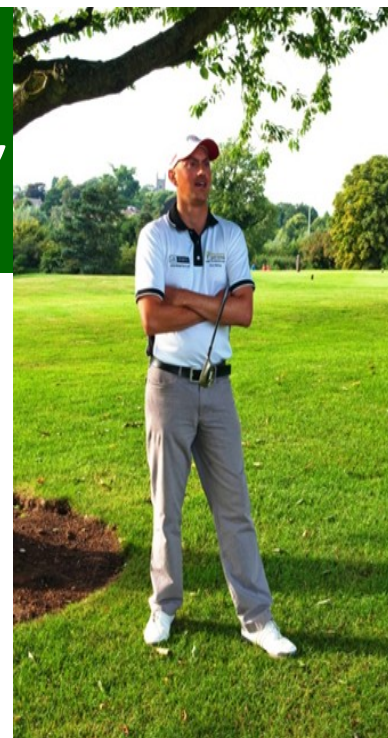


Get your shot types right this winter..

With PGA Golf Professional Dan Bailey

September's here and as we all know, the start of the L&R County Alliance season is upon us, staged at different venues across Leicestershire nearly every Thursday, throughout the winter. So without putting a curse on the weather, now is the time to hone the skills that can be useful to play during damp, cool and windy conditions of winter that so often faces us. We are going to start with the much loved punch shot.

This is one to try either on your next practice/social game or visit to the practice range as I feel all golfers should have this shot in their bag regardless of what the conditions are. I also saw this shot played to perfection many times whilst drawn with our very own Ian Lyner (The Leicestershire) during his victory at Wellingborough CG's PGA Glazerite Trophy a few years back. It gave him such a huge advantage that I thought it was definitely a shot I needed to master.



Fundamentally, this is a shot played without much lateral (weight transfer) movement, so grabbing a 6 iron and starting with set up this is what I suggest... The stance should be just slightly wider than a stock shot's helping to keep your balance if the wind is blowing you around and to keep your legs firm which is paramount to a good strike. Next lean the whole body over to your front side so that there is about 80% of your body weight located on your front (nearest the target) foot. As you do this move the ball position as close to your back foot as you feel comfortable with whilst keeping the clubface still aiming at the target. The reason for doing these three key things are to help strike the ball well and keep as much loft off of the club whilst allowing the clubface to travel down the target line for the longest time possible.

Ok so we are ready to swing the club. During the takeaway, keeping the weight on the front foot, allow the club, hands and arms to stay on the target line until at least hip height where you will feel like the swing is getting steeper (don't worry this is a good thing). At this point you can have as much or as little wrist cock angle (angle from arm to club shaft) as you feel comfortable with and you should now feel (if the weight has stayed on the front foot that you can only reach to around about a 3/4 length swing. This is perfect and the time to start your downswing; the downswing should follow the same route back to the ball, tracking back down the ball - to - target line as early as possible. Once you anticipate the strike then the key is to keep as much loft off of the clubface as possible. To ensure this the follow through I am about to show you will do a majority of the work for you.



Having the weight forward and the ball position back should help encourage a 'ball - before - turf contact so all is left now to do is to fully complete the turn, transferring the remainder of the weight over to the front foot. As you do this I want you to learn to 'Hold Off' the shot, which is effectively hold off the natural release of the club (a very powerful tool in a number of shot types). To 'Hold Off' the shot I want you to feel that the back of your 'Top' hand (left hand of a right hander) stay facing the sky for as long as possible, making the club unable to release and turn over. The result will be a truncated finish and the club ending in front of you as you look down the target rather than finishing around the back of the neck. Allowing you to glance up and see the ball fly low and straight, unaffected by wind and rain. Judging and mastering this shot will take time but it is worth it. When taking onto the course during competition, my advice is, take one to two more clubs than you normally would from a particular distance and allow for more run out of the ball, as this shot generally carries less and rolls more.

Thank you to Lutterworth Golf Club for the use of their facilities. Dan Bailey PGA is available for lessons 07940 962627