

Begin with Ball Flight

by Peter Norwood

When analyzing a golf swing, great teachers and players begin with analyzing the ball flight and analyzing the caliber of contact between the clubface and ball. They then work backwards into why this is occurring from the movements of the club, the arms, and the body during swings. To even begin understanding the golf swing, a player or teacher must understand ball flight and understand the movement of the club during the downswing and through the impact area. The flight of the ball, in terms of direction, is a combination between the path of the club, the angle of the clubface, and where the ball is struck upon the clubface through the impact area. It is fairly simple and completely based upon the laws of physics. An important point I want you to understand is the clubface has substantially more influence upon the direction of the ball compared to the swing path of the club. This means if your clubface is very open or closed through impact, the ball may go solely in the direction of the clubface, even if your path is traveling in an opposite direction. Overtime and after observing numerous shots, you will definitely see a pattern emerge in your ball flight.

There are many visible differences among great players and the key to good golf is repeatability. The ability to repeat is why there are successful players with ball flights of fades, draws, straight shots, or combinations of all three. The key is in understanding why your specific good shots and bad shots happen, and recognize how to overcome and minimize the bad from happening, especially in important situations. The majority of amateur golfers who play the game will have a tendency of being outside-to-in through

impact and create the shot pattern of fades, slices, and pulls. The majority of lower handicapped players in the game often have relatively neutral paths through impact and have shot patterns of straight shots, slight fades, and slight draws. For a better player, including many tour professionals, a bad shot in terms of direction is often caused by the club traveling too much from inside-to-outside, and creating the shot pattern of draws, hooks, and pushes. As a final thought for this section, the great Sam Snead was once asked why some tour professionals have long careers with great success and why others don't. Sam replied by saying that he felt many of the players who didn't simply did not understand the ball flight laws. Come in and get some help from one of our teaching professionals. We can help you learn to understand and improve your own ball flight tendencies. Considering Sam Snead won 82 PGA Tour Events, currently the most ever won by any player, if you are serious about improving your golf game, you should definitely listen to the man's advice.