

Introduction

One day I was explaining to some of my golf friends my last discovery: Breaking putts are positively more reliable than flat and level ones. The explanation requires one or two basic physics concepts but they entirely captured the message and agreed with me. One of them asked why hadn't I considered writing that and other useful tips in a book for everyone. I laughed and replied that I like playing golf, not writing about it, and the conversation died there.

Months later, almost by accident, it finally became clear in my spirit the solution for another big problem: Why do golf players with good putting skills (even professionals) sometimes miss the lines outrageously and make lousy and unacceptable putts. This time the solution wasn't as easy as the first

one and also required non-golfing background which made me wonder how people without the basic tools could master the most important subject for golf scores: putting.

Then I remembered that during my professional career as an engineer I've always been praised for my ability to put things in plain words and to make even the most complex subject clear to everyone. And here I am: golf lover, 60, creator of a patented golf equipment for computer-assisted teaching and training and now writing about putting lines.

First of all there is a point I would like to make clear: I don't plan to get rich from selling e-books. I just want to know that my work is useful to other golfers, to get feedback and discuss the various aspects of the book and obviously learn a lot in that process. Of course I hope to recover the investment I made to put this text on-line but I don't expect to live from the proceeds. **This helps to understand why I'm ready to refund all those who after reading my book honestly feel that I have delivered less than I have promised.**

⁽¹⁾ The most serious and complete guide I know about putting is "Dave Pelz's Putting Bible" but the choice of the way to improve your putting technique is up to you.

I am not writing for beginners who are still learning how to putt. My targets are those who usually make two putts in every hole but sometimes fail. If you are a consistent three-putter I honestly recommend that you work first the basics of putting and only later start worrying about the details of the putting lines explained in this book. Of course everybody can read it and understand the concepts. I'll try to introduce it in a very friendly way. But if you are a consistent three-putter I believe you are dealing with a technique based problem not a line reading problem.⁽¹⁾

For those who are not convinced about the nature of their problem let's try the following test for "consistent" three-putters. At home, in a room with a rug or carpet to make sure you are in a flat and level situation and without imperfections, take your putter and a golf ball. Use a second ball as a target and place it at a distance of one to two club shafts ⁽²⁾. Repeat several strokes changing target position in the mentioned range and count how many times you hit the target ball in every ten attempts. Five or less means

⁽²⁾ I often use one club shaft as a length unit because it's easy to use in any circumstances. If you prefer you can replace it with one yard or one meter and the sentence still makes sense.

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a technique problem. Eight or more means a line reading problem. Results between those limits probably mean some of the two.

The rationale of the test is this: If, in a flat and level situation and without imperfections, you don't hit the second ball, or rarely do, you surely reveal a poor technique. If you are successful 80% of times, or more, in the same circumstances, you are a fine putter that probably doesn't read lines as well as you could do in order to avoid three-putting. It's worth noting that hitting a second ball that is one and half club shafts distant (roughly 1.5 yards) means that for a 15 yards putt, if the distance was good, you'd be inside a 17 inches radius circle centred in the hole. Very good if the objective is avoiding three-putting. Keep in mind

that distance has a lot to do with your ability to "feel" the peculiar conditions of that green, that day at the right time you are putting.

Another possibility is that you'll have to consider reviewing your approach and short game in order to solve your putting problem. The truth is that if, for instance, you usually hit your first putt from more than 15 yards you can't expect the same results as if it is made from inside a 5 yards circle.

Well, since I'm not writing for beginners don't expect to find here tips about grip, stance, ball position, weight distribution, alignment, distance control and so on.

• **Fig. 2.1**



Don't expect a magic recipe either promising to slash 6, or 7, or even more, putts per round from your scores, as you can find in some golf literature. It's perhaps possible to do that with players scoring more than 50 putts per round but that's not the kind of golfers I'm expecting to be my readers.

My book is targeted to those who:

- already know the basic technique of putting and are aware of the importance of choosing the right line in order to sink a putt;
- regardless of their golf handicaps, already know that there are almost no putts to do in flat and level surfaces and this means that choosing a line is a problem they have to face more than 20 times in a normal round of golf (18 holes);
- have no doubts about the fact that choosing wrong lines is the most important source of missed short and middle range putts;

- feel that choosing a line is a serious matter that can't be solved with the common "little bit to the right" or " little bit to the left";
- usually miss putts, even short ones, when they face situations where the green is flat and at constant slope;
- believe that concavities and convexities of putting surface require some adjustments in the chosen line but have no idea of nature and magnitude of those adjustments.

I would be glad if after finishing the book my readers start facing putts on flat greens with a constant slope - the friendlier and more rewarding ones - with greater confidence and know how convexities and concavities affect lines in other cases. I know that this doesn't seem to reveal an outstanding ambition, but it would represent an increase in putts converted in the range of 2 to 4 club shafts and a significant reduction in three-putting. And if you are not a beginner you know that even 1 or 2 strokes less in your score means a lot.

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This is what I will do:

Write about ball tracks. The concept; the different kinds.

Analyse uphill and downhill lines when the surface is flat and at constant slope. Study the consequences of concavities and convexities.

Describe the forces that command the ball's movement.

Define break and discuss the right point where it must be measured.

Introduce the concepts of "aim point" and "break point".

Explain why the balls curve (break) and provide clues to evaluate how much.

Refer to different factors that affect ball trajectory.

Explain the basics of physics behind all mentioned concepts in a very plain language for those readers who want

to understand why and how things happen and no more than that. This will be a separate chapter everybody can skip without major consequences.

Reveal why putts in the range 1 to 4 yards are more reliable if there is a clear break to consider than if they look flat and level.

Suggest some drills and experiments that will help you to become more sensitive to the several green factors that influence putting lines and, as a consequence, make you more confident with those putts that used to make you sweat even in cold winter days.

Be as succinct as possible because I believe my readers are looking for solutions, not for literature.