1. FIVE FUNDAMENTALS

My golf success has been founded on seeking perfection in what I term the five fundamentals of the game:

- The Grip
- The Stance
- The Backswing
- The Downswing to Impact
- The Full Follow-through

I state categorically that it is impossible to be a good golfer unless you get it fixed in your mind that these are the essentials and concentrate on getting each one right in that sequence. I feel my method is one of the simplest to follow, though I do not suggest for one moment that golf is an easy game. It is my intention here to explain how I play golf—and once again let me stress those five fundamentals, in the sequence I have given.

I am not a theorist. I have never filled my head with a string of confusing injunctions: head down, left arm straight, left heel off the ground, and all that sort of thing. Too many people approach a golf shot with their heads buzzing with a variety of tips and hints—‘Do this’, ‘Don’t forget that’, ‘Remember not to do the other’.

Wrong, absolutely wrong! Make sure that you have those five fundamentals correct, that at all times you are relaxed, and from then on it is a matter of practice, practice and more practice. And remember you must avoid tension, which is the ruin of good, consistent golf.

How to make sure that you are doing the right things? Well, if you read on, study carefully the illustrations I have given, and faithfully copy my methods, you will be right.

I have always aimed at achieving a perfect swing. In the course of this book I shall include some ‘don’ts’, but I want the reader always to remember that it is the perfect swing we are seeking and that the perfect swing depends on those five fundamentals.
CONTENTS

FOREWORD by Bernard Darwin 9
PREFACE 11

PART ONE: MY GOLFING LIFE
1. Beginnings 13 10. Success in America 45
2. My First Championships 20 11. To America again 50
5. I Turn Professional 27 14. 1951: A Strenuous Year 61
6. Golf Teacher 33 15. South Africa, Mexico, America 63
8. The War Years and After 39 17. Champion's Challenge 69
9. Matches with Cotton and Snead 44 18. A Pause Enforced 73

PART TWO: HOW I PLAY GOLF
1. Five Fundamentals 75 11. The Sand-trap Shot 103
2. The Grip 76 12. The Pitch and Run Chip Shot 106
3. The Stance 79 13. Fading the Ball 109
4. The Backswing 82 14. How to Play a Draw Shot 112
5. Dowsswing to Impact 88 15. Low Shots into the Wind 114
6. The Full Follow-through 90 16. High Shots for Carry 117
7. The Short Irons 92 17. Putting 119
8. The Long Irons 94 18. Hanging Lies 124
10. The Wedgemaester 100 20. Advice to Young Golfers 128

PART THREE: THE PSYCHOLOGY OF GOLF
1. Play to Win 131 8. Near Defeats and Bad Luck 143
3. Accuracy off the Tee 134 10. Hiding your Feelings 146
5. Relaxed and at Ease 137 12. Tough Schooling 149
6. Making the Most of Your Assets 140 13. The 'Killer' Instinct 152
7. The Strain of Tournament Golf 142 14. The Professional 'Closed Shop' 153
13. FADEING THE BALL

With the long irons it is frequently an advantage to be able to put ‘fade’ on the ball, that is, to make it travel from left to right completely under control. Such shots are not for beginners. They should not be attempted until one has gained considerable confidence. Too often playing a fade encourages a golfer to become a slicer, and I need not add that the majority of golfers spend a lot of their time trying to eliminate slices.

Personally I fade a ball only when it is absolutely necessary, and let me explain that there is a big difference between a fade and a slice. In a correct fade, the ball is completely under control; in a slice it is out of control and loses considerable distance. Do not get the idea that to fade a ball one must open the club-face and get the right hand over. If you do that, you are beginning trouble for the rest of your shots. Never, never, change the grip (except for putting) and never open the club-face at any time for any shot. Always let the club-head have its natural lie.

Now I must make it clear that if you do hit an iron shot with fade you are inevitably going to lose distance, but if you do it correctly, the loss of distance is not more than a few yards, whereas, of course, in a slice the loss may be great.

Illustration 1 To show my method exactly, I have laid a club on the ground in front of my feet. The club is pointing in the direction of the target. I still position the ball opposite the left toe, but you will see that I have opened the stance and that the left foot is a good four inches behind the club on the ground. By opening the stance I am aiming down the left-hand side of the fairway, and, just as important, my hips are pointing in that direction. Notice that I have given the club-head its natural lie, and that I am standing a comfortable distance from the ball.
Illustration 2 (previous page) The club has started on the backswing. Observe that this time the club-head is going back outside the line of flight. A fade shot must be played from outside to in, so the club must start back outside the line of flight. As for all other full shots, the club, hand and arm are all in one piece until I reach the position of right-hip-high, and the left wrist is kept firm. There must be no body sway.

Illustration 3 I am now at the top of the backswing for the fade, with my left shoulder fully turned to point to the ball, making certain that I am in the correct hitting position. The only difference between this position and the position for the ordinary full shot is that my hands are more upright at the top. The right leg is taking most of the weight.

Illustration 4 Now I am going down to impact. Note carefully that the club is going down to the ball in exactly the same arc as it went back in the back swing, making sure that I get outside the line of flight. The weight already has been almost completely transferred to the left foot, getting ready for the impact.

Illustration 5 Now the ball has just been struck, and this is the most important part of this shot. The divot has been taken across the line of flight and after the ball has been struck. By hitting ‘across’, sidespin is applied to the ball as it begins its flight down the left side of the fairway, and that sidespin will help the ball gradually to work its way back towards the middle of the fairway.

It will be useful here to consider what is happening in this picture, because it shows how so many players slice when they are trying to hit the ball
straight. They slice because they do what I am doing in this picture, only they do it more so and involuntarily. The horrible secret, of course, is that they overdo the cut across the ball at impact. In the normal shot that is fatal, and as there is such a small margin of error between a successful fade and a dreadful slice, I again urge golfers to be extremely cautious about cultivating fade. Wait until you have full confidence that you are going to be able to control the fade and so make certain that it does not develop into a hopeless slice.

**Illustration 6** This is the completion of the successful fade shot. It is essential that the club travels through to this position in one smooth movement, making absolutely certain that sidespin has been applied to the ball. If the follow-through is checked in any way, it can quite easily interfere with the application of spin and upset the whole shot. There is no need to force this shot; just use a full free swing, hitting from 'outside' to 'in' across the ball and finishing up in the position I show, with the weight on the left foot.
ordinary speed and slow motion. The film, in colour, developed perfectly, and I and my friends who have seen it have derived great pleasure from it. That meeting with the great man was a very pleasurable interlude.

To return to the actual tournament, I had one practice game and then in the first round was paired with Ed Dudley, the home professional. It was my first experience of the larger American ball, and, as I have said, everything was utterly different, but I managed to score a 74. I did another 74 in the second round with Bobby Jones, and in the third round I was paired with the favourite, Byron Nelson. He too was very kind and sympathetic, and in spite of the huge gallery, the largest I had ever seen, I soon settled down. A twenty-five-foot putt for a birdie three at the 9th gave me an outward score of 34 against Nelson’s 38. I finished in 70 against Nelson’s 72, and it was during this round that I realized that if I played against bogey and did not allow myself to be over-awed by the reputation of my opponent, I could hold, and perhaps beat, the ‘unbeatable’ Americans. Nelson congratulated me very warmly on my score. I shall always think of him with affection, and I regret that he was another man who had to retire early because of ‘nerves’. Nelson got to such a state that before big games he could neither eat nor sleep.

People often say to me, ‘It must be a great strain playing the sort of golf you do’. This is almost an understatement, and I think only those who have known it have any appreciation of what it does to you. The competition is utterly ruthless. You are either at the top or ‘out’.

In the final round of the Masters my partner was Jimmy Demaret. I clung to my tactics of playing against par, and finished in 71. Demaret had a 72, but with his earlier scores he had a total of 281 to win. My total was 289, and I finished joint tenth.

After the Masters I then went to North Carolina to my friend Dugan Aycock, whom I had met in Italy during the War. He was president of the Carolinas section of the P.G.A., of which he made me an honorary member, and invited me to play in their Open, a seventy-two hole event. The big names competing included Johnny Palmer, Skip Alexander, Clayton Heafner and Johnny Bulla. This event was played on the Mid Pines Golf Club at Pinehurst, and I won the tournament with a score of 274. This began to rouse the interest of the American pros. Clayton Heafner, who played the final two rounds with me, said, ‘Boy, you are the best driver I have seen. I’ll make money betting on you against the boys’.

The following week was the Houston Open at Houston, Texas. All the big guns were there—Hogan, Snead, Mangrum, Barron, and many others. There was quite a lot of conversation in the locker-room about my win of the previous week, and Heafner insisted that I had a big chance. The big names laughed, and Mangrum and Heafner had a side bet, in which Mangrum said he would finish ahead of me. Anyhow, my form stayed with me, my favourite rusty putter held its magic, and I won the tournament with a score of 277 for the four rounds over the long Memorial Park course.
This victory really shook the boys who had said that my swing was unreliable. The next tournament was at Fort Worth, Texas, and I finished third.

I was now ankle-deep in the American golf circuit, with a big tournament every week starting on Thursdays. The distances to be travelled were colossal. For instance, the jump from Fort Worth to Philadelphia for the next tournament was 1,500 miles. The first day’s play of the Philadelphia Inquirer tournament was washed out by heavy rain, so the final two rounds had to be played on the Sunday. Hogan led at the halfway stage, with 65 and 69 for 134; I was next at 139, five strokes behind; then came Mangrum and the rest. I was paired with Hogan and Dick Metz for the final two rounds. This was to be a landmark in my career. The Cedar Brook Country Club is a long narrow course with thick rough and superb greens, and it is an exacting test of golf. We set out on the final day, Hogan starting 4 to my 5, and then I gradually started picking up strokes, drawing level with Hogan by holing a thirty-five-foot putt for a birdie three on the 15th. Hogan by this time was shaken and he finished 4, 5, 5, to my three fours, to give me a two-shot lead with one round to play. A round of 70 in the afternoon against Hogan’s 73 gave me a four-stroke victory. American golf was rocked from coast to coast. Everyone was amazed that Hogan could be overtaken by a foreigner and beaten. My winning score was 279.

The following week was the Goodall Round Robin in Boston. This is an

*The Goodall Round Robin is one of the toughest golf tests in the world. In 1947 I won this invitation tournament by three points over Vic Ghezzi with a total of 37 points.*