STOP THAT SLICE

JOE DANTE & LEN ELLIOTT
Every golfer has suffered periods of slicing which have ruined his figures and threatened to break his heart. Indeed, in the case of many long handicap golfers the slice has become a permanent and integral part of their play. For them it would be a pipe-dream paradise to be able to hit a ball with certainty straight down the fairway—with never a lost ball and never a lost temper.

Yet that is precisely what the authors of this book promise any slicing golfer and they don't care how deeply ingrained or stubborn the slice may be. Quite simply they say, if you slice we will cure it.

It is, of course, easy enough to make claims of this nature, but they have got to be well-founded if they are to receive the support of national champions. Here are just two comments among many:

"Here is a rare item—a golf book for both beginners and the more advanced players. . . . There are many books on golf . . . but here is one book that I can recommend unhesitatingly—for it contains some of the best illustrations I have ever seen; good, clear, logical language; information about golf that is easy to absorb; and, above all, that elusive quality most writers lack:

(Continued on back flap)
It is entirely fitting that this book be dedicated to the memory of the late

JAMES J. DANTE

for five years President of the New Jersey P.G.A., one of golf’s great teachers and inventor of the Square Face System
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NOTE ON THE ILLUSTRATIONS

The illustrations in this book are, we believe, unique. One of the greatest difficulties in golf teaching is getting over to the pupil what the professional feels when he is swinging the club. In every other golf book we have seen, the pictures, whether they were photographs or line drawings, showed what could be seen in the swing. The stylized drawings on these pages by Bill Crawford, himself a golfer, attempt for the first time to impart the actual feel of the swing. The game is played by feel even more than by sight. Also, wherever possible the unnecessary details are eliminated and the particular point under discussion is emphasized almost to the point of exaggeration.
This Is The Book That Explains In Detail The Golf Technique That Everyone’s Talking About.

THE ‘SQUARE FACE’ SYSTEM

Originally introduced as a certain means of curing the sliced shot, the ‘Square Face’ system has now been adopted by many of the top tournament professionals in America – to say nothing of the vast rank and file of amateurs – as the quickest sure-fire route to consistent low-scoring.
weakling. Her left hand kept loosening at the top, and she was slicing. Her hand position at the top was wrong. Once she adopted the hand position taught here, she had no difficulty holding on to the club. And no difficulty with slicing, either.

Finally there was the professional whose hand position at the top was giving him trouble. He became interested in the theories you will read here, and took the hand position advocated. He now hits unquestionably straighter, 20 to 30 yards longer.

We have no intention of boasting. The examples are mentioned merely to show that the system is sound, that the system works. Any professional, teaching the same principles, would have made the same corrections.

So, regardless of how painful your experience has been with slicing, don’t think you can’t be cured. Don’t believe for a minute that you are the one exception in all the millions of people who play golf, who can’t stop slicing. There is nothing so peculiar about you or your swing that it can’t be straightened out.

Do you realize that 95 per cent. of the people who play golf are slicers? It is apparently the “natural” way to hit a golf ball. Most faulty shots are hard to get rid of, but the slice seems to be a dragon that is impossible to slay. Unchecked, it grows rather than diminishes, until it dominates the player’s thoughts and has led more than one disconsolate sufferer to throw his clubs in the nearest lake. The poor fellow is restrained only by family ties and a sense of duty from following them himself.

There are several reasons why a slice is so devastating. Most slicers, for instance, bring off that big curve much better with a wooden club than with an iron. Since the drives on 14 of the 18 holes, usually, are with a wooden
club, it means the slicer is getting off to a bad start on most of the holes every time he plays. He may even lie three, four, or five by the time he finally gets his ball on the fairway. All chance for a decent score on that hole is gone, even though he plays his irons well to the green. Nothing in golf is more discouraging than a bad start.

What exasperates the slicer even more is that the harder he tries to hit the ball straight, the more he slices. If he tries some drastic cure on a tip from a friend, he will probably pull the shot or smother it. On the rare occasions when he unconsciously hits a good shot, he doesn’t know how he did it. A wild hope surges, but this is dashed a few shots later, and the unhappy soul spends the rest of the round trying to figure out how he happened to hit that one good one.

One further reason the slice is so annoying is that it never feels good when it is hit. The player never feels that he is hitting the ball squarely, and of course he is not. He is hitting it a glancing blow. This feeling is not true of a hook, for instance, because a hooked shot is much closer to a good shot than a slice. The ball is at least struck solidly when it is hooked.

At this point let us stop for just a moment and examine the beast. What causes that exasperating curve to the right? It is caused by the face of the club being “open” at the moment of contact with the ball. By “open” we mean that the face points, or faces, to the right of the direction the club head is following. The direction of the club head determines which way the ball will start. The position of the club face determines whether the ball will curve, which way, and how much.

If the club face is square (at right angles) to the direction line of the club, the ball will go straight. No curve. But
SQUARE AND OPEN FACE. The difference in the position of the clubs is slight, measured in fractions of an inch, but the effect on flight of ball is great. At left the face is at right angles to line of flight. At right it is open.

If the club face is open to this direction line, the ball will curve to the right. It is then being struck a glancing blow which imparts a left-to-right spin. This is true whether the club head approaches the ball from the outside, the inside, or from directly behind it.

We have all seen the sliced ball that starts to the left and then curves to the right. This is the most common of all slices. In this the club approaches the ball from the outside—an outside-in swing, we call it. Then there is the ball that starts out straight and develops a slice. Here the club comes to the ball from directly behind it.
Finally, there is the ball that starts out to the right and picks up a curve that sends it farther out. Out of bounds, without a doubt. This one is hit from the inside, with an inside-out swing.

So much for what a slice is. The cause, in every case, is an open face. And you’ve got it. So the open face is what we are going to attack and eliminate.

How will we do it? We will do it by teaching you what we call the Square Face System of hitting the ball. The outstanding feature of this method is that the face of the club is square not only when it hits the ball. It is square during the entire swing, from the moment it starts to go back, all the way to the top and down again to impact.

This is the swing that will feel strange and awkward to you, and against which you may fight at first. We don’t blame you. This Square Face System is in marked contrast to the old-fashioned way of hitting a golf ball.

It is the square face *versus* the open face. In the old method the club face began to open almost as soon as it left the ball on the backswing. It continued to open, and was wide open at the top. It was still open as it came down. Only by a conscious, though slight, roll of the wrists toward the ball was the face closed enough to bring it square to the line at impact. Some have called this roll of the wrists a flick, and perhaps that is a better name for it. The correct name for it is pronation. Roll, flick, or pronation, it has to be done to get the face square.

Now obviously this wasn’t, and isn’t, a bad method. The great golfers of the past all hit the ball that way. Harry Vardon, Jim Braid, J. H. Taylor, Bob Jones, Francis Ouimet, Walter Hagen, Gene Sarazen, Henry Cotton—the list is endless. They hit the ball by opening and closing
the face. J. H. Taylor developed permanent wrinkles on the back of his left wrist from bending the wrist backward at the top of the swing. If you try that you will see immediately that with the left wrist bent back, the face of the club will be wide open at the top of the swing.

Who are we to say that this is the wrong way to hit a golf ball? We don’t say it is wrong. But we do say there is a different way, and an easier way. That is the Square Face System. It is the way the top players in the United States tend to hit the ball to-day.

It stands to reason, doesn’t it, that if you open and close the face there is a great chance that you will either close it too much (and hook) or not close it enough (and slice)? The chances are that you will not have it exactly square when it meets the ball.

If during a lesson an instructor tells you to roll your wrists at impact, he is trying to get you to close the club face. At least one complete book has been written on this very practice of rolling the wrists, first away from the ball and then toward the ball. With the old swing this was necessary. But think how accurately you must perform that rolling so as to bring the face of the club exactly at a right angle to the line of flight at the instant of impact. Yes, it can be done. But only with a prodigious amount of work—work which requires much more time than most of you can afford to give to the game.

How much simpler if you keep the face always square to the line. A tremendous chance for error is instantly eliminated. You will not have to roll or flick the wrists. You will just swing the club. And you will stop slicing.

Now, before we get to the actual description of the Square Face System, a word about how to practise is necessary.
LEFT-HAND GRIP. Here you see what is meant by palm-and-finger grip. The shaft lies diagonally across the hand, from curve of forefinger almost to heel of hand. The arrow points to the fold of flesh below the shaft. In an all-finger grip the fold would not be there.

the bases of the index and second fingers. Make sure you see that second knuckle, but no more.

Yes, we know three knuckles is the accepted number, and we have no quarrel with the three-knuckle boys.

But if you’re going to use three knuckles, stop right here. Don’t read another word. If we’re going to cure your slice, you must do it our way or the whole thing is off. We won’t cure you.

We want the left hand in this position for two reasons: First, it forces the back of the left hand to face the
TWO-KNUCKLE GRIP. Difference between two-knuckle and three-knuckle grips is shown, as seen by the player himself. The two-knuckle places the back of the left hand towards the objective. In the three-knuckle, the back of the left hand is more towards the sky.
More specifically, the moving of the hips slightly to the left puts more weight on the left leg and makes easier the marked transfer of weight to the right leg which takes place in the backswing.

The hands move slightly with the hips in the forward press—and from the position it puts you in, you immediately start the backswing.

The first movement of the backswing is this:
Move the hips laterally to the right, allowing them a slight natural turn. As the hips move to the right the head remains stationary. As the body moves under the head the shoulders perform what is largely a rocking motion, and turn very little. The right shoulder rises and the left shoulder drops.

Meanwhile the arms move with the shoulders, hips, and body. They and the club move all in one piece, as though there were no joints in the wrists and no points in the shoulders. They all move together to the right. *And the club head moves straight back from the ball.* The club head goes as far back as the lateral motion of the hips will take it—from 30 to 40 inches. *Straight back!*

It is important here to guard against an exaggeration of the shoulder action. It is not strictly a rocking motion, with no turn whatever. If the pupil tries this he will run into difficulties. With no turn of the shoulders and no turn of the hips, just a rocking action, the weight will stay on the left leg and the head will dip and move to the left. We don’t want that to happen.

What actually happens is that the left shoulder *turns under*, or turns as it goes under the head, but not much. Perhaps the best insurance against exaggerating the shoulder
BREAKING THE WRISTS
—THE RIGHT WAY

We come now to the third major step in the Square Face System. This is the early wrist break. Our first movement going back, you remember, was the lateral motion of the hips and the rocking action of the shoulders. This, with the arms, hands and club moving all in one piece, carried the club head straight back from 30 to 40 inches and kept the face square.

Now, as this movement is completed, after the hands pass the right leg, start to break the wrists.

But before you break them, learn how.

There are two ways to break or cock the wrists—backward and upward. We'll show you the difference. Hold your right hand in front of you, the flat of the hand perpendicular to the ground, with the palm facing left and the thumb on top of the hand. Now bend the hand to the right, backward. Try to make the big knuckles touch the back of the wrist. You can't do that, of course, but bend the hand back as far as you can. Some people, with very supple wrists, can make the back of the hand and the back of the wrist form a true right angle. Others can't bend the hand back nearly so far. But that is the backward break.

Now for the other break. With your right hand in the first position, palm facing left, bend the hand upward and
WRIST-BREAK CHECK POINTS. Here is how to check yourself. You see the hands, and club as the player sees them. If you see two knuckles of left hand, and none of the club face, you are often.

WHAT NOT TO SEE. You will know you are wrong if at the end of the wrist break, if you can see the back of left hand, an outward curve of left wrist, only one knuckle of left hand, and any of the face of the club. You see all of the face here.
to rotation, from where they were at address—or at the end of the early wrist break. That is why the face of the club is still square, and why the position does not seem entirely natural at first. It will become natural through constant repetition as you practise, but at the beginning it won’t be.

Let us revert for a moment to the old swing. In this the club is brought back on an inside line—a curving inside line. As soon as this is done the face of the club begins to open, even though the wrists are not rotated. By the time the club gets back to a position parallel to the direction line, the face is wide open. The face is facing the same way the player is, and the toe is pointing to the sky. That is an easy, natural position. From there the club is swung up and bent up by the upward cocking of the wrists, and you have an open face at the top with the left wrist under the shaft. This, again, is a natural action. Equally natural during this period is the action of the shoulders. They turn on more or less of an even keel. They do not perform the pronounced rocking motion we teach. Here is another cause of the open face. When the shoulders are turned evenly (without the left rocking down), the club face must open, unless the wrists are rolled to the left.

In the Square Face System the rocking shoulder action during the first movement of the backswing is the principal factor that keeps the face from opening, as well as taking it straight back.

Actually, the shoulder controls the action of the club face—so long as the wrists are not turned in either direction.

You, however, are not accustomed to exerting any conscious control of the club face with your shoulders, and their action, as well as that of the hands and wrists, does not seem natural.
PERFECT WRIST POSITION. Note the straight line formed by left wrist and back of left hand. It is shown clearly here, with right wrist bent back and under the shaft. Notice also that the face is half open and the right elbow points down, not out.
CHAPTER VI

LET YOUR BODY DO THE WORK

OBVIOUSLY, the idea of the downswing is to hit the ball hard with the club. Unfortunately there is more to it than that, though. You not only want to hit it hard, you also want to hit it straight. Since you are a confirmed slicer, the chances are that you would sacrifice 30 yards of distance if you could only hit that ball down the middle. So, we will show you how to hit it straight and also hit it far.

To hit a straight shot the club face must be square to the direction line at impact. In order to hit the ball far, the muscles of the body as well as those of the arms and hands must be used and used well.

Now, at the top of the swing you have kept the club face square. You have done that by shoulder, hand and wrist action.

You have also wound up, or twisted, the body so that the big body muscles are ready to deliver the power.

The function of the downswing is to preserve these two things—the square face and the torsion—until the ball is hit.

Preservation of the square face is accomplished by an act of will, a simple determination not to let those wrists turn and open the face of the club.

The body torsion is maintained by turning the hips toward the hole, or whatever you are aiming at. This preserves the tight wind-up or twist as the downcoming arms tend to relax it.
That is what you are trying to do, the theory behind the action. Now let’s see how to make the action itself.

The first move from the top of the swing is a turn of the hips forward and around to the left, with the right shoulder going down, not around. This may or may not be accompanied by a slight push off the ball of the right foot. The object of this first movement is to transfer the weight from the right leg to the left, which braces to take it, and to start the downswing in the correct plane by a downward movement of the right shoulder.

That first movement, the turn of the hips to the left, will bring the line of the hips parallel to the direction line, and will pull the arms down until the straight left is about parallel with the ground.

Don’t get the idea that you stop here. We stop here merely for purposes of instruction, and call this the first movement of the downswing. This position is passed in a flash without the slightest hesitation.

But if you were to stop after this movement you would be in the position you have often seen in action pictures of top-flight players. It is a sort of sitting-down position, with the weight about equally divided between the feet and with the legs in a curved or bowed position. The picture, if you have seen it, is rather comical. The player doesn’t look very graceful. You never notice it when you watch a player swing; only a fast camera can catch it.

This movement has three danger points:

First, you may turn the wrists to the right and open the face of the club.

Second, you may start swinging the arms and club from the top instead of letting them be pulled down.

Third, you may not get the weight transference well under way.
YOU NEVER SEE THIS. First movement of downswing brings you to this sitting position, passed through so quickly you never notice it. Both knees are bent as the unwinding body pulls the club down. Inset shows exaggeration of position.

The opening of the club face will be done instinctively if you don’t watch it. It will stem from your fear that the face will not be open enough to hit the ball.

The trick we mentioned in the last chapter, that of trying to turn the right wrist slightly to the left at the top, may help. In reality, if your right hand is in the
So make no effort to hit with the arms or hands from the top. Let the turn of the hips and body pull the hands down.

The weight transference is doubly important. First, it is the movement that gets the weight over on the left leg whence the hips, continuing to turn, preserve the torsional strain or tension through the left side.

Secondly, the complete transference from left to right on the backswing and then from right to left, has a marked
effect on hitting from the top. If at the top of the swing there is more weight on the left leg than there should be,

BODY PULLS THE CLUB. The artist has shown here how the unwinding body pulls the club down to ball. Hips have unwound, weight is on left leg, and right shoulder is going down and through, instead of around.

that weight will be thrown sharply to the right, away from the ball, as the downswing starts. This is almost
a whiplike action. It starts the shoulders unturning too soon and too fast. They, in turn, whip the club down from the top instead of letting it be drawn from a slow start by the unwinding body. Finally, this whipping of the club from the top uncocks the wrists and releases their power long before it should be released. Hence the phrase, "hitting too soon."

The antidote for all this is to make sure the weight gets well over on the right leg as the club goes up on the back-swing. You should feel that there is very little weight on the left at the top. A good way to check this position is to have someone take a picture of you at the top of the swing. Have the camera directly in front of your right leg. If, in the picture, the line formed by the outside of this leg from the foot to the hip, is not vertical or very close to vertical, you have too much weight on your left. It may be exactly the reason you are hitting from the top.

When the weight is over on the right leg at the top of the swing it moves easily to the left on the downswing. The club starts down slowly, almost leisurely. There is no compulsion, physical or mental, to whip it.

And one more thing. In making this first hip turn, make it with the hips alone. Don't try to turn the shoulders. Make sure that you keep the right shoulder back as the shoulders are pulled around by the hips. That right shoulder must go down and through rather than around.

Now for a word of encouragement. If you have got this far correctly, you are practically home free. From this half-way down position things are moving so fast that there is hardly time to go wrong before you hit the ball.
YOU may think it strange to find a chapter on putting in a book which shows how to stop slicing. Most of us don't slice putts to any great extent. The reason putting is dealt with at all is that there is a putting stroke that corresponds closely to the Square Face swing—*in miniature*.

Of course the putting stroke is only a tiny swing. Actually it isn't a swing at all. It is just what we called it—a stroke. Yet, small as it is, it embodies two of the fundamentals of the big swing. These are the square face and the early, backward, wrist break.

But let's start at the beginning. There are no hard and fast rules for the stance in putting, but there are a few fundamentals. One of these is to have most of the weight on the left foot, or the foot nearer the hole. A second is to play the ball opposite the left toe or instep, no farther back. This is so that the ball will be rolled toward the hole and not pinched between the face of the putter and the turf. A third is that the ball should be played close to the feet, so that the eyes are directly over it. After that, not much matters in the stance except that you should be as comfortable as possible. Don't spread your feet too far apart, or you will get a cramped, tense feeling before you hit the ball. And if your feet are too close together you are likely to sway. Having the feet a moderate
CHAPTER XI

LET'S GO!

THERE you have it—the Square Face System of hitting a golf ball. It is the easiest, simplest, and most logical way we know of. It will stand firm against any test you may put it to on a golf course, and any argument that may be thrown against it in a locker room. It is consistent. It has no weaknesses. Its proof lies in its success. Not only are the best American professionals tending more and more toward it, but the average golfer and the duffer are improving their games with it.

What does it come down to, after all? It comes down to two basic fundamentals. One is keeping the face of the club what we call square to the direction line all through the swing. The other is a winding and unwinding action of the body, with the body always a shade ahead of the hands in the unwinding.

That is the system, reduced to the fewest possible words.

To keep the club face square two specific actions of the shoulders and wrists are required which you are not used to making. You will find that these feel strange at first. So does any new action. If you've ever broken a hand or an arm you've had to do things with the other that you never did before. You have thought you'd never be able to do them, and they were awkward at first. But by the time the broken member healed, weren't you
pleasantly surprised at what you could do with the other? And proud of how well you did it?

Well, the learning of these few new actions in the Square Face System will be much easier. Physically they are not at all difficult. They require no special dexterity and no great muscular strength. The fact that women use the system just as well as men is proof enough that no big muscles are needed.

The second fundamental, the winding and unwinding, is something you have been doing anyway. You just haven’t been doing it quite right. You’ve been doing—and trying to do—all of the swinging and hitting job with your hands and arms. You’ve been keeping your body out of it. What we want you to do is get your body in the swing, to let the unwinding body pull the arms and hands down into the ball. Make it pull them down.

That may be a new idea to you, that you don’t have to do anything with your hands and arms from the top of the backswing. Just leave them there and let them be pulled down. Think about that. Get a good mental picture of it. Carry the idea into practice swings. Get the feel of it in the living-room. Then try it on the practice tee.

Once you get the feel of the body pulling the arms, and realize how easy it is to hit the ball that way, you will be amazed. You will wonder why you never did it before. You’ll also want to kick yourself because you never did it.

And that’s it. That’s the Square Face System that will straighten out your slice, take you out of the woods, the rough, and the lurking brooks, and put you back on the fairway where you belong. Once you have learned this system it will become virtually impossible for you to
slice. The Square Face System will take the frustration out of golf and replace it with fun and the pride of accomplishment.

The Square Face System is simple. It is effective. It has worked for others. Now let it work for you.
he instills confidence in the reader. Joe Dante’s reputation as a golf professional and as an authority of how the game should be played is firmly established. This book proves it.”—Julius Boros, National Open Champion, 1952, Professional at the Mid-Pines Club, Southern Pines, North Carolina.

“Joe Dante has made a fine contribution to golf with his book, Stop That Slice. Most golfers are slicers and this will bring them help they sorely need. It should be in every golfer’s library.”—Tommy Bolt, North and South Open Golf Champion, 1951.

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