

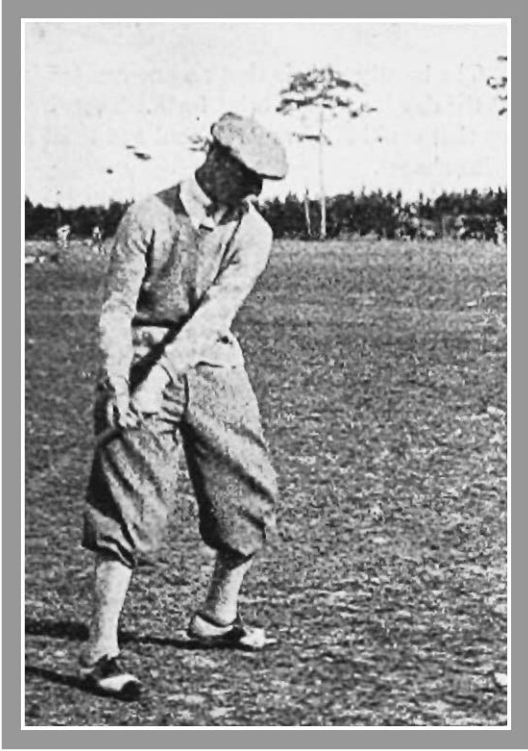
# How to Get Distance from the Tee

*Former British Open Champion Explains His Method of Driving*

By Arthur Havers

**I** NEVER tire of teaching driving, because when all is said of other shots in the game, the tee shot is the most fascinating.

"Put me on my driving" is the request most frequently heard by the professional. I am not



On starting the club back avoid any hurried or snatchy movement and don't raise the club up too much

belittling the shots that come between the tee shot and the hole. Far from it. I am not speaking comparatively.

My subject in this article is driving, and well I know that to put a moderate player in the sure way of adding fifteen or twenty yards to his drive on the average is to earn his or her gratitude for bringing a real joy into the game, and for removing a real source of unhappiness.

Driving that is just too short to carry hazards that ought to be carried from the tee, leaves the golfer in a perplexing position from which he craves to be delivered.

Obviously he has something to learn in the swing that he cannot arrive at by his own observations. Hence he comes to the professional for the needed assistance.

I do not promise miraculous results; but I can usually honestly guarantee ten or fifteen yards; which is more than it looks, let me add. Twenty or twenty-five yards may come eventually, but half that added distance should serve very well for a start.

I believe in the full swing for players of both sexes, and all ages and sizes; whether short or tall, stout or slim, makes no difference. I always set out to teach the full swing. Curtailments are ticklish things to adjust in golf.

Cases may arise in which the full swing seems hopeless, but I never come to this conclusion until it is forced upon me. Middle-aged beginners, who have not been addicted to outdoor ball games in their young days may sometimes seem to be incapable of the full swing, owing to the set condi-

tion of their muscles, causing me very reluctantly to consent to a short back swing in their cases. But even with them there is no saying what persistent practice with the full swing might achieve.

By the full swing is meant the bringing of the club to the horizontal at the top; to take it back further is as bad as stopping short, because the player must never find himself in the position of having to pull the club up to the horizontal in commencing the downward swing.

Women golfers are rather apt to hamper their golf in this way, flinging the club upwards without maintaining control of it—a fatal mistake.

My experience has convinced me that the maximum of power is obtained by the full swing. The character of the shot is also better then. Short swinging looks stilted.

The half of the three-quarter swings usually tend to restrict one's pivoting, with the result that the shot is almost certain to be cut and sliced. Instead of the arms going out with the shot they are apt to be drawn across the body—a radical and very common error in driving, whereby the



This point on the back swing, about three-quarters up, shown the left arm comfortably straight

club-head travels inward rather than forward.

Much has been said and written about the straight left arm in the backward swing. The theory is good up to a point. By saying this I mean that it must not be taken too literally or applied too rigidly. The left arm has an elbow in it, which must not be forgotten.

If the left arm is taken back as "straight" as if it were a jointless wooden limb, then the shot must be botched. By a "straight left," I would have you understand a very slightly "curved" left; not sharply bent like a half or three-quarters shut knife, but bent rather like a relaxed bow. When the left arm is brought back too stiffly, you will find that the fingers of that hand cannot keep hold of the shaft.

And now about my bold claim to point the way for fifteen more yards on your moderate driving. Have I promised more than I can fulfill, like an election candidate? I think not. All I ask is that you give a fair trial to my system.

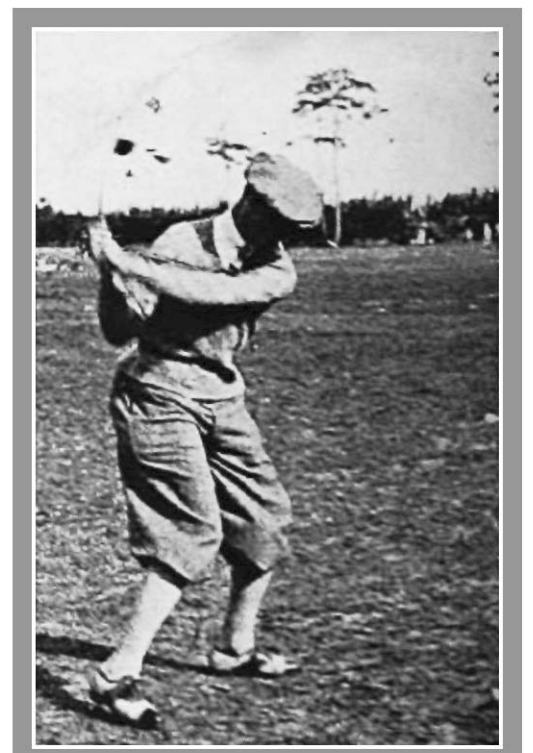
To begin with, in general terms, feel that the club is being swung backwards by the extended and very slightly bent left arm, all the muscles of which are consciously tightened. The club is not "lifted" but "swung," while under perfect control. The hands are not taken round the nape of the neck but round the point of the right shoulder, and five or six inches outwards.

So far the right arm is practically only a passenger moving smoothly with the left and waiting for the moment when it will come into the shot. At the top of the swing the club lies level, or "horizontal." The right elbow does not project outwards but falls naturally to an easy downwards position, eight or nine inches out from the side. The left arm practically remains as it was, bending as little as possible.

There is a momentary—but distinctly conscious—pause before the club begins to descend. This pause is better overdone than underdone; but it cannot be safely dispensed with. I pay great attention to the pause in my tee shots, though, of course, habit makes it almost mechanical to a professional.

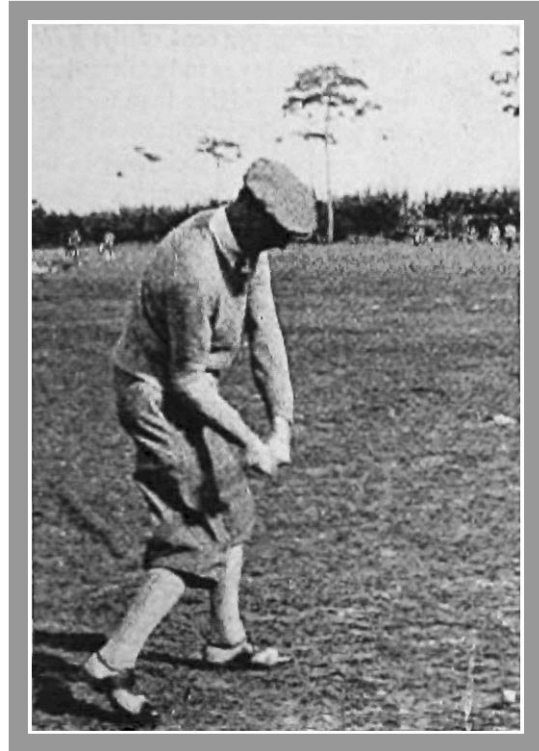
The left arm continues still to do the major part of the work in the downward swing, without perceptibly relaxing, till the club-head has come within two or three feet—no need to deal in inches here—of the ball. If everything has gone right up to this stage, everything will go right beyond it.

The wrists now assume complete command of the shot, without the semblance of jerking. It is the right hand's turn to take the upper hand, so to speak, and without any pushing, it must be remembered.



The hands have been started down, but the body has scarcely begun to turn any as yet

The feet and shoulders are perfectly poised as the right hand takes charge of the follow through, bringing the unwinding body with it. All should happen with a minimum of conscious effort, as the club-head carries the ball away, and chases it, as



This shows the clubhead getting well back down to the ball. The wrists are just beginning to speed it up

far as the arms allow—without being thrust forward!

Now let me come to one or two important details in the nature of warnings.

(1) Be very careful not to hurry the back swing, as too great haste causes a jerk at the top when you cannot be sure of the club reaching the horizontal, or pausing there.

(2) Let the pause at the top be equal to the period of time required to say "I am there all right." That should be long enough to wait and should also give you a feeling of confidence. It is better than counting "one, two."

(3) In coming down, you must beware of unwinding the body too quickly, as that would throw everything out of gear. The effect of coming down too quickly is to slice the shot.

(4) Keep in your mind the thought of trying to increase the pace of the swing from the top gradually, not by spasms.

(5) Keep your eye a little on the right side of the ball, without actually taking aim at certain pimples. Don't stare, or glare, but look straight at the little white object. And don't be frightened of it.

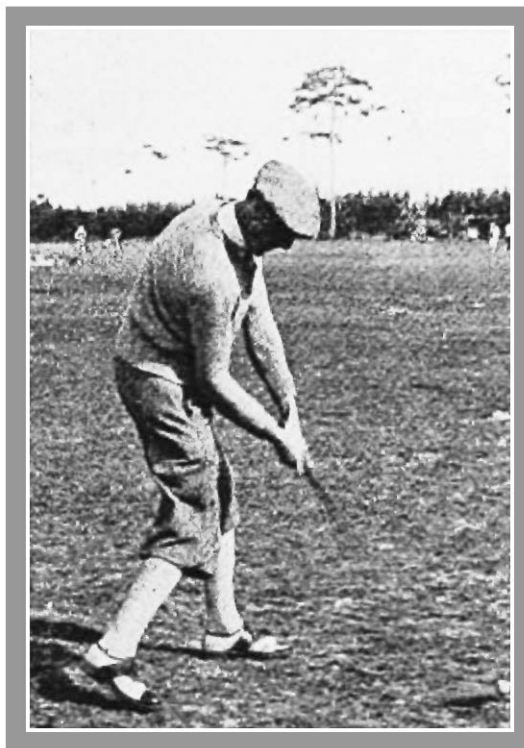
Well now, you ask, where do the extra ten or fifteen yards come in? I answer from the proper manipulation of the straight left arm; by paying particular attention to the fact that the left arm

*must not be any more bent immediately before the right arm takes charge of it two or three feet from the ball than when it took the club away from the ball at the start of the upward swing.*

Pupils have sometimes looked incredulous when I have explained this sure secret of the golf drive, and for a time their experience has confirmed their doubts. But on persevering for some days the secret has disclosed itself in a drive of greater length and beauty than they have hitherto known.

Thus encouraged they have gone on till at length the desired additional length has become a permanent acquisition. I can truly say that at least nine in every ten have had this happy experience. So far as I know, it is the last word in the formation of a golf style that can be relied on rarely to let you down.

This may sound very optimistic. No doubt it is, but would you take lessons in golf, or in anything else, from a pessimistic coach?



The clubhead was caught here almost against the ball. The right side is following easily around

I come now to other matters; minor matters, perhaps, but not to be neglected.

Golf is a very exacting game. It cannot be played while your wits are woolgathering. For myself, my mind is never a blank in the playing of any shot. I dare not forget what I am doing.

Another warning note relates to those occasions when one greatly desires to add a few feet or yards to a drive in special circumstances, as when a bunker requires carrying from the tee against a wind.

The danger is then very great of imperfectly tossing the shot, when the extra effort for length will have a very different effect. My rule is to

play in the knowledge that I have a little unexerted power in reserve for emergencies, and when these come I keep the risks in mind.

So must you, for they are very liable to trip up any of us. Control of the club and oneself



Although the ball has already been hit and is well on its way the head is still held in the hitting position here

must in no circumstances be lost. One little thing going wrong may throw everything wrong. The mind invariably telegraphs to the player when his timing is upset; for without timing there can be no good golf.

To preserve timing, be careful not to bend the left or the right leg too early, as these errors involve dragging the club instead of swinging it. Timing has no greater enemy than the desire to do too much.

I must not conclude this article on driving without dealing with two questions often put to me:—How to play the tee shot for a low ball, and how to play for a high ball?

The answer is very simple. It is mainly a matter of stance. When playing for a low ball I put greater part of my weight on the left foot, and bring the left shoulder slightly forward.

In playing for a high ball, the stance is reversed. I throw the weight on the right foot and bring the right shoulder slightly back. If you will make these experiments, the proof of what I say will become at once apparent.

Lastly, persevere with that straight left arm exactly in the way I have described. Don't be easily discouraged. For what I tell you is right. But be sure that the arm is kept straight for, at least, three-fourths of the entire swing. And don't hurry, or flurry in making the shot.