

**T**HERE is no more accurate golfer playing the game today than William Macfarlane, the national open champion—a sweeping statement, but it will be borne out by such friendly rivals of Macfarlane as Johnny Farrell, Leo Diegel, Tommy Armour and others. Taking his play day in and out, under all sorts of conditions, there are none who are less often in trouble, playing either woods or irons, than this self-same individual who outplayed the field in winning the open title at Worcester.

Macfarlane's recent victory in the Shawnee open championship, an achievement that stamps him as a real champion, was due to nothing more than this steadfast refusal to stray off the straight and narrow paths that make pars easy and birdies possible. Seldom was he called upon to waste his strength getting out of trouble, for seldom was he in trouble. It was just one drive after another straight down the middle of the fairway; one brassie, spoon, iron, mashie, spade, or mashie-niblick shot after another straight up to the green or at the pin. It became so monotonous in exactness that it cost Macfarlane the majority of his gallery in the second round of play.

That record of his—90 holes in six under 4's on a course where the par is 74—was not the result of anything spectacular in the way, shape or manner of holing in one, holing out of the rough, holing chip shots or even an over-abundance of one-putt greens. As a matter of fact it was made in spite of his putter rather than because of it, for at any number of holes he had putts of ten feet, which, had they gone down, would have given him far lower figures. Not only did he fail to sink more than a few of the reasonable putts, but he actually lost a number that were well inside of five feet. So it was not his putter that was respon-

sible for his remarkable scoring, but his approaches, no matter what club he employed in making them.

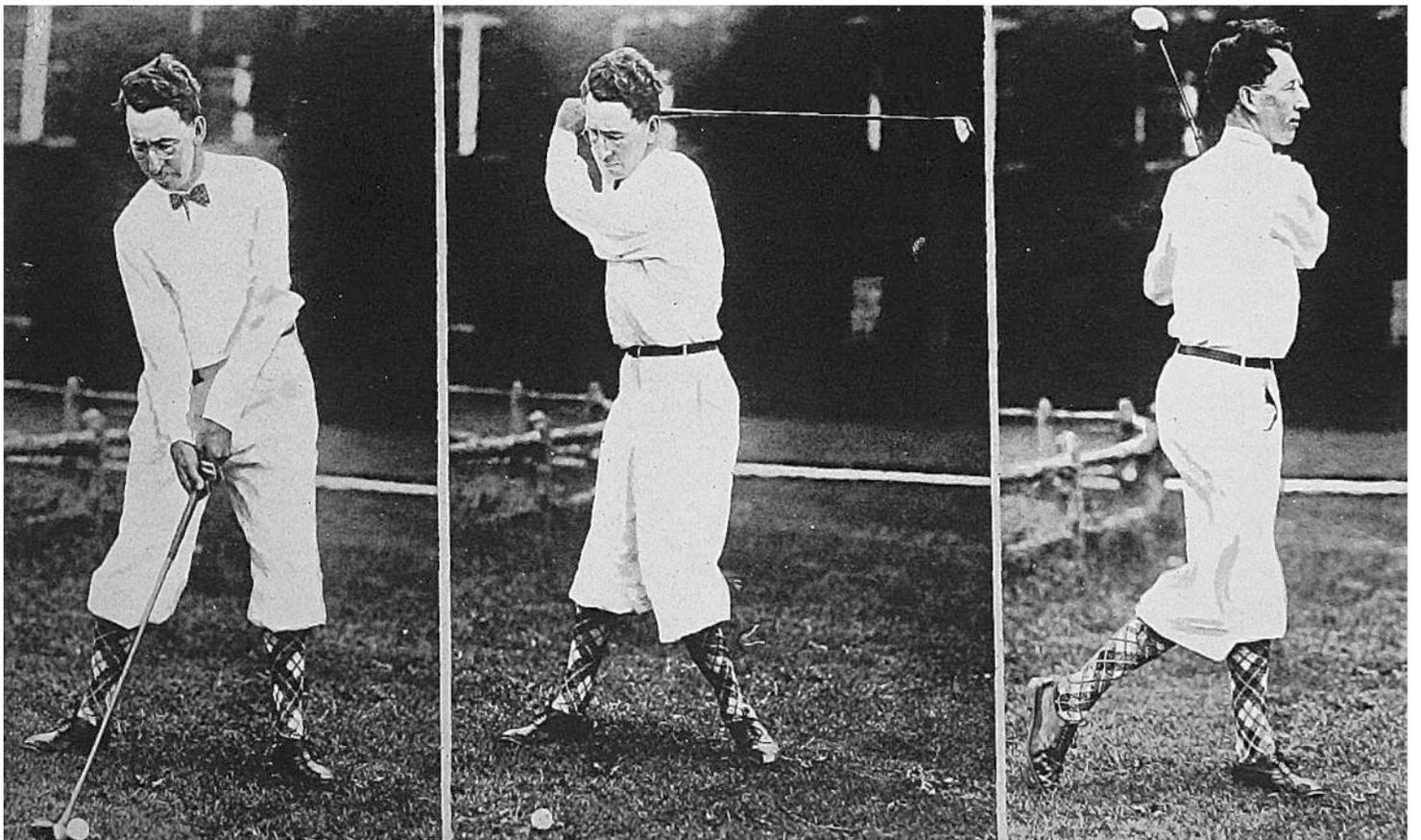
What is the secret of this straightness, particularly this straightness off the tee? Is it stance, grip, swing? It is mostly grip. Macfarlane has what is said to be the firmest grip that is used by anyone of the present-day crop of golfers. It is a grip that is, so far as I know, an individual one. It might also be called an unorthodox one, for it is one that, while he does not preach what he practices, suits his own purposes to a T. It might bring about the ruination of others.



WILLIE MACFARLANE'S GRIP

The grip that Macfarlane employs is a combination of the old palm grip, used by almost everybody until Harry Vardon came along with his evolutionary and revolutionary method which has been tagged the over-lapping grip. With his left hand Macfarlane "takes the club in his fist." But instead of the thumb being down it is around and lies over the forefinger, the nail of which has worn a callous at the base of the thumb. That's the position of the left hand. The right hand overlaps in a perfectly orthodox style, the little finger overlapping the forefinger of the opposite hand. In Macfarlane's opinion it is the most firm grip known. It insures the two hands working together instead of against one another.

While he uses this particular grip to such perfection himself, he does not advocate its use by those who come to him for instruction, either at Oak Ridge or elsewhere. It is not that he is covetous of it as a trade secret, but it might produce far different results for others. In his case it comes perfectly natural. It developed out of the old palm grip method, it is the grip that he has used since he started playing in his boyhood days at Aberdeen (Continued on page 60)



ILLUSTRATING MACFARLANE'S SMOOTH SWING. NOTE STANCE BALL IS PLAYED MORE OFF LEFT FOOT THAN RIGHT. IN SECOND picture left arm is almost straight and club head points in direction of line of play. At finish right foot could be lifted without loss of balance

### Current Comment

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and it has stood him in good stead ever since. "It would be folly to change," says Mac.

Macfarlane has several revolutionary theories in regard to the tutorial aspects of the game and he prides himself on his ability to impart what he knows about the game to others. One of the things that Macfarlane believes is that the majority of players, learning the game of golf, approach it from the wrong end. "They try to run before they are able to creep," he asserts. The average player upon taking up the game goes to the driver. If Macfarlane had his way about it, however, the putter would be first.

"One of the effects of this procedure," says Macfarlane, "is that it has served to bring about an equality so far as driving is concerned. There are any number of amateurs who are able to drive fully as well as the majority of professionals, but from there on the comparison ceases. When it comes to iron play the professionals have a marked advantage and it is ability to play one's iron shots that brings about low scores. The reason for this difference in ability is not hard to locate. Most of the professionals have come up from caddie ranks. In the case of caddies an iron is the first club that they possess. Watch them at any club and you'll see them swinging away with an iron, nipping the heads off dandelions or batting away at an old golf ball. In this way they become accustomed to the "feel" of an iron and when they graduate into professionals they are quite proficient in iron club play.

"It is seldom that anyone tells me that he is having difficulty with his

irons. It's generally the woods that are the root of all ailments according to the average man's diagnosis. This over-emphasis of driving and under-emphasis of iron clubs is responsible for the margin that exists between professionals and amateurs.

Most driving troubles, says Macfarlane, are due to over-swinging tendencies. "Swing easy," says Mac. In giving this advice he practices what he teaches, for there is no easier, smoother swing than that of the Oak Ridge professional. Being outdriven never disturbs him. While he is able to drive as long a ball as most of the professionals and amateurs when he lets out, he is perfectly willing to allow others to outdrive him and to take his chance with the second shots. At Worcester Jones was yards ahead of him; so was Klein at Shawnee. But on the greens the advantage was the other way. "Trying to hit the ball too far in competitions is the reason why so many amateur players generally run up their scores," he says.

So far as driving stance is concerned, Macfarlane's is slightly open. The figure on the left shows this to advantage. It will be seen that the ball is played more off the left foot than the right. In other words, he stands a trifle behind the ball. Going to the next picture note the almost-straight left arm and the club-head pointing in the direction of the line of play. Also note the uprightness of his swing and the position of the body and the feet at the finish. Note especially that the weight is almost entirely on the left foot. In fact, there is no weight whatsoever upon the right. At the finish he could lift his right foot completely off the ground without losing any of his balance.