



Five Keys to Better Driving

Distance off the tee and keeping the ball in play is one of the main keys to shooting lower scores. Being able to hit the ball father and staying out of trouble takes pressure off other parts of your game. It allows you to use shorter clubs for your second shot, which will give you closer looks at birdie. Power off the tee combined with keeping the ball in play is one of the areas you can work on this season if you want to shoot lower scores and have more fun playing golf. Here are four of my keys to creating more club speed and better center contact for longer and straighter drives.

ADDRESS

Club speed starts from the ground. Getting into a balanced setup position will allow you to pivot your body and shift pressure into the ground correctly. A proper set up will allow you to deliver the club with more speed in the correct sequence on the downswing. Here are four things to look for in the set up:



A. Ball is Forward Make sure to tee the ball up in line with your inside left heel and the outside of your lead shoulder. This ball position will allow you to hit the ball on the upward part of the swing arc. Launching the ball with a positive angle of attack gives you more carry distance and less backspin which will have the ball roll out more when it lands.

B. Stance Width Much Wider Than Hips Your driver stance is the widest of any other club in the bag. Place your feet wider than the width of your shoulders and flair both of your feet. This will open your hips and allow you to make a bigger and deeper backswing.

C. Start With 60% of Your Weight in Your Trail Foot and Tilt Away from the Target from Your Ribcage This set up will allow your lead shoulder to be higher than your trail shoulder, again making an upward swing into the back of the ball at contact.

Your body will look like a backwards "K" in the correct set up.

D. Grip the Club Somewhat Tightly in Your Hands While Keeping Your Arms and Shoulders Relaxed Don't let tension from your hands seep into your arms. This is a trait that all long-drive golfers have.

BACKSWING

In the backswing we need to do two main things—shift your pressure early into your trail heel and pivot your shoulders (upper body) and your pelvis (lower body/hips) to allow for a full arm swing. The shift in pressure starts early in the takeaway with a micro bump into the trail leg that loads pressure into the trail heel—we will use this power to push off to start the downswing. Feel like you are squishing the water out of a wet sponge under your trail heel as the club comes back. After the initial bump, you will turn your chest back away from the target, trying to get your lead shoulder behind the golf ball. The more you can turn your chest, the more you can keep your lead arm stretched out and away from your body. This will build a big turn and a loaded up feeling in your trail leg.

DOWNSWING

The transition from the backswing to the downswing is an important part of a good drive. The transition starts from the ground and works its way up the body parts, eventually transferring the energy to the hands and club. The downswing will begin with a push off the trail foot and a small slide towards the target with your hips into the lead leg. The more you can load



in the backswing, the more force you will have to push off in the downswing. Once the pressure is pushed laterally towards the target, the lower body will start to unwind, starting with the knee then the hips. You want to feel like your back stays looking at the target as long as you can. This will put a stretch into the lower and upper body parts producing not only more speed, but an in-to-out club path that will produce a draw ball flight. The downswing sequence would be close to the sequence of throwing a pitch or a ball. It starts in the legs, then hips, then chest, then out to the arm and hand. The poorest drivers do the downswing sequence in reverse and hit short slicing drives.

FOLLOW THROUGH

A huge differentiator of skill is that the best players in the world never let their elbows separate at impact and into the follow through (when the club and your belly button should both be pointed down the target line). Film yourself from an area where you can clearly see whether you are keeping your elbows squeezed together. Equally as important is shoulder tilt in the follow through. Pretend that you have water in your right ear (for right-handed golfers) and the only way to get that water out is to tilt your head, having your right shoulder pointed down toward the tee just after impact. Finally, try and bend your shoulders as far backwards as possible, keeping your weight firmly on your front leg and straightening both legs as much as possible.

FINISH

Stick the finish. If you can finish with your weight balanced on your lead leg and your body turned past the target (left of the target for a right-handed golfer)



er) you will know you made a full finish. Your trail foot will be light and on your toe. Shoulders will be left of the target and your sternum will be pointed to the sky. You want your hands over your lead shoulder as well. If you cannot finish in balance—your sequence of transition is off. You will need to make practice swings to get the sequence right and balance at the end of the swing.

For more information or help with your golf game contact:

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