

Swinging the Clubhead

By ERNEST JONES

AUTHOR OF "SWINGING INTO GOLF"

When teaching golf, I try to present a picture of a fundamental principle that applies to all golfers. It does not matter to me whether the pupil is a national champion or has never held a golf club. I try to explain exactly what he should try to do, somewhat in this fashion:

What you must realize is, as Sir Walter Simpson explained 60 years or so ago, that there is only one categorical imperative in golf, and that is: to hit the ball. There are no minor absolutes.

There is only one thing you are allowed to hit the ball with, and that is the head of the club. So therefore, the object is to use your power to transmit as much force as you are capable of producing into the clubhead.

No one can do more than one thing at one time, and golf is no different from anything else. For instance, I refer very often to a circle; I point out that you do not have to know how many parts you can break it into, such as 360 degrees, so many minutes, so many seconds, etc., but it is simply one line, perfectly round. And it is just the same with a swing. **A swing is one continuous motion, to and fro, backward and forward.**

In 1917 I collaborated with Daryn Hammond in a series of articles entitled "The Essence of the Matter", which became the basis of the book, "The Golf Swing—The Ernest Jones Method". In that, it was pointed out that I was convinced that the golf swing could be readily taught and consistently performed only if it were conceived as one movement, under one control — the hands. Further, that various members of the body (including the shoulders) were normally anxious to get busy too strenuously and too soon, and that the only way of insuring their working in due co-ordination with the other members of the body, notably the hands and fingers, was to treat them as disastrous

leaders, but as wholly admirable followers. The basis of the swing was the proper action of the hands and fingers.

Now, after thirty years of teaching, it has become an axiom that the only way to have control of the motion of the clubhead is through the medium of the hands and fingers.

Emphasizing the Positive

Today all golfers talk about their swing. Any kind of hitting or any kind of style in golf is referred to as that person's swing. Practically every pupil who comes to me for help wants to know what is wrong with his or her swing.

Invariably I ask, "Do you think it would help you if I were to tell you what is wrong?"

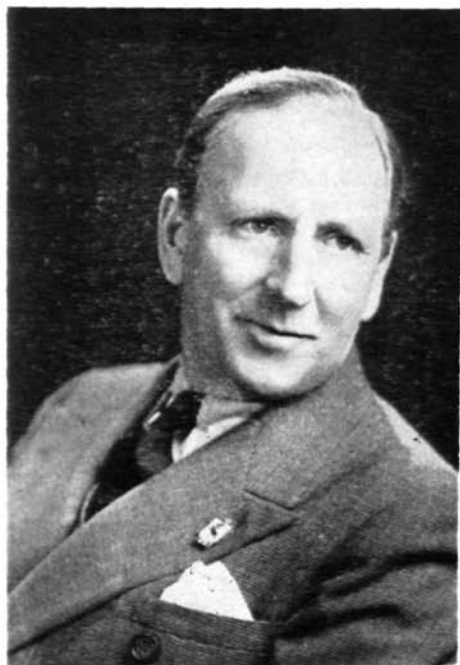
"Most certainly I do," is the usual reply.

"Well, now, if I did tell you what is wrong, I would only be telling you something you should not do, or something to avoid. Don't you think it would be much better for me to tell you what is right and give you a chance to learn something positive?"

Anything you do that is possible to exaggerate is no good—you can caricature only an imperfection—but you cannot overdo what is right, so let us begin with what you must be aware of doing. You are going to use your powers to generate as much force as possible into the head of the club.

Now, your power means your strength, energy, which is in every part of your body. Force is speed times weight. The club has the weight, but you have to create the speed, so the next point is what kind of motion will produce the greatest force. The greatest force you can create is **centrifugal**, which moves away from and around a center.

At this point, I bring out a weight on the end of a string and, by whirling it



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around and around, demonstrate what centrifugal force means. Then I begin moving it backward and forward with a swinging motion to explain what is meant by swinging. (In all my experience I have not had anyone explain, when asked, what he means when he uses the term "swing".)

Most good golfers talk about altering or changing their swing. I have been told very often by some of the top players that they can swing in lots of different ways—upright, flat, inside out, outside in, etc. Now this is not possible. A swing is a positive, indivisible motion to and fro, or, in a golf shot, backward and forward. It has a definite form or shape, which is an arc, or part of a circle. It has perfect rhythm which can be put to waltz time music. It is a measure of time just as the pendulum of the clock, and is subject to Galileo's law. The pendulum takes the same length of time to swing irrespective of the length of the swing.

Thus, a short putt would take the same length of time to play as would a full drive if the same club were used and held

at the same place. The idea of swinging fast or slow is not possible in the same length of swing. It must be made clear that a true swing takes the same measure of time; so therefore, the longer the swing, the greater the force, or speed. The shorter the swing, the less the speed, or force.

Again, I often demonstrate Galileo's law of falling bodies, which I find is very little understood. All falling bodies (except a feather or anything of that nature) take the same time to fall irrespective of weight. A table tennis ball will hit the ground at the same time as a ball of lead if dropped from the same height. But the lead would hit with much more force (force being speed times weight). A heavyweight boxer doesn't hit faster than a flyweight, but he hits with greater force. Again, two horses cannot run faster than the slower if they are harnessed to a light chariot, but they have more power together.

So many golfers are always suffering in trying to find out how to hit harder, instead of knowing how to develop speed in the clubhead. The Hogans, Nelsons, Cottons develop it through practice, practice, practice, and there is no other way. The whole point is to know what, and how, to practice. I am so sorry to have to say to many who come to me, "You must have worked very hard to get as bad as this, when the right way can be so enjoyable if you will only have the courage and trust in what is right." Truth is simplicity, although it is elusive.

This is the first of two articles by Ernest Jones. The second will appear in the next issue. This material must not be reproduced, in whole or in part, without the consent of the author.

Harris, Dahlbender Turn Pro

Bobby Harris, 20-year-old holder of the National Collegiate Championship, has become assistant pro at the Oklahoma City Golf and Country Club.

Gene Dahlbender, Jr., of Atlanta, turned professional by accepting a position as assistant at the Winged Foot Golf Club, Mamaroneck, N. Y. He was a semi-finalist in the USGA Championship and won the Southern Amateur Championship last year.