

Acceleration

The steady increase in speed most often associated with the hands, arms or club. (Tiger Woods has tremendous acceleration through the hitting area.)

Address

The act of setting the body and club up to the ball when preparing to hit a shot. (Every golfer could profit from studying Jack Nicklaus's address position.) When used in the context of the Rules of Golf, it refers to the point when the player has taken his stance and grounded his club. (The ball moved after he addressed it, resulting a one-stroke penalty.)

Aiming

The act of aligning the clubface to the target. (She had a problem aiming the club properly all day and missed several shots to the right of her target.)

Alignment

The position of the body in relation to the initial target. (One reason she plays so well is that her alignment is so consistent from one shot to the next.)

Angle of Approach (or Attack)

A term that describes the relative angle which the clubhead approaches the ball at impact which, in turn, helps determine the distance and trajectory which the ball travels. (He hit the ball with a sharply descending angle of attack, which caused the ball to fly high enough to carry over the tall trees.)

Approach

A shot hit towards the green. (His approach shot to the 17th hole came up short of the green) or towards the hole (Sam Snead was a great approach putter.)

Axis

Generally refers to a straight line (the spine) that the upper body rotates around in the course of the golf swing. (One reason for her consistent ballstriking is that her axis remains in a constant position throughout the swing.)

Backswing

The motion that involves the club and every element of the body in taking the club away from the ball and setting it in position at the top of the backswing from which the club can be delivered to the ball at impact. (John Daly has an unusually long backswing that causes the club to go past parallel at the top of the swing.)

Backspin

The rotational movement or spin of the ball produced by contact with the clubface. The greater the backspin, the higher the ball will fly and the more it will spin, and therefore stop or even spin backwards on impact with the turf. (The ball had so much backspin that when it hit the green it spun back into the water hazard.)

Balance

The proper distribution of weight both at address and throughout the swing. (Tom Watson's swing has always been characterized by perfect balance.)

Balata

A rubber-like substance used as a cover material for golf balls. Pure balata is rarely, if ever, used today. Instead, manufacturers use blends or synthetic material. Many players prefer balata or balata-like covers because it provides a softer feel. And it can provide increased spin. (Most of the players in the championship played with balata-covered balls.)

Baseball Grip

A grip in which all ten fingers are placed on the grip of the club. (Bob Rosburg was a very successful player who used a baseball grip.)

Birdie

A score of one-under par on a hole. (Her birdie on the 10th hole was a turning point in the match.)

Bladed Shot

Often referred to as a "sculled" shot, it occurs when the top half of the ball is struck with the bottom portion of an iron, resulting in a low-running shot. (She bladed her approach shot but the ball ran onto the green and set up her putt for a birdie.)

Block

A swing in which the rotation of the forearms is delayed or prevented throughout the hitting area, generally producing a shot that flies to the right of the target. (With a pond guarding the left side of the green. Ernie Els blocked his approach shot to the right of the flag.)

Bobbing

The act of raising and lowering (or lowering and raising) the swing center in the course of the swing. (Because of an inconsistent knee flex in her swing, her bobbing led to inconsistent ball striking.)

Bogey

A score of one-over par on a hole. (The bogey on 18 cost him the championship.)

Borrow

The amount of break a player allows for when hitting a breaking putt. (One of the confusing factors for young players at Augusta National is learning how much they have to borrow on their putts.)

Bowed

The position of the wrists at the top of the backswing in which the top wrist is bent slightly inward. (For many years, Tom Weiskopf had a bowed wrist at the top of his backswing.)

Break

The amount a putt will curve to the side because of the slope, grain and wind that effect the movement of the ball. (The swale in the middle of the green produced a tremendous break on Palmer's putt.)

Bump and Run

A pitch shot around the green in which the player hits the ball into a slope to deaden its speed before settling on the green and rolling towards the hole. (The mounds and swales at Pinehurst #2 resulted in many players hitting bump and runs shots during the Open.)

Bunker

A hollow comprised of sand or grass or both that exists as an obstacle and, in some cases, a hazard. (The greens at Winged Foot were protected by deep bunkers.)

Caddie

A person hired to carry clubs and provide other assistance. (A good caddie can be worth several strokes a round.)

Calcutta

An auction in which people bid on players or teams in a tournament. (For many years, Calcuttas were a regular event at many popular tournaments.)

Cambered Sole

A rounding of the sole of the club to reduce drag. A four-way cambered sole is one that is rounded at every edge of a wood. (The 5-wood had a cambered sole to help it slide through the deep rough.)

Carry

The distance a ball will fly in the air, usually to carry a hazard or safely reach a target. (Many of the holes at Pine Valley require a substantial carry over waste areas.)

Carryover

When a hole is tied in a match and the bet is carried over to the next hole. (He won the 10th hole as well as the carryover.)

Casting

An uncocking of the wrists prematurely on the downswing, resulting in a loss of power and control. Also known as "hitting from the top." (Smith had a tendency to swing at and not through the ball, which caused him to cast the club from the top of the swing.)

Cavity-back

A type of iron in which a portion of the back of the clubhead is hollowed out and the weight distributed around the outside edges of the clubhead. (The cavity-back irons were far more forgiving than his old blades.)

Center of Gravity

That point in the human body, in the pelvic area, where the body's weight and mass are equally balanced. (Ian Woosnam has a lower center of gravity than the much-taller Nick Faldo.)

Centrifugal Force

The action in a rotating body that tends to move mass away from the center. It is the force you feel in the downswing that pulls the clubhead outward and downward, extending the arms and encouraging to take a circular path. (Tiger Woods' swing creates powerful centrifugal force.)

Center of Rotation

The axis or swing center that the body winds and unwinds around during the swing. (A stable center of rotation is an important element in solid ball-striking.)

Chicken Wing

A swing flaw in which the lead elbow bends at an angle pointed away from the body, usually resulting in a blocked or pushed shot. (Once Jack's PGA Professional saw him, he knew the cause of Jack's loss of power was his chicken wing position at impact.)

Chip and Run

A low-running shot played around the greens where the ball spends more time on the ground than in the air. (She saved par with a beautiful chip and run that ended inches from the hole.)

Choke

A derogatory term describing poor play that results from nervousness. (Early in his career, some critics claimed Tom Watson choked under pressure.)

Choke Down

The act of gripping down on the shaft, which is generally believed to provide greater control. (She choked down on a 7-iron and hit a beautiful pitch to save par.)

Chunk

A poor shot caused by hitting the turf well behind the ball, resulting in a fat shot. (The defending champion's defense ended when he chunked his tee shot on the par-3 16th and hit the ball into the pond guarding the green.)

Cleek

A fairway wood with the approximate loft of a 4-wood that produces high shots that land softly. (He played a beautiful shot with his cleek that almost rolled into the cup.)

Closed Clubface

The position formed when the toe of the club is closer to the ball than the heel, either at address or impact, which causes the clubface to point to the left of the target line. (Her closed clubface resulted in her missing several approach shots to the left of the green.)

Closed Clubface (swing)

A position during the swing in which the clubface is angled to the left of the target line or swing plane, generally resulting in shots hit to the left of the target. (When they looked at a videotape of his swing, his PGA Professional pointed to his closed clubface at the top of the backswing as the reason he hit his drive into the left rough.)

Closed Grip

Generally referred to as a strong grip because both hands are turned away from the target. (PGA Tour professional Ed Fiori was nicknamed "Grip" because of his closed grip.)

Closed Stance

A description of a stance when the rear foot is pulled back away from the target line. (Her closed stance allowed her to hit a gentle draw off the tee.)

Closed-to-Open

A swing in which the clubhead is closed on the backswing but then manipulated into an open position on the downswing. (Miller Barber was a very effective player, even though he had a closed-to-open swing.)

Cocked Wrists

A description of the hinging motion of the wrists during the backswing in which the hands are turned clockwise. Ideally, the wrists are fully cocked at the beginning of the downswing. (He cocked his wrists early in the backswing to hit a high, soft shot over the bunker.)

Coefficient of Restitution

The relationship of the clubhead speed at impact to the velocity of the ball after it has been struck. This measure is affected by the clubhead and ball material. (Testing showed that the new ball had a very high coefficient of restitution.)

Coil

The turning of the body during the backswing. (Her ability to fully coil on the backswing resulted in tremendous power.)

Come Over the Top

A motion beginning the downswing that sends the club outside the ideal plane (swing path) and delivers the clubhead from outside the target line at impact. This is sometimes known as an outside-to-inside swing. (Sam Snead came over the top slightly, which he felt produced more powerful shots.)

Compression

A measure of the relative hardness of a golf ball ranging from 100 (hardest) to 80 (softest.) (Like most powerful players, he preferred a 100-compression ball.)

Connection

A description of a swing in which all the various body parts work harmoniously to produce a solid, fluid motion. (Many players focus upon connection as a key element in the golf swing.)

Conservation of Angular Momentum (COAM)

A law of physics that allows the player to produce large amounts of kinetic energy. As the body shifts its weight and turns towards the target in the forward swing, the mass (arms and club) is pulled away from the center into an extended position by centrifugal force. By temporarily resisting that pull as well as the temptation to assist the hit by releasing too early, one maintains the angle formed between the club's shaft and the left arm and conserves the energy until a more advantageous moment. This has been referred to as a "delayed hit," a "late hit," "connection," "lag loading," "the keystone," or COAM, but when performed correctly may simply be called "good timing."

Croquet Style

A putting stance popularized by Sam Snead in which the player stands aside the ball, facing the hole, holds the club with a widely-split grip, and strikes the ball with a croquet-type stroke. A similar style, in which the player faced the hole with the ball positioned between the feet, was banned by the United States Golf Association. (A croquet-style putting stroke is popular among players who suffer from the "Yips.")

Cross-Handed

A grip in which the left (or lead) hand is placed below the right hand (in other words, a grip that is the opposite of the traditional grips. (Bruce Lietzke used a cross-handed grip when putting and was very successful.)

Cupped Wrist

A position in which the left or top hand is hinged outward at the top of the backswing. (Her cupped wrist caused the club to be pointed to the left of the target at the top of her swing.)

Cuppy Lie

A lie when the ball is sitting down slightly, usually in a small depression. (He had a difficult shot because he had to play from a cuppy lie in the fairway.)

Cut Shot

A shot played with a slightly open clubface and a swing path that travels out to in. The result is a soft fade that produces additional backspin and causes the ball to stop quickly on the green. (Lee Trevino was known for his ability to play beautiful cut shots.)

Dead Hands

A shot in which the hands remain relatively passive in the hitting area, resulting in a shot that flies a shorter distance than it normally would. (He dead-handed a 5-iron on the par 3, which confused his fellow players.)

Deep-Faced Driver

A driver with greater-than-standard height on its face. (His PGA Professional suggested trying a deep-faced driver.)

Decelerate

A decreasing of the clubhead speed in the hitting area. (Jones decelerated on his putt, and left it short of the hole.)

Delayed Hit

A golf term used to describe the Conservation of Angular Momentum.

Divot

The turf displaced when the club strikes the ball on a descending path. (Her divot flew into the pond.) It also refers to the hole left after play. (Her ball landed in an old divot, making her next shot difficult.)

Double Bogey

A score of two-over-par on a hole. (The double bogey ended her hopes of defending her title.)

Double Eagle

A score of three-under-par on a hole. (Gene Sarazen's double eagle at Augusta National is one of the most famous shots in golf history.)

Dormie

The point in match play when a player is up in a match by the same number of holes that remain. (When Lanny Wadkins had his opponent dormie three, it seemed like the Americans would win the Ryder Cup.)

Doubles

When a caddie carries two sets of clubs. (Carrying doubles was hard work in the hot weather, but he never complained.)

Downswing

The swing forward from the top of the backswing. (The clubhead accelerated smoothly on the downswing.)

Draw

A shot that flies slightly from right to left for right-handed players. (She hit a draw into the green that stopped two feet from the hole.)

Driving Range

Another term for a practice area. Also known as a golf range, practice range or learning center. (Watson headed for the driving range following his round.)

Duck Hook

A shot that flies sharply from right to left for right-handed players. It is usually hit unintentionally, since it is difficult to control. (He hit a duck hook from the tee and the ball flew out of bounds.)

Dynamic Balance

Transferring the focus of weight appropriately during the golf swing while maintaining body control. (Sue worked with her PGA Professional on improving the dynamic balance of her swing.)

Eagle

A score of two-under-par on a hole. (His eagle on the 17th hole assured his victory.)

Early Hit

When a player prematurely releases the cocking of the wrists on the downswing, resulting in a loss of power at impact. This is also known as “casting from the top.” (Her tendency to make an early hit made her one of the shortest hitters in the field.)

Effective Loft

The actual loft on a club at impact as opposed to the loft built into the club. Effective loft is determined by, among other things, the lie and the position of the hands relative to the ball at impact. (The uphill lie added effective loft to the club.)

Explosion

A shot played from a sand bunker, usually when the ball has buried or settled down into the sand. (He played a spectacular explosion shot from the bunker to save par.)

Extension

The width of the swing as measured by the target arm on the backswing and the trail arm on the follow-through. (Tiger Woods has beautiful extension in his swing.)

Fade

A shot that flies slightly from left to right. (She hit a gentle fade from the tee and never missed a fairway in the final round.)

Fanning

An exaggerated opening of the clubface as the backswing begins. (He fanned the club open on the backswing and hit mostly slices.)

Fat Shot

A description of a shot when the clubhead strikes the turf behind the ball, resulting in poor contact and a shot that comes up well short of the target. (She hit a fat shot from the tee on the par 3 and, as the ball sank from sight in the pond, so did her chances of victory.)

Flange

A portion of the sole of a club such as a sand wedge or putter. (The wedge’s wide flange made it an effective club from the deep, powdery sand.)

Flat Swing

A swing that is more horizontal and less vertical in plane than is typical. (Because he had a flat swing, he had to guard against hooking the ball.)

Flier

A shot from the rough or in wet conditions that reduces the amount of backspin on the ball, causing it to fly lower and farther than it might under normal conditions. (She caught a flier from the light rough and hit her approach shot over the green.)

Flip Shot

A shot, usually played with a wedge, that involves a wristy swing designed to hit the ball a short distance but with a lot of height. (He hit a flip shot over the bunker, landing the ball near the hole.)

Floater

A ball struck from the deep grass that comes out slowly and travels a shorter distance because of the heavy cushioning effect of the grass between the ball and the clubface. (Gail caught a floater from the rough and hit her approach shot into the pond.)

Flop Shot

Similar to a flip shot except that it involves a long, slower swing. (Phil Mickelson is a master at playing the flop shot.)

Fluffy Lie

A lie in which the ball rests atop the longish grass. This can be a tricky lie because the tendency is to swing the clubhead under the ball, reducing the distance it carries. (The ball came to rest in a fluffy lie near the green, but he played an excellent shot and won the hole.)

Fly

The distance the ball carries (He can fly the ball 280 yards with his driver) or a shot that carries over the intended target (She flew the green with her approach shot and made a bogey.)

Follow-through

That part of the swing that occurs after the ball has been struck. (His powerful follow-through was the result of his long backswing.)

Footwork

The coordinated action of the lower body during the golf swing. (Tom Watson has some of the best footwork of any player in history.)

Forward Press

A slight movement of the hands and arms (and occasionally the legs) that initiate the golf swing. (A good forward press helps relieve tension in the golf swing.)

Forward Swing

The downward motion of the hands, arms and club from the top of the backswing to impact. Another term for downswing. (Ben Hogan began his forward swing with a lateral shifting of his left hip towards the target.)

Fried Egg

The slang term for a buried lie in the sand. (To her dismay, when Nancy Lopez reached the bunker she saw she was facing a fried egg lie.)

Grand Slam, The Modern (or Professional)

Grand Slam describes winning the four professional Major Championships—the PGA Championship, the Masters and the United States and British Opens—in a calendar year. The Career Grand Slam describes winning each of these events once in a career. Only Gene Sarazen, Ben Hogan, Gary Player, Jack Nicklaus and Tiger Woods have accomplished this. No one has ever won the Modern Grand Slam. In 1930, Bobby Jones won the U.S. and British Amateurs and Opens, a feat which was termed the Grand Slam and has never been duplicated. The 28-year old Jones retired from competitive golf that year. In addition, The PGA of America’s

“Grand Slam of Golf” is a late-season event that features the winners of that year’s four Professional Major championships.

Golf Range

A facility where people can practice their full swings and, in some cases, their short games. (In Japan, golf ranges are very popular because the number of golf courses is limited.)

Grain

The direction which the blades of grass grow, which is of primary importance on the greens (particularly Bermuda grass greens) as this can effect how much and in which direction a putt breaks. (Sam Snead won many tournaments in Florida because he was so adept at reading the grain in the greens.)

Greenkeeper

An older, outdated term for the course superintendent. (He was the greenkeeper at Merion for many years.)

Grip (Equipment)

That part of the golf club where the hands are placed. (After a disappointing round, John’s PGA Professional suggested that he have his grips replaced.)

Grip

The placing and positioning of the hands on the club. The various types include the Vardon or overlapping, the interlocking and the 10-finger or baseball grip. (The Vardon grip is the most popular grip today.) There is also the reverse-overlapping grip, in which the index finger of the left or top hand overlaps the smallest finger of the right or bottom hand. This is primarily used in putting, although some players use this grip when chipping the ball.

Groove (equipment)

The horizontal scoring lines on the face of the club that help impart spin on the ball. (Before teeing off on the par-3 12th, Jack Nicklaus cleaned out the grooves of his 8-iron with a tee.)

Groove

A description of a swing that consistently follows the same path, time after time. (In his post-round interview, Curtis Strange said his swing was in the groove all day, resulting in a 65.)

Ground

When referred to in the Rules of Golf, it means the point when the club touches the ground (or water) prior to playing the shot. (It is against the Rules of Golf to ground your club in a hazard.)

Group Lesson

A teaching session in which several pupils work with one or more PGA Professionals. This type of lesson is particularly effective for beginners, especially juniors. (The PGA of America offered group lessons for youngsters as part of the city's summer recreation program.)

Half Shot

A shot played with an abbreviated swing and reduced swing speed. This shot is often played when trying to keep the ball out of a strong wind. (With so much at stake, Amy Alcott played a half shot to the final green and made a comfortable par.)

Heel

The part of the clubhead nearest the hosel. (Fuzzy Zoeller addresses the ball off the heel of his driver.) A shot hit off the heel is said to be "heeled."

Heel-and-Toe Weighted

A club design where weight is distributed towards the heel and toe of a club, usually an iron, to reduce the effect of mis-hits. (When he played with heel-and-toe weighted irons, his scores improved.)

High Side

The side of the hole that a putt breaks from. (He missed the putt on the high side of the hole.)

Hitter

A player who favors a forceful, aggressive style of swing. (Arnold Palmer has been a hitter of the ball throughout his career.)

Hooding

The act of placing the hands ahead of the ball, both at address and impact, which tends to reduce the effective loft of the club. (Because he was trying to hit his shot under the tree limbs, Tom Kite hooded a 6-iron and ran the ball onto the green.)

Hook

A shot that curves sharply from right to left for right-handed players. (When playing the par-5 13th at Augusta National, many players try to hit a sweeping hook from the tee.)

Hosel

The part of the club connecting the shaft to the clubhead. (When the PGA Professional studied Tom's 5-iron, he saw that it was bent at the hosel.)

Impact

The moment in the swing when the club strikes the ball. (Betsy's feet slipped at impact, resulting in a poor drive.)

Inside-to-Inside

A description of the swing path that, all things being equal, will produce the greatest percentage of solid, straight and on-target shots. It refers to a path in which the clubhead travels from inside the target line, to impact, and then back inside the target line. (Once she developed an inside-to-inside swing, her ballstriking improved dramatically.)

Inside-to-Out

A swing path in which the clubhead approaches the ball from inside the target line and, after contact, continues to the outside of the target line before turning back to the inside of the target line. (Every so often, his inside-to-out swing path resulted in shots that missed the target to the right.)

Intended Line of Flight

The direction a player plans for his ball to begin after impact. (Because she planned to hit a hook from the tee, her intended line of flight was at the right-hand fairway bunker.)

Iron Byron

A testing device modeled after Byron Nelson's swing. It is used to test clubs and balls. (After tests using Iron Byron, the new balls were measured to be longer.)

Kinesiology

The scientific study of man's movement and the movements of implements or equipment that he might use in exercise, sport or other forms of physical activity.

Kinetic Energy

The form of energy associated with the speed of an object. Its equation is: $KE = Hmv^2(\text{squared})$, or kinetic energy = H mass x velocity squared. (It is obvious from the formula that increasing clubhead velocity has more potential for producing distance than increasing the clubhead weight.)

Lag

A shot (usually a pitch, chip or putt) designed to finish short of the target. (Since the green was severely sloped from back to front, he hit a lag putt that stopped just short of the hole.)

Lateral Slide or Shift

A movement early in the forward swing in which the hips begin to slide to the target and rotate, while at the same time, weight begins to shift from the trail side to the target side. The timing of this motion is crucial to a proper swing. (The commentators were impressed by the young player's lateral shift.)

Lay Off

When the swing plane flattens out at the top of the back swing, it causes the club to point to the side of the target and the face to close. (His PGA Professional watched him hit a few balls and then told him that he was getting the club laid off at the top of his backswing.)

Learning Center

A complete practice and instruction facility, which may or may not be on the site of a golf course. (While there was no golf course nearby, she was able to work on her game at the local learning center.)

Level-Par

A term describing a score of even par. (Jones was level-par after the first round of the Open.)

Lever System

The skeletal system is composed of numerous bones which, in mechanical terms, act as levers. The two primary levers in the golf swing are: 1) the target arm, comprised of the radius and ulna of the lower arm and the humerus in the upper arm, and 2) the club when the target wrist becomes cocked.

Lie

As it relates to the ball, the position of the ball when it has come to rest. (He hit his drive into the rough, but luckily had a good lie.) As it relates to the club, it is the angle of the sole of the club relative to the shaft. (He liked the sand wedge but the lie was too flat.)

Lights-Out

A slang term describing an outstanding round or stretch of holes. (She played lights-out after the turn.)

Line

The intended path of the ball, usually referred to in the context of putting. (She judged the line perfectly and made the putt.)

Line of Flight

The actual path of the ball. (There was a grandstand in his line of flight, so the Rules official allowed him to take a drop without penalty.)

Links

The term for a course built on linksland, which is land reclaimed from the ocean. It is not just another term for a golf course. (The Old Course at St. Andrews is the most famous links in the world.)

Lob Shot

A short, high shot, usually played with a wedge, designed to land softly. (He played a delicate lob shot over the bunker and saved his par.)

Loft

The degree of angle on the clubface, with the least loft on a putter and the most on a sand wedge. (Tom Kite popularized the sand wedge with 60-degrees of loft.) It also describes the act of hitting a shot. (Kite lofted his approach over the pond.)

Long Irons

The 1-4 irons. (The long irons are often difficult for people to hit, so PGA Professionals often recommend replacing them with fairway woods.)

Looking Up

The act of prematurely lifting your head to follow the flight of the ball, which also raises the swing center and can result in erratic ballstriking. (Once she stopped looking up, her scoring improved dramatically.)

Loop

The shape of the swing when the backswing and forward swing are in different planes. (Jim Furyk has a distinct loop in his swing but his swing is very effective.) Loop also refers to a round of golf. (The caddie finished his morning loop and then went right back out without eating lunch.)

Loosened Grip

Any time a player opens his fingers and loses control of the club. When this happens at the top of the backswing, it is often referred to as “playing the flute.” (Once he made the grip changes his PGA Professional suggested, his problem with a loosened grip was corrected.)

Mechanics

The mechanics of a golf swing or putting stroke. (Nick Faldo constantly works on the mechanics of his swing.)

Middle or Mid-irons

The 5-7 irons. (He was very accurate with his middle irons, which helped set up a lot of birdies.)

Mulligan

The custom of hitting a second ball—without penalty—on a hole, usually the first tee. (Mulligans are not allowed according to the Rules of Golf.)

Nassau

A competition in which points are awarded for winning the front nine, back nine and overall 18. (Nassaus are the most popular form of betting games.)

Off-Green Putting

When a player elects to putt from off the green rather than chip. (She favored off-green putting because she lacked confidence in her chipping and pitching.)

Offset

A measure of the distance between the leading edge of the hosel and the leading edge of the clubface. (The added offset on his new irons helped reduce his slicing.)

One-Piece Takeaway

Sometimes called the “modern” takeaway, it describes the beginning of the backswing when the hands, arms and wrists move away from the ball, maintaining the same relationship they had at address. (Sam Snead is credited with developing the one-piece takeaway.)

Open Clubface

When, either at address or during the swing, the heel of the clubhead is leading the toe, causing the clubface to point to the side of the target. (An open clubface caused him to hit his approach shot to the side of the green.)

Open Grip

Also referred to as a weak grip, it is when the hands are turned counter-clockwise on the club. (His open grip made it difficult for him to hook the ball.)

Open Stance

When the left or lead foot is pulled back farther from the target line than the rear or right foot. This stance generally helps promote a left-to-right ball flight. (Since she played from an open stance, it was easy for her to fade the ball around the large tree.)

Open-to-Closed

A description of the movement of the clubface when a player fans it open on the backswing and then closes it at impact. (When his timing was correct, his open-to-closed swing produced wonderful shots.)

Outside-to-In

A description of a swing path when the clubhead approaches the ball from outside the target line and then continues to the inside of that line following impact. (His outside-to-in swing path allowed him to hit his approach shot very near the pin, which was cut on the right side of the green.)

Overclub

To pick the wrong club, usually for an approach shot, causing the ball to go over the green. (He overclubbed his approach to the 18th green, and his ball came to rest in a shrub.)

Pace

The speed of the golf swing (He had a beautiful pace to his swing) or the speed of the greens (The greens at the PGA Championship had a quick pace, which the better putters favored.)

Paddle Grip

A putting grip with a flat surface where the thumbs rest. (Ben Crenshaw’s old putter had a paddle grip.)

Par

The score an accomplished player is expected to make on a hole, either a three, four or five. (The 12th hole at Augusta National is one of the most famous par 3s in golf.)

Path

The direction the club travels during the swing or the putting stroke. This is best observed from an overhead view. (When they studied the videotapes in the learning center, they saw that she had a pronounced outside-to-in swing path.)

Pendulum Stroke

In putting, a stroke that moves the clubhead back and forth on a constant line, without deviation. (His pendulum stroke made him a very effective putter.)

Pinch Shot

A shot played around the green in which a player strikes the ball with a crisp, clean descending blow. (She pinched the ball off a perfect lie and holed the shot.)

Pistol Grip

A grip, usually on a putter, that is built up under the left or top hand. (He had a pistol grip placed on his new putter.)

Pitch-and-Run

A shot from around the green, usually with a middle or short iron, where the ball carries in the air for a short distance before running towards the hole. (She played a beautiful pitch-and-run to within a foot of the hole.)

Pivot

The rotation of the body around a relatively fixed point, usually the spine. (Throughout his career, people have marveled at Fred Couples’ full pivot.)

Plumb-bob

A method many players use to help them determine the amount a putt will break. It involves positioning yourself behind the ball and holding the putter vertically so it covers the ball. In theory, the shaft of the putter will indicate the amount the ball will break. It does not, however, measure the speed of the green, which is an important element in reading a putt. (Ryder Cup Captain Curtis Strange often plumb-bobs his putts.)

Plugged Lie

The condition when the ball comes to rest in its own pitch mark, usually in a bunker or soft turf. (The ball plugged in the bunker, resulting in a difficult shot.)

Press

To try and hit the ball harder than usual. (He thought he could carry the trees and so he pressed with his driver.) This also describes an extra effort to play well.

(When he bogeyed the first two holes, he began to press.) In betting terms, it’s an additional bet made after a player falls behind in a match. (When he fell two-down in his match, he pressed.)

Pre-Shot Routine

The actions a player takes from the time he selects a club until he begins the swing. (Her pre-shot routine never varied when she was playing her best golf.)

Private Lesson

Generally speaking, when a PGA Professional gives a lesson to a single pupil. (After losing in the club championship, she had a private lesson with her PGA Professional.)

Pronation

An inward rotation of the hands towards the body’s centerline when standing in a palms-facing-forward position. (The term was inaccurately used for many years to describe the rotation of both hands through the impact area. In fact, one hand, the right, was pronating while the left was supinating. Obviously, it is impossible to pronate both hands through the shot.)

Pulled Hook

A shot that begins to the side of the target line and continues to curve even further away. (He hit a pull hook off the 18th tee in the final round, but luckily the ball stayed in bounds.)

Pulled Shot

A relatively straight shot that begins to the side of the target and doesn’t curve back. (She pulled her shot and ended up in the left-hand bunker.)

Pulled Slice

A shot that starts well to the side of the target but curves back to the target. (He hit a pulled slice that landed safely on the green.)

Punch Shot

A low-flying shot played with an abbreviated backswing and finish. The key to the shot is having the hands slightly ahead of the clubhead at impact, which reduces the effective loft of the club. (With the winds howling off the ocean, she played a beautiful punch shot into the green.)

Pushed Hook

A shot that begins to the side of the target but curves back to the target. (Under the pressure of the final round, he hit a pushed hook from the tee of the 17th hole.)

Pushed Shot

A shot that starts to the side of the target and never curves back. (He pushed his tee shot into the right rough.)

Pushed Slice

A shot that starts to the side of the target and curves further away. (His pushed slice on the first hole flew out of bounds, setting the tone for the match.)

Radius

The distance between the center of the swing arc (the target or forward shoulder) and the hands on the grip. (Because of his unusually long arms, his swing had a large radius.)

Raised Swing Center

Elevating the central area in the body (somewhere between the top of the spine and the center of the neck) around which rotation takes place. What the novice frequently refers to as “looking up” and results in a swing that is too high.

Rap

To hit a putt with a short, firm stroke. (Former PGA Champion Gene Sarazen liked to rap his putts.)

Reading the Green (or Putt)

The entire process involved in judging the break and path of a putt. (Her caddie, Tom, was a genius at reading a green.)

Recover

To successfully hit a shot from a poor location. (Throughout his career, Arnold Palmer was known for his ability to boldly recover from trouble.)

Release

The act of freely returning the clubhead squarely to the ball at impact, producing a powerful shot. (Tiger Woods has a textbook release of the club at impact.)

Reverse Weight Shift

A swing flaw in which the weight moves forward on the backswing instead of to the back leg. (His reverse weight shift caused him to be a poor driver of the ball.)

Rhythm

The coordination of movement during the golf swing or putting stroke. (For generations, Sam Snead’s golf swing has been the model of perfect rhythm.)

Road Hole

The par-4 17th hole at the Old Course at St. Andrews, one of the most famous and difficult holes in the world. (His approach on the Road Hole missed the green and cost him the British Open.)

Round Robin

A tournament format in which players or teams play a variety of other teams, the winner being the player or team that accumulates the highest number of points. (The two brothers always teamed in the club’s Fall Round Robin.)

Scoring Clubs

The driver, putter and sand wedge. (He devoted much of his practice to the scoring clubs.)

Scramble

To recover from trouble (Seve Ballesteros could scramble with the best of them) or a popular form of team play in which the team members pick the ball in the best position and everyone plays from that spot. (The member-guest was played in a scramble format.)

Semiprivate Lesson

An instruction format where a limited number of pupils work with a Professional. (When the triplets wanted to take up golf, their parents arranged for them to take semiprivate lessons with their PGA Professional.)

Separation

When any of the various body parts and/or the club move either faster or slower than the other elements of the swing. (He worked very hard to prevent his arms from separating on the downswing.)

Setup

The process of addressing the ball, so that the club and body are properly aimed and aligned. (Since his setup was so good, he could occasionally recover from the slight errors in his swing.)

Shank

When the ball is struck on the hosel of the club, usually sending it shooting off to the right. (He hit a shank on his approach to the ninth hole, and the ball almost struck his caddie.)

Shape

To curve a shot to fit the situation. (His ability to shape a shot really impressed the older players.) The word is also used to describe the flight of the ball. (The usual shape of his shots was a fade.)

Short Game

Those shots played on and around the green, including putting, chipping and pitching, and bunker shots. (To go along with his power, Tiger Woods has a phenomenal short game.)

Short Irons

The 8 and 9 irons and the pitching wedge. The sand wedge is considered a scoring or specialty club. (He wanted flatter-than-standard lies on his short irons.)

Shut

A position in the swing when the clubface is closed relative to the target line. (The cause of his poor driving was a shut clubface at the top of the backswing.)

Sky

A high, short shot caused by the clubhead striking the underside of the ball. Also known as a “pop-up.” (He skied his tee shot and the ball barely reached the fairway.)

Slice

A ball that curves from left to right to a greater degree than a fade. (His game was plagued by a terrible slice that he developed as a youngster.)

Smothered Hook

A low, right-to-left shot that dives quickly to the ground. The cause is an extremely closed clubface. (He hit a smothered hook from the tee, and the ball splashed into a nearby pond.)

Sole

When referring to equipment, it is the bottom of a club. (The sole of his wedge had become rusty over the winter.) When referring to the swing, it is the point when the sole of the club touches the ground at address. (When he soled his club, the ball moved and he called a penalty on himself.)

Sole-Weighted

A design, usually for fairway woods, that incorporates additional weight along the sole of the club. This makes it easier to get the ball into the air and is also effective from the rough. (Many players in the PGA

Championship had sole-weighted clubs in their bags because of the deep rough.)

Splash Shot

A shot played from a good lie in the bunker. The club “splashes” through the sand, throwing the ball into the air. (He splashed the ball out of the bunker, landing the ball within a foot of the hole.)

Spoon

A term for a 3-wood that is seldom used today. (He reached the par 5 with a driver and a spoon.)

Spot

Another term for marking the ball on the green so it might be lifted. (He put a spot on his ball so he could clean it before putting.)

Spot Putting

Using an intermediate target such as a discolored blade of grass or an old ball mark as a means of aiming a putt. (Once he began spot putting, his scores began to improve.)

Square

A term frequently used in golf. It can be used to describe a stance (his feet, hips and shoulders were all square to the target line) or the clubface (his club was perfectly square to the target line) or to describe contact with the ball (the key to greater driving distance is making square contact.) It can also refer to the status of a match (they were all-square (tied) at the turn.)

Stance

The position of the feet at address. (He played most shots from an open stance.)

Steer

An attempt to guide the flight of the ball that usually results in a loss of distance. (He tried to steer the ball off the first tee, but wound up hitting a weak push into the rough.)

Straight-Faced

The description of a club with very little loft, such as a driving iron, or a driver that lacks the standard bulge and roll. (Because of the strong winds, he often drove with a straight-faced iron.)

Stroke Play

Also known as medal play, it is a form of competition based on the cumulative number of strokes taken, either over one round or several. (Most professional tournaments are stroke-play events.)

Strong Grip

A term used to describe a grip in which the hands are turned counter-clockwise on the grip. It does not denote a stronger-than-normal grip pressure. (Former PGA Champion Paul Azinger has a strong grip.)

Supination

An outward rotation of the hands (thumbs turning out) away from the body's centerline when standing in a palms-facing-the-body position. In the golf swing it is the right-hand rotation motion on the backswing and the left's on the forward swing.

Swaying

An exaggerated lateral movement of the body on either the backswing, forward swing, or both, which results in inconsistent shotmaking. (His PGA Professional suggested a drill to correct his swaying.)

Sweet Spot

The point on the clubface where, if it is struck with an object, the clubface will not torque or twist to either side. (To find the sweet spot on his putter, he held the grip with his thumb and forefinger and let it hang vertically. Then he tapped the face of the putter with the eraser-end of a pencil until the putter head moved back without any torquing or twisting.)

Swing Arc

The entire path the clubhead makes in the course of a swing. It is a combination of the swing's width and length. (His swing arc resulted in tremendous clubhead speed.)

Swing Center

A point, usually near the base of the neck and the top of the spine, around which the arms and upper body rotate during the swing. (Since his swing center remained constant throughout the swing, he was a very consistent ballstriker.)

Swinger

A player whose swing is based on timing and rhythm, as opposed to "hitter," whose swing is based on sheer power. (Gene Litter is a textbook example of a swinger.)

Swing Plane

An imaginary surface that describes the path and angle of the club during the swing. (As a rule, tall players tend to have a more upright swing plane than shorter players.)

Swingweight

A measure of the effective weight of a club. (His driver had a D-8 swingweight, which is heavier than standard.)

Swingweight Scale

A device for measuring swingweight. (Every PGA Professional knows how to use a swingweight machine.)

Takeaway

The movement of the club at the start of the backswing. (Her slow takeaway set the pace for her entire swing.)

Target Line

An imaginary (often visualized) line drawn behind and through the ball to the point a player is aiming. If the player is planning to curve the ball, this point is the initial – not the ultimate – target. (Jack Nicklaus visualizes his target line before every shot.)

Tee Box

The area where players tee off to start a hole. (Robert Trent Jones designed long tee boxes.)

Tempo

The speed of the swing (not necessarily the clubhead speed.) (Ernie Els has a beautiful tempo.)

Texas Wedge

A term describing a shot played with a putter from well off the green. It is a good shot for players who lack confidence in their chipping and pitching, or in extremely windy conditions. (Under tournament pressure, he often played a Texas wedge, rather than risk chipping the ball.)

Three-Quarter Shot

A shot played with a shortened backswing and lessened arm speed. (With the winds blowing off the ocean, he played a three-quarter shot into the 15th green.)

Tier

A rise or level in a green or tee. (It was important to land your approach shot on the proper tier.)

Timing

The sequence of motions within the golf swing. (Her timing was so good that it made up for her minor swing faults.)

Toed Shot

Any shot hit off the toe of the club. (Facing a fast, downhill putt, he toed his approach putt and left it short of the hole.)

Topped Shot

A low, bouncing shot caused by the bottom of the club striking the top half of the ball. (He topped his drive on the first tee and never regained his composure.)

Touch

A player's sense of feel, generally around the greens. (Ben Crenshaw has always had great touch.)

Trajectory

The height and angle the ball travels when struck. (Great players are able to control the trajectory of their shots.)

Transition

The change of direction in the swing, from the backswing to the forward swing. (It's very important to make a smooth transition in your swing.)

Uncock

The release of straightening of the wrists during the downswing. (She uncocked her wrists prematurely, causing her to lose power in her swing.)

Upright

A steeper-than-normal swing plane. (His upright swing helped him escape from the rough.) Upright also refers to a club's lie in which the shaft is placed at a steeper-than-standard angle. (His PGA Professional suggested upright lies in his long irons.)

Vector

A quantity or measure related to force that has both magnitude and direction. An important factor in determining the distance and direction a ball travels.

Visualization

A mental image of a swing or shot or even an entire round. (Once she began visualizing her shots, her scoring improved dramatically.)

Waggle

A motion or several motions designed to keep a player relaxed at address and help establish a smooth pace in the takeaway and swing. (His father told him to try and copy Sam Snead's waggle.)

Weak Grip

A term describing a grip where the hands are turned to the left for a right-handed player. (When Ben Hogan weakened his grip he began fading the ball.)

Whiff

A complete miss. Also known as an "air ball." (He was so nervous that he whiffed his drive.)

Yips

A condition, generally believed to be psychological, which causes a player to lose control of his hands and club. In Great Britain, the condition is referred to as the "Twitchies." This generally occurs when putting or in the short game, but it can also afflict people when hitting a tee shot. (Bernhard Langer has fought the yips for much of his professional career.)