

Golf - Overview

Golf is a game in which the players hit the ball with a club. The game is played on a long course that contains a lot of holes at random spots. The aim is to hit the ball and to put it inside a series of holes. This should be done with as less number of strokes as possible. Both men and women can participate in this game.



History of Golf

Inception of golf is believed to be during the period of 100 BC at Rome where people use to hit a leather ball with a stick. During the reign of Sung Dynasty, this game was a bit popular in China but with a name **Chuiwan**. But the actual modern form of this game was seen at Scotland in 15th century.



In 1457, James II banned the game in Scotland but James IV lifted the ban in 1502 by himself becoming a golfer. Musselburgh links in Scotland is considered as the oldest golf course and is also recorded in Guinness Book. In 1764, the golf course was created at St. Andrews having 18 holes. The rules of golf were made in 1744 and is considered to be the oldest. The Open Championship is considered as the oldest championship which was first played in 1860. Later on, the game was introduced in US in 1888.

Participating Countries

Popularity of this game grew when first WATC game (World Amateur Team Championships) was held between Japan and USA in the year 1957. After that, many countries started to participate in WATC championships. Now in total 26 countries actively participate in this championship.

The players who have dominated golf over the years mostly belong to USA, Argentina, Canada, and Australia.

Golf - Equipment

In this chapter, we will discuss the equipment required to play the game of golf. But, let us first start with the playing environment of golf.

Playing environment

Golf is played in big fields with trimmed grass ground. The playing areas need to be maintained under super surveillance and care every time failing to which can cause water pollution, spilling of pesticides and destructions of the nearby vegetation.

Choose the golf field and make it in such a manner that nearby ecosystem will not be disturbed. Proper drainage system for the waste water should be there and if possible implement water reuse facility in the field. For the protection of the surface water, high quality buffer zones are usually created.

There are certain non-play areas on the field. At those places, vegetation can be continued aiding to the agricultural balance. For the filling of the golf field VENM (Virgin Excavated Natural Materials) are used. Generally, golf course fields are constructed in those areas which are previously deserted.

Let us now take a look at the equipment used in golf.

Ball

The main equipment of this game is the ball. It is made up of beech which is generally a hardwood material. The golf ball should have a minimum diameter of 42.67 mm and weight should not exceed 45.93 gm.

Golf Clubs

The clubs can be made of as woods, irons and putters. A single player can carry only 14 clubs. Now-a-days, a new type of club called **Hybrid club** is used which is a combination of wood and iron.

Ball Markers

Certain circumstances may occur in which there may be the need to change the position of ball. At this point we use ball markers. This is generally a round piece of metal or plastic.

Golf Bag

This is a nylon or leather bag that is used to transport the clubs. They have sections inside to separate each club. They have various categories such as Sunday bag, cart bag, staff bags etc.

Golf Cart

This is a vehicle that is used to transport the players from one place to another place in the course. Unlike other petrol vehicles, these are battery or electric vehicles. Some governing bodies have restricted certain usage limits upon these vehicles.

Towels

Towels are used by the players to wipe the balls and hands. They are attached to the bag with the help of grommet.



Club Heads

Clubs heads are nothing but wood or leather materials that are used to cover the head of the clubs so that they will not collide with each other while being together and will protect them from any accidental damage.

Gloves

Most of the golf players used gloves while playing. This helps in having a strong hold of the club grip and prevents blistering. Players wear the gloves generally on the dominant hand.

How to Play Golf?

Position of Ball

The position of your ball with respect to your stance is a key factor in deciding the winning chance of yours in the game. If you are on short irons, then it is advisable to position the ball in the middle of the stance (at equidistance and at the centre of both of yours legs). When a golfer hits the ball a turf of grass is cut while hitting. This is known as **divot**.

The distance will eventually increase as half inch with the type of club in your stance. The distance will increase towards your lead toe i.e. towards left toe for right handed golfers and vice versa.



The ball and the lead heel should be in line with each other for the player. To ensure proper striking of the ball on the upswing, the toe should be flared little outward.

If the position of the ball is too far forward, then you will face problem in having a strong impact on the ball. This will also cause the club to move from outside to inside at the moment of impact. To resolve this issue, move the ball back into the stance an inch or two.

To have an edge over others, place the ball to the inside of left foot. This position will help you in drawing a line at an angle of 90 degree with the target line that connects the left heel and the golf ball.

It is often advised to the beginners not to use the same positioning of the balls for their fairway woods. This mistake will not let you produce quality shots. Instead you can make slight adjustment with your balls to get the best shot.

Grip Position

As a beginner, your prime focus should be on gripping mechanism. This is because many people often neglect this and regret later. A good gripping can help you in delivering the best shot with desired angle and will also help in developing a consistent set up. First we should know about the hand orientation over the club.

If you are a right-handed golfer, then the position of your left hand must be near the butt of the shaft on the top while the right hand should be exactly below the left hand and vice versa for the lefties. Extend the thumb of the left hand towards the downside of the club's handle but do not wrap it around the underside.



There are various types of gripping mechanism. Some of them are discussed below.

Interlock grip

In this type of gripping, the position of the pinky finger of the right hand will be in between middle and index finger of the left hand. Many of the famous champions like Jack Nicklaus and Tiger woods use this gripping mechanism.

**Ten Finger Grip****Interlock Grip****Vardon Overlap Grip**

Vardon Overlap Grip

It is another popular gripping mechanism and is more similar to the interlock gripping mechanism. Here instead of placing the small finger in between the index finger and middle finger, place it over the gap in between them.

Baseball or Ten-Finger Grip

Professionals do avoid this gripping but it is more popular among the amateurs. Unlike other two gripping mechanisms, there is no interlocking or overlapping of fingers in the grip. The player has to place the little finger of the trailing hand close to the index finger of the leading hand and the thumb of the leading hand is covered by the lifeline of the trailing hand

Aim

As we all know that golf is a target-oriented sport and our main objective is to move the ball from its initial position to the goal. The target is far away from the hitting point. Our primary aim is to move the ball from the hitting point to the green, and then from that point the target is cup.



Bunker Shot

Bunkers are nothing but the sand traps which becomes very difficult for the player if he is not aware with the strategies of moving out the ball out of it. Unless you are well prepared for a bunker shot, it will cost you shots and will affect your sanity too. There are mainly two major types of bunkers that you must be aware of and they are;

- Greenside bunker
- Fairway bunker

Greenside Bunker

Here bunkers are positioned near to the greens. This will add obstacle for the player. This is because these shots are hit during the approach shot and shot is made through an iron with a very heavy uplift.



Fairway Bunker

These are even more difficult than the sand ones. Here we have to deal with more club than a wedge of sand. The hitting of shots in this case will depend upon the lip of the bunker.

Techniques for Hitting Better Drives

Hitting always with a perfect drive is very important in golf. But this requires regular practise and certain tricks are to be employed while playing. On the flat area, we need to tee up the golf ball in the desired area so that it will have a better sweep shot. Some of the tips that should be followed for hitting better drives are as follows –

- Most of the performers think the shot as a performance that should be delivered with perfection. This creates muscle tightening and brain cramping. Instead you take this as an aim to put your ball into a good position for hitting the second shot. This will enhance your performance.
- Another important aspect that most of the golfers neglect is the placement of the ball with respect to their stance. Unless the ball has been placed with right stance, it will be difficult to achieve a perfect shot.

- Always have an eye on the degree of loft that your club head is maintaining. Degree of loft has two advantages. First it increases the height of the drive and secondly it decreases the curves which obviously is another advantage.
- While preparing for swinging, do not think about those area where you do not want to hit the ball. Instead focus on the areas where you definitely want your ball to be positioned after the drive.
- Sometimes golfers gamble during situations when their handicap is very low. You should aim to put the ball into the play.

Golf - Rules

The rules of golf is maintained and governed by International Golf Federation (IGF) all over the world. Apart from this, all countries have their own governing bodies to organise the game in the fairway. Some of the important rules that one must be aware of before getting his/her hands into the game are as follows –

- The teeing of the ball should be done within a club's length of the hole.
- Position of your tee must be upon the ground.
- The player is not allowed to remove any obstacles while playing. Only obstacles within the club's length of the ball on fair green can be removed.
- In case it has been found that your balls are touching each other, you have to pick up the first ball till you play the last one.
- During the time of holing, it is expected of you to play the game fairly without laying yourself in the way of hole.
- The person whose ball lies farthest from the hole is supposed to play first.
- If you are at the position of holing, then you are not allowed to mark the path of holing with any material like your club or foot etc.
- If the movement of the ball is stopped by any animal like dog or birds etc, then it has to be played again from its initial position.
- Once you strike off a ball with a tee, you cannot change the ball with another one.
- While playing, if your ball comes under any watery filth, then you are free to take out your ball from that position and tee it again.

Golf - Champions

In this chapter, we will provide a brief synopsis on some of the great players of Golf who brought laurels to their country by playing at the highest level.

Isao Aoki



Isao Aoki is a Japanese player who has won more than fifty events in Japan Golf Tour during the period between 1972 and 1990. In 1983, he participated and won Hawaiian Open on US based PGA tour. He also won Panasonic European Open in European Tour.

In 1978, he won World Match Play Championship held in England. Aoki participated in the tour 165 times in PGA Tour and got second rank in 1980. Aoki also participated in Million Dollar Challenge in South Africa in 1984.

Tiger Woods



Tiger Woods is an American golfer who is one of the most successful players in the sport. He started his golf career in 1996 and won 1997 masters and got the first rank in the world rankings. From August 1999 to September 2004 and from June 2005 to October 2010, he was world number one golfer.

After these wins he got married and then divorced. So he lost his form and his rank went down to 58. In December 2011, he won Chevron World Challenge and In 2013 he won Arnold Parmer Invitational and regained his first position.

David Toms



David Toms is an American golfer who was born on 4th January 1967 in Monroe. He made his debut into this game in the year 1989. His professional career shows 13 wins in PGA tour and 2 wins Web.com Tour. He was awarded with Payne Stewart award in the year 2011. From 2001 to 2006, he was one of the top ten players and in 2002 and 2003, he ranked fifth. Tom got third place in Northehrn Telecom Open. In 1994, he participated in Nike Tour(web.com) in which he won the Greater Greenville Classic and Wichita Open tournaments. Besides this he took part in many tournaments and remained one of the top ten players.

Helen Alfredsson



Helen Alfredsson is a Swedish player who is a lifetime member of Ladies European Tour and also plays for US based LPGA Tour. She started her career in 1989 and participated in Ladies European Tour. In 1990, she won Women's British Open. In 1991, she won LET two times and ALPG and Japanese tours one time each. In 1992, she won seven events in the LPGA tour. She kept taking part in many tournaments and won them and in 2013 she announced her retirement.

Yani Tseng



She was born on 23rd January 1989 in China. She made her debut into this game in the year 2007. She has won 15 times in LPGA tour and 6 times in Ladies European Tour.

She was awarded with GWAA Female Player of the Year consecutively for 2010, 2011 and also LPGA tour Rookie of the year in 2011. She is the youngest player to win five major championships and was number one player consecutively from 2011 to 2013.

Juli Inkster



She was born on 24th June 1960 in California. She made her debut into this game in the year 1983. She has won 31 times in LPGA tour out of which seven were major wins. She also won two times in Ladies European Tour.

She was awarded with GWAA Female Player of the Year in 1999 and also LPGA tour Rookie of the year in 1984. In 2007, she participated in Women's World Cup of Golf. Her name can also be found in World Golf Hall of Fame in 2000.

Karrie Webb



She was born on 21st December 1974 in Australia. She made her debut into this game in the year 1994. Her professional career shows 41 wins in LPGA tour and 15 wins in Ladies European Tour.

She was awarded with GWAA Female Player of the Year in 2000 and also LPGA Tour Rookie of the year in 1996. She also got the Ladies European Tour Rookie of the Year in 1995. Along with this, she has won LPGA Player of the Year in 1999 and 2000.