

## The SOLE of your Clubs

For whatever reason, lately I have been paying more attention to players practice swings, particularly with the driver, and a thought occurred to me that I had not given a great deal of consideration in the past. I have noticed a lot of players hit the ground with their drivers during a practice swing. Why??

Many times, striking the ground is a swing flaw usually caused by an early release of the right hand, but many other players hit the ground unconsciously as a part of their practice swing and pre-shot routine. Do you want to hit the ground with your driver when you are striking the ball? No, you don't. What you are possibly doing is creating a 'muscle memory,' which may cause you to hit the ground occasionally, resulting in a poor shot. Take your practice swing without hitting the ground.

Another situation involving soling (grounding) your clubhead has more to do with a possible rules violation. For example, you find your ball in the rough and perhaps, it is precariously sitting atop a tuft of grass. If you sole the clubhead when you are in the address position and the ball moves, you are deemed to have moved the ball (rule 18-2b.) and shall incur a penalty of one stroke. However, if you take your stance and do not sole the clubhead on the ground, you may avoid the penalty if you were not directly responsible for the ball moving. This situation can happen in many places, including in the wood chips under some of our trees, or if the ball happens to be resting against a twig or leaf, etc.

For many of my students who are prone to taking the club away in the backswing with their right hand and find themselves getting the club stuck in the grass on the way back, I have recommended that after they get into the address position and are ready to start the swing that they actually hover the clubhead about one-quarter inch off the ground before starting the backswing. This will allow the backswing to be smooth by taking the club back more with the shoulders.