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SUPPLEMENT TO THE PORCUPINE ADVANCE, WEDNESDAY, MAY 10th., 1922

GOLF

And It's Minimum Essentials
by FRANK THOMPSON, AMATEUR CHAMPION OF CANADA.

No.5—THE WOODEN CLUBS
The driver and brassie are the most powerful clubs of the set. When these are used the length of the swing and the pivot of the body are at their maximum.
Some players take the club further back than others. The horizontal is supposed to be the ideal position but it must be noted that very few golfers stop their back swing at this point. It is impossible and indeed inadvisable to be dogmatic in this point for every one must find out for himself what his own best hitting position is.
A person with small hands and weak forearms will require a longer swing to develop the hit, than another stronger person, and one should be guided absolutely by his own physical characteristic as to how far he takes the club back. As ladies are generally physically weaker than men they will require a longer swing as a rule.
There are two parts to the swing, or at least two ways of viewing it, for the swing is a way to be considered as a unity—the arc the club makes and the twist of the body. It is admitted now by the best authorities that there should be no sway of the body and the most consistent performers are those who observe this idea. The body simply pivots and should require no more space to execute the swing than that needed at the address.
I know of one instructor who in order to make it clear that there is no sway in the up-swing makes his pu-

his swing without a club, with the right side close to a wall. If the side touches the wall the swing is not properly made. If this example were carried out further, so that an imaginary wall were placed at the left side, it should be possible to hit the ball without touching the wall with the left side. Of course after the ball is hit the hands travelling at so fast a clip will naturally pull the weight after them on to the left foot, and in this way the imaginary wall will be touched. But with the expert players this movement is very small. This should make beginners pause and wonder for often times in their enthusiastic endeavors to follow through they hurl their bodies forward before the ball has been struck, which can result in nothing but disaster.
In order to give a ball any great distance with the wooden clubs, there must be considerable pivoting. To prove this one has simply to restrict the body absolutely and hit the ball by use of the hands only. The hands cannot get into a hitting position and the temptation is to sway the body. Now the twist of the body and the distance the club goes back are not necessarily dependent on each other. A good example of this is Miss Leitch who takes the club little, if any, past the horizontal and still has as free and pronounced a body twist as anyone in the game. This among other things is not the least of the reasons for her great length from tee.

The indifferent player may and frequently does take the club much further past the horizontal but has quite a restricted body pivot. As said before the weaker player, even though his body movement may be as much, will require to take the club further back than his stronger brother. So long as one always has control of the Club, regardless of the distance it goes back, no one is justified in saying that there is an over swing. In the well executed swing if a line is drawn through the ball to the hole, and extended, the club head will pass inside this line on the back swing and also after hitting the ball. Of course with slice and pull this will not be the case. If the swing is thought of as an arc it will help to make it rhythmic. The whole swing should be conceived as one movement. It should not be built up in parts. One should persistently think of getting maximum results with minimum efforts. Above all preserve an even balance for without this successful golf is impossible.
Anything which makes balancing easier is to be recommended. Every one will not attain this end in the same way. But if the above general principles are followed, it will be less difficult than if they are broken.
In taking the club back, beginners are often advised to throw their arms well out from the body—the idea is to get freedom into the swing. This is apt to cause the body to sway if indulged in too much. It must be remembered that the blow in golf is delivered from the inside, as can readily be proven by motion pictures of players in action. The arms should not hug the body too much in the address nor be thrown too far out. In the back swing the right elbow slips around close to the body.

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The pace of the swing will usually be in keeping with the type of the player. A high strung temperamental player will naturally make his shots quicker than the dour, phlegmatic person. Not every one can play his shots as quickly as Duncan and for the vast majority to attempt to do so would destroy their games. Taking the club back should not be (as some one remarked) a funeral rite, nor a music hall trick, but something in between. The great thing is to take the club back naturally. In connection with the drive I recall a verse and I pass it on as a gem, not of poetry but of golf wisdom.
"Do not try to over do it,
Hold your driver fairly slack,
And if you press, you'll deeply rue it,
And remember slowly back."
I am quite sure that a great number have pushed the last line to absurdity until as Sir Walter Simpson remarks, the swings resembles a person trying to catch a fly on his "ear." If the swing is slowed up beyond a certain point, the hands are not taking an active part in it, and in all probability it becomes wabby and disjointed. Usually the fault is in snatching the body back. So long as the hands control, I do not think it possible to take the club back too fast. The fact that most good players take their clubs back comparatively fast is significant. Most long drivers have fast swings,

and within limits, the faster the back swing, the quicker the down swing. Let the player strive to find out what is natural, in this detail as in all other things. "Hold the driver fairly slack." If it is held too tightly, it is apt to stiffen the forearm muscles, which makes a smooth swing difficult.
Some advise holding tighter with the left hand. My advice is not to attempt to make either hand the master one. I try to hold the club firmly but not grimly, with both hands, and I do not consciously hold tighter with either my left or right. I have experimented a little, but the results were not nearly as good as when I played naturally without trying to give prominence to either hand. It seems to me that a great deal of nonsense has been written about the relative work of the right and the left hand. The game is difficult enough inherently (I apprehend for most persons) without creating fictions. So long as people believe it is difficult for them, it will be so. There is such a thing as getting too much form.
Every student of the game arrives at the point where his game would be better if he would take the old Pro's advice and simply stand up to the ball and "swoop her awa."

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Next article—Iron Play.

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