

Twenty Extra Yards – From Two Simple Moves

Extra distance is, and always will be, the Holy Grail of golf.

From a marketing point of view the way to make money in golf products is to promise instant ability to hit the ball further.

I had an incredibly illuminating chat with the arguably the greatest golf copywriter of all time who told me to never sell putting products and always focus on easy distance. Sell “immediate gratification” to huge drives and if you *must* waste your time creating a putting product then simply throw it in as a freebie.

A salutary lesson in human nature I think!

Of course I didn’t take his advice and shall probably never be rich as a result. I chose to create my Break Par Blueprint based on exactly what worked and not just on “immediate gratification” secrets and the relentless appeal of the booming drive. And, partly as a two fingered gesture to all those out there selling “instant 50 yards on your drive using this one tiny twist of your big toe” merchants, I chose to throw in my “get an extra twenty yards” ebook as a bonus.

I also promise not to pad it out into 50 pages to confuse it and create the illusion of “value”.

So that’s the theory.

There is one inarguable fact though and it's the oldest, most tedious, tired cliché of all and I'm delighted to smash it once and for all...

“Drive for Show and Putt for Dough”

...is complete nonsense. It's nonsense put out there by wizened old hackers who simply can't hit it very far and wish we were all using mashie niblicks and bemoaning the fact that women are allowed in the club house.

We all know that putting is absolutely vital and we all know that it is one of the absolute keys to scoring but driving the ball as far as you can puts you at a huge advantage.

Here is a little story to demonstrate how big an advantage. The first hole at my local course is a 350 yard par four with quite a tricky green. There are gorse bushes on the left, a steep fall into trees on the right and a bunker just short of the green. In other words you're quite badly punished for a poor approach shot.

I was having a conversation with a friend of mine about half way into the challenge – just at the time when I was really getting the hang of driving the ball. I had played with him a few years previously when I was still in my “can't break 100” mode and at that stage he was probably a better golfer than me.

A mutual friend told him what I'd been up to and he was incredulous. I'd just shot my 78 and he simply didn't believe it. He started quizzing me about what I'd been doing and still dumfounded he asked me to describe my last round. Slightly exasperated I explained that I hit my drive on the first and then would work out which wedge to hit. If it was a great drive it would only be a sandwedge into the green and if I hadn't got it quite right it might have been my 52* or $\frac{3}{4}$ pitching wedge.

He stopped me with an incredulous look *"You take a WEDGE into the green? I take a six or a seven iron!"*

That conversation, more than any other before and since, highlighted just how important hitting the ball a decent distance is. Your ability to be accurate with a wedge versus a 6 iron is exponentially different. It's night and day and will hugely reflect in your scoring equally as much as bad or good putting will. My scoring became an awful lot better when I was able to consistently hit the ball in the 260 – 300 yard bracket. It meant that two of the par fours, with a great drive, actually became little more than a drive and a pitch making them obvious birdie chances and a big disappointment if I didn't get them. Shooting a few birdies allows you to take the pressure off the holes you mess up and bogey. It's common sense stuff but worth reiterating.

So what are the keys? Well it all boils down to creating a decent source of coiled power that you simply unleash. It is not about thrashing away at the ball. You create two power sources as you “wind up” and then, in as controlled fashion as possible – you “let go”.

The two sources are **stored power in your right leg** and **stored power in your shoulder turn**. Effectively you’re turning your shoulders against the right knee. The easy way to turn your shoulders a long way is to let your right knee go straight on the backswing (a big problem of mine in the early days) which simply dissipates the power.

So here it is:

1. Turn your right knee a tiny fraction in at address. Barely perceptible to an observer but feel a little tension. Make sure you keep this position **THROUGHOUT** the backswing. Feel the tension increase as you take the club back. This tension is the force you’re going to let go.
2. On your backswing turn your shoulders so that the back of your left shoulder is to the right of the ball. You should see clear space between the ball and the shoulder.

Now, when you’ve wound up and satisfied those two criteria, you simply, but still in a very controlled manner, unleash this stored power towards the ball and

finally through to a balanced follow through. You *do not* lash at it with your hands.

Of course there are all sorts of other swing mechanics going on in there but if I satisfy those two on my drives then I know I'm going to hit it a long way. Not necessarily straight of course because we haven't dealt with any other swing issues. It is, however, vastly more likely to be straight because you're doing it in a very controlled way. You are NOT simply "hitting it" as hard as you can with your arms.

There is a proviso to this. *Flexibility*. You do need a certain level of flexibility to be able to get your shoulder turn correct and this became a major focus of my fitness training. And I'll be giving you all the details of this in the "Get fit for golf" bonus.

But for now just try this in front of a mirror. Feel the tension in the knee and feel the stretch in your turn. But be careful. Don't twist too far and pull a muscle. Make sure you warm up and stretch beforehand.