

How to play a Greenside Bunker Shot....

With PGA Golf Professional Dan Bailey



I get asked many times a week to explain how to improve a golfer's success out of greenside bunkers, I feel that this would be a great place to start our series of lesson features. I also feel that many golfers do not understand the theory behind the traditional splash shot even when shown, so putting it into practice during the monthly medal proves unsuccessful.

One of the reasons for this is down to the way in which the TECHNIQUE should be separated from the METHOD. Let me explain this; the technique is a) Initial setup of body and club, b) Movements of body and club which has a start, middle and end during the golf swing, c) Contact with ball. Whereas the Method is simply how the technique will carry out

If all this is a little confusing then fear not I am now going to talk you through a routine which starts from the annoying moment you arrive at the ball and start to investigate the lie the ball has in the sand and ends when you see the ball settle within tap in distance from the hole...



Before we start this routine we must talk about the equipment needed to play a greenside bunker shot. I recommend a speciality wedge or Tour wedge to give you the most responsive feel through them being made from softer metals and designed for opening out the face your desired amount. Sand wedges from sets of clubs will also do the job pretty well too.

The two key figures you need to familiarise yourself with are a) How much loft is on your club and b) how many degrees of bounce is on the sole of your club. This basically means how much the base of the club sits below the leading edge (the sharp edge at the base of the clubface).

For example my gap wedge has 58 degrees of loft on the face and 8 degrees of bounce on the sole. This gives me plenty of scope for different lengths of greenside bunker shots and also differing types of sands (dry fluffy types, firm or wet styles, shallow or deep layers, small or larger grains) found throughout the UK.

Once arriving at your ball to assess the lie I want you to look at 3 key areas a) how the ball is sitting in/on the sand b) how far away from the ball and how high is the lip of the bunker and c) how much green you have to work with between the edge of the bunker and the hole. Only when this is established you can get the feel for how high and how far the carry should be so choosing your club will become easier. Ok so the club selected is the right one and you have some idea of how high and how far the carry of the ball must be, it is time to talk about the technique needed.

