



Alex Morrison points out that there are three cardinal points which contribute to the successful golf swing, all of which must be present in every smooth, rhythmic, well-timed stroke.

Standing just as erect as possible immediately encourages, and will in time bring about proper body action and balance. Keeping the head from turning with the body affords a free shoulder and arm action, and helps to balance and to time the entire body movement.

Placing the hands on the club at approximately the same angle makes possible the required unison of wrist action. The two lower drawings bring out what is meant by having the hands applied at approximately the same angle at the moment of impact



INTERVIEWING ALEX MORRISON

By GRANTLAND RICE

RICE :

Alex, I know, as a result of your reputation as a teacher and the tremendous sale of your very fine golf book, that you get queries from all over the world about all parts of the swing, I also believe that you take the teaching of golf more seriously than anyone I know. You've had so much experience in analysing the swing and have been so successful, when it comes to correcting faults, that I'm sure you can give us some helpful pointers. Tell me, where do you think the average golfer should begin in the matter of improving his game?

MORRISON:

In order to improve his game the player must first learn to picture the swing as a whole, not as a series of separate actions.

RICE:

It seems to me that you've said this same thing many times in your articles in THE AMERICAN GOLFER and in your book, and, along with this statement, you've given a perfectly clear description of the entire swing, one that should enable anyone to visualize the whole swing but, in spite of the thoroughness with which you've covered the details of body, arm and hand action, there seems to be something still lacking. I know of many cases where, even though

he knows how the swing should be made, the player seems to be quite unable to execute it. How do you account for this?

MORRISON:

Just as I said before, the swing must at all times be treated as a whole or one continuous motion. I, too, know of any number of players who are able to describe orally nearly every move that should be made by the various parts of the body throughout the swing. In addition to having memorized descriptions of the correct movements, they may even be able to execute them in a practice swing, but they fall down when it comes to blending the various stages of the action into one uninterrupted motion during actual play.

RICE:

Yes, I remember that you originally described the successful swing as being one, full, smooth-flowing motion without mental or physical interruption, and I think this very accurately describes the feeling which every player has, when he is at the peak of his game, when he is able to swing with little or no effort, when every move he makes seems to blend into one flowing motion. And that's exactly what I and perhaps a few million others would like to know, just how to en-

joy this feeling of smoothness and ease most of the time instead of occasionally.

MORRISON :

Oh, there's a simple enough means to this end. In fact that's where the trouble comes in; the very simplicity of the suggestions I am about to offer makes the average player hesitate about following them. At least I have found it so with my own pupils. When I suggest that they give their entire attention to just one or two points during the swing, they will say to me, "It's all very well for you to tell us to keep our minds on our chins, but what about our hips, shoulders, elbows, etc.? What should we be doing with them in the meantime?"

At the risk of being considered impolite I ignore such questions as long as I can. When forced to, I tell them, as I did at the beginning of their lesson, that, by simply giving their entire attention to the one or two points I stress, they will automatically bring their shoulders, hips and legs into the proper action. (Continued on page 37)

INTERVIEWING ALEX MORRISON

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In other words I have given them what might be termed keys to the action as a whole.

RICE :

Then, you agree with the policy of Bobby Jones, Gene Sarazen and other experts who try to do away with the old complaint of "too many things to remember" by giving the player comparatively few things to think about.

MORRISON :

Yes, I fully agree with anyone who advocates simplified instruction, provided, of course, the instructions are practical. Most of them are not for, as I am trying to point out, they don't enable the player to produce a smooth flowing swing.

By way of illustrating just what I mean by this, let me tell you about one or two things which surely will prevent anything like the desired coordination between the various parts of the body. For example, when a player's mind is taken up with thought about the forward shifting of his hips during his downswing, he cannot produce the required power in the clubhead, because, in concentrating on the action of his hips, he is overlooking the action of his arms and hands. Or, if he tries to urge the club forward with his right side supplying the propelling power, he will neglect the action of his body, proof of which will be had in the fact that most of his weight will remain back on his right foot instead of shifting forward to his left by the time the clubhead strikes the ball. The player may not realize at the time he is making his swing that his body, arms and hands are not coordinating properly, but ample proof is always at hand in the flight of the ball in case there is any doubt in his mind.

On the other hand, there are several things which the player can think about immediately before and during his swing to benefit his swing as a whole, things on which he can concentrate without hurting other parts of his swing. When I find that a player seeking advice from me has a number of faults in his body action, such as turning his hips instead of shifting them to the side at the start of his swing, dropping his left shoulder during his backswing, swaying or bobbing up and down with the upper part of his body, I begin by pointing out the existence of these faults; then I explain that he should not try to overcome them by

thinking about them during his swing for the reasons stated above. I ask him to give his entire attention to standing as erect as he can, and to keeping his chin pointed back of the ball. I tell him, of course, that by so doing he will minimize the errors in his body action and at the same time place himself in a position to enjoy the proper action in his swing as a whole. In other words, I am trying to have him use certain keys which will open the way to the necessary coordination between all parts of his body.

RICE :

Is that one of the suggestions you make for all faulty body action?

MORRISON :

Yes. Standing more erect and concentrating on the proper pointing of the chin will help every player no matter what shot he is having difficulty with, particularly the longer shots.

RICE:

Well, I can see how that helps to bring about better hip action and body balance, but I don't see how it can improve a player's arm and hand action. Tell me just where this might benefit the wrist action for instance?

MORRISON :

In answering that, I must go back to a series of articles that appeared in THE AMERICAN GOLFER along about April, 1929. In one of these articles I pointed out three main sources of freedom; three parts of the body that must be taken care of, if anything like muscular coordination is to be had in the swing.

The first is the upper section of the spinal column which affords freedom of action to the shoulders, arms and hands. This source is kept open by the proper pointing of the chin. The second source, which affords freedom of action in the legs and feet, is the lower section of the spinal column. This is kept open by the side motion of the hips. The third source of freedom is in the wrist joints. This source is kept free partly by having the hands on the club at approximately the same angle. *Look after these three main sources of freedom and you can always make your swing one continuous motion*

I might add that the pointing of the chin is the connecting link, in a sense, between the body and the arms and hands; the one thing that will bring about some sort of coordination as long as it is kept from turning with the body during the spring.



On the Gavea Golf Club course at Rio de Janeiro