand other citizens whose scoring range is from 75 to 80.

But when you get down to the cold and clammy statistics, over ninety per cent of these four million, young and old, male and female, hit some melancholy spot between 90 and 140.

The average golfer plays over 100. So the golfer who plays between 100 and 105 is not a dub or a duffer, unless dufferism is the average run of humanity. You might rate the different grades in this order:

Duffers: consistently above 105.

Average golfers: from 100 to 105.

Fair golfers: from 90 to 100.

Good golfers: from 80 to 90.

Fine golfers: from 75 to 80.

Stars: from 70 to 75.

But the great marching, suffering army of the game, the millions, belong to the first two classes: those who fizzle, slither, slice, hook and top their way around from 100 to 130, give up the game forever as they finish each round, only to dash back in for one more stand.

In almost every other game you know about what you can do. But golf is the great adventure, even for the stars. Only recently Mike Brady, who twice tied for the top in an open championship, turned in a 68 at Montauk in his first tournament round and an 82 in his second, a difference of 14 strokes from forenoon to afternoon.

Slaves of the Rough

But no one has tears to shed for any golfer who can turn in a 68—or an 82.

What is to be done for those who range from 90 to 140? They pay most of the dues, support most of the clubs and courses, and gather in most of the suffering. And it is surprising how few improve from year to year. Most of them stay in the same old rut, as firmly imbedded as a steel post cemented into a granite foundation.

What can be done to free these slaves—slaves and captives of the rough and sand, of the wooded thickets and the waiting ponds; of the out of bounds and



The correct golf swing starts under the control of the left hand, left arm and left side. Posed by Joe Kirkwood

the haunting heel prints—who suddenly see a par 4 hole turn into a ghastly 9?

Why is golf so hard to play consistently well? The ball sits there until it is struck. No opponent can crowd, push or interfere with the player. Yet most of them are helpless, largely for the reason that a man's hardest opponent is himself. In football, boxing, tennis or baseball he might bear down on some rival, but in golf he can't shackle his own emotions, control his nerves, force the proper coördination of mind and nerve and muscle.

There is another reason: Golf is a game played contrary to the ordinary human impulse, which is the strong side hitting forward. The basis of the golf swing is the weak side hitting backward. The correct golf swing starts under the control of the left hand, left arm and left side. The club head is largely taken back with the left hand and arm as the left side turns naturally to the right. For the right-handed player the golf swing is a left-handed, back-handed affair through most of the club head's route. The left hand and left arm are in control until the club head on the down swing is only two or three feet from the ball. It is only through the final arc of the swing, through the closing speed area, that the right hand and right side put on the final whip or slash.

The good golfer starts the club head back with the left hand and the left side in control as he waits on the right until the final punch. He has conquered his natural impulse to hit with the stronger side. The average golfer

either starts the club head back with the right hand or else begins hitting with the right hand and the right side too quickly from the top of the swing.

There are two main principles of the golf swing. The first is to start the club head back with the left hand, left arm and left side in control as the body turns naturally to the right until the top of the swing is reached. The body must turn, not sway. The second principle is to feel that one is hitting with the club head and not with the arms and body.

How is one to get a sound swing? Not only through instruction and practice and play but also through greater attention and closer concentration upon main principles.

The first of these must come in relation to the hands and the club head. After all, you hit the ball with the club head, not with the hands and the body. The first principle is to give the club head its chance to gather increasing speed on its way through the ball in an unchecked flight. Most golf faults come through hitting too quickly with the right side or rushing the hands and body in ahead of the club, thereby breaking the force of the stroke.

The body should turn naturally to the right on the back swing and come along naturally with the down swing, but there should be no conscious body effort in a golf stroke any more than there is conscious body effort in throwing a baseball.

You will hear a lot in golf about hitting "from the inside out." This is taught to correct the average fault, which is hitting from "the outside in." The true golf swing finds the club head traveling on a line through the ball toward the pin.

Only a small percentage of all golfers have any mental picture or mental pattern of what they should do. Only a small percentage have the feel of club head control by the hands. They all try to do too much instead of giving the club its way unchecked. They won't let it follow the law of gravity, or increasing momentum, because they are usually trying too hard, gripping too tightly or are too anxious to hit. Few know anything about correct concentration.

True concentration in golf means the elimination of all outside details—except swinging smoothly. It doesn't mean wondering whether you have picked the right club, how you are pivoting, what your wrists and shoulders and knees are doing. It means making a definite decision on the club to use, the distance to be reached, and after that nothing matters except a smooth, unhurried strike. No average human be-

ing can concentrate on two or three things at the same time.

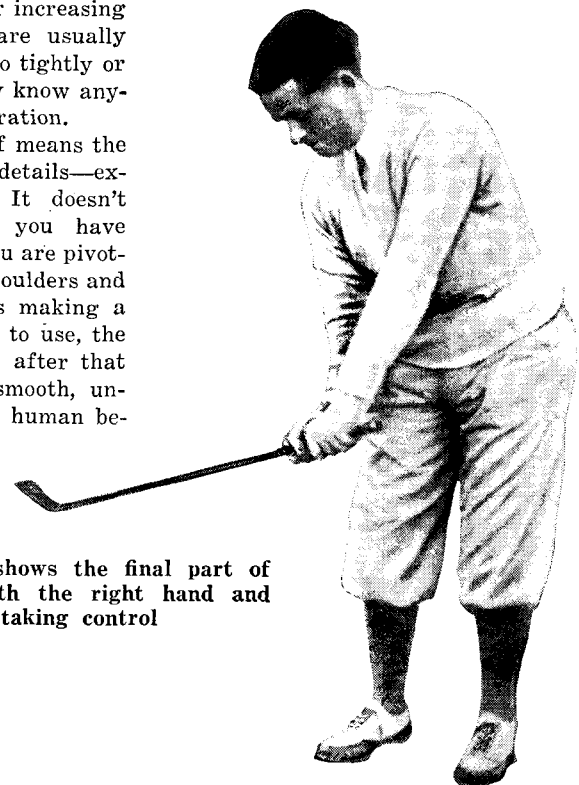
There are just four things that will improve anyone's golf: Instruction, Observation, Thought, Practice. Few golfers do any real thinking. Few combine thought and observation. They should study the methods of good golfers, get a clearer mental picture of the right way to swing, and keep this picture in mind through practice and instruction. They must learn the use of the left side and make it instinctive instead of forced. They must cultivate more the habit of mental and physical ease, which will help to suppress the tendency toward over-effort.

Subterranean Sport

Golf, after all, is supposed to be a game. When you watch the average golfer perform with a strained look on his face, with a taut, tense body, with rigid wrists, with a general atmosphere of suffering and hopelessness, you might think he was reviving an old inquisition, the sole object being human torture.

Only recently I was playing with Irvin S. Cobb, the Paducah Phenom. He stood moodily upon the edge of a deep trap and inquired, "Has anyone here a miner's lamp?" After he had finally emerged Mr. Cobb remarked: "This bunker would have tasted better if it had been full of granulated sugar in place of sand."

Since it is now impossible to fill the bunkers with granulated sugar the next step must be to keep the multitudes out of them—not altogether, but enough to break up the steady procession of mourners who have forgotten just what the green of the fairway looks like as they joust in the abysses and curse their fate. The way to improvement is open to anyone who will do a little quiet thinking and tinkering along right lines—in place of the helter-skelter of wild ideas that mean nothing except trouble and lead nowhere except to a depressing afternoon, largely underground.



Bobby Jones shows the final part of the swing, with the right hand and side taking control



R. V. Culler

In time they arrived at the club. Phyllis sighed as she went up the steps, "Oh, well, what's the use?"

Phyllis the Unwanted

By Teresa Hyde Phillips

The Story Thus Far:

MR. LANIER loses his money, and his lovely daughter, Phyllis, decides she must earn her own living. She gets a job posing for Neil Farragut, a popular and gifted artist, much sought after but never found.

Phyllis is very unhappy because Scott Thornley, a young broker, has fallen in love with Estelle Lord, who is jealous of Phyllis. Farragut plans to get him back for her, mostly because he thinks she will be a better subject for his next picture if she is happily in love.

Farragut paints a beautiful picture of Phyllis for an advertisement and one evening when Phyllis, Scott, Estelle and a Mr. Watrous are playing bridge, he telephones that he is bringing out a young man who has fallen in love with the picture. Phyllis demurs but finally relents and the four wait for the two men to arrive.

THEY heard a motor whispering up the drive. Estelle drew out her vanity case, two dinner-coated gentlemen entered, and the polite but desperate struggle was on in earnest.

But Mr. Farragut was thoroughly at ease.

"Hello," he said, nonchalant and care-free, like a cat who has found a private entrance into a cream factory.

"How do you do?" said Phyllis, polite and chilly, and made him known to the room.

"Mr. Stewart," murmured the illustrator, waving a careless hand toward his companion like a king responsible for an ambassador. And Mr. Stewart, with an automatic bow for the others, went straight for Phyllis as if he were on the last lap of a lifetime's pilgrimage.

"Miss Lanier," said Mr. Stewart and held her outstretched hand as if it had

been the Kohinoor. Phyllis led him to a chair. She saw rightly that this was the moment to give the moonstruck millionaire just the right sort of reassuring kindness and not too much of it.

Estelle paid no attention to them, but turned the full blast of her charm on Neil Farragut. She believed in the policy of direct attack. So:

"I have been dying all my life to meet you, Mr. Farragut," she began, and her eyes were open doors. Fate, she felt, had brought about this confrontation.

Mr. Farragut got up and took a chair much closer to her and grinned.

"Up to this moment," he said gravely, "my own life has been a vacuum. . . ." He could do this sort of thing, when necessary, till the cows came home. You just pulled out Stop No. 3 of the conversational organ and let it play its own notes.

Phyllis looked over at him with a faint wonder and felt suddenly left out and uncared for. Somehow Mr. Stewart did not protect one from the elements. She kept listening for Mr. Farragut's voice flowing out like warm wine.

Mr. Watrous got up and left, but hardly anyone paid him any attention. "See you later, Jimmy," came from Estelle dreamily. The smooth music of Mr. Farragut's Stop 3 was rolling over her vanity like a massage. She purred under it louder and louder and relaxed into smiling security.

"It's thrilling Phyllis, posing for you," she confided, heart-to-heart. "I simply can't wait to see the paintings."

"All in good time," he encouraged her.

"I can't wait!" Her girlish enthusiasm drew even Mr. Stewart out of his enchantment. "You have seen them," she bubbled intimately. "Are they too divine?"

Mr. Stewart looked back at her.

"Yes," he said simply, "they are divine."

He glanced around at the small group appraisingly and fearfully like a miser laboring under the urge to disclose his hidden wealth. Then, making his decision, he reached a hand into a pocket and drew out an envelope. He got up and laid it before Estelle.

"An advance proof," he said reverently. "Mr. Farragut let me have it photographed before it was finished."

SCOTT, who had been sitting saying nothing and looking, strangely enough, at Phyllis, now looked at Mr. Stewart. It had been a shock to him to find a chap so enamored of her. It was more of a shock to find that he was carrying pictures of her in his pocket. That day when he learned that she was posing for Farragut he had got a sort of blurred impression that there was more to her than he had ever imagined. Now this feeling returned, more clear-cut. He got up and leaned over Estelle's shoulder with an odd sense that some secret that had been eluding him was now about to be uncovered. The answer, he felt, was in that picture.

"Isn't it a knock-out?" breathed Mr.

Stewart, and paused for their astounded and breathless tributes.

Estelle adjusted the slave bracelets on her round arms impatiently. "Perfectly lovely!" she said and found her voice flattening in spite of herself, for to her the picture was a poisoned dagger. She could not believe that this was Phyllis. "You surely work magic!" she said to Mr. Farragut, and it was as though she said, "How you can take material like Phyllis and make that out of it!"

But what was happening to Scott behind her, and hence out of her sight, was not the least remarkable thing that had occurred lately. He stared at the photograph and felt that something was wrong somewhere.

"Lovely, Scott, isn't it?" thrilled Estelle, and the smile she turned brightly up to him was, he thought, rather too lustrous, like a string of imitation pearls.

"Very nice," he said noncommittally. And he looked not at her but at Phyllis, and noticed things that he had never noticed before. He looked at her eyes and thought, "Gosh, but they're good looking!" and at her hair and saw how it shone.

"It's the image of Phyllis," he added unconsciously, for he knew suddenly, in a burst of impassioned revelation that should come to no well-fed and prosperous broker, that Neil Farragut had found in Phyllis herself all this shimmering glory, for it was beyond the reach of any man's invention.