

To Read or not to Read

Quite often, I am asked if there is a golf instructional book that I recommend. That question is not one which has an easy answer. In golf as in life in general, people learn in different fashions. When it comes to the golf swing, some individuals are “visual”, they learn by watching others. Some people are “kinesthetic” and learn by feel, while others are “auditory”, listening to learn. There are few which I have found that learned their golf swing from a book. Don’t get me wrong, there are a lot of great instructional books out there; Hogan’s “Five Fundamentals”, Pennick’s “Little Red Book” and Ballesteros’ “Natural Golf”, just to name a few. However, many of the writers use terms relating to the golf swing, which may be difficult for you to visualize or feel. For example, the word “release” pertains to an impact position and is used frequently by instructors and writers but not understood very often by the student. If the book continues in this context, it may not be the best book for you to read. Like finding a good golf instructor, you have to find a writer that you “click” with.

The monthly golf publications are full of quick instructional tips from various “Top 100 Teachers” and tour players. If you find one of those tips that works particularly well for you, my advice is to cut that tip out of the magazine and put it in a binder for future reference. Start a collection if you will, a personal inventory of golf tips you have found to be helpful. One that you can go back to or review when swing problems arise. In essence, creating your own personal instructional book. If an instructor says something to you that clicks, write it down and place it in this book. Instructional videos are also an excellent source particularly for those individuals that are visual or auditory in their learning process. Again, you need to find an instructor that makes as close to perfect sense to you as possible.

If you think about your days in High School or College, there were probably some classes you enjoyed more and did better in than others and I would be willing to bet in those classes, you had a good connection with the teacher or professor. Perhaps it was their presentation of the material or even their sense of humor that made the information captivating to you and easier to understand. If you find that same teacher to student or writer to student relationship in golf, you will see an improvement in the understanding of your swing and the game of golf.

For help with this or any other part of your game, contact John Rathbun, PGA Head Golf Professional at the San Vicente Golf Resort (760) 789-3477.