



PERFORMANCE
IN MOTION

By Dan DeMuth

PERFORMANCE IN MOTION: PLAYING THE GAME PARTNERSHIP OF MIND AND BODY



Unlike the typical golf coach, the coaching I do is not just about improving mechanics, but rather working with golfers on the mental game. It is also important to recognize what comes first. Often we try and change the mechanics first because that is what we see. However as I have pointed out in previous articles, if the mind isn't focused on the target, or distracted by interfering thoughts the ball will drift off line and the swing will look strange. The same is true with any successful business or team within a larger organization. When the target and goals become over whelming from interference either internally or externally it is difficult to perform at our best. I have listed five important things you can do before, during, and after a round of golf. You can certainly relate these strategies to increase performance and enjoyment both on and off the course.

1 - Playing Your Own Game And Knowing What You Want From The Experience

When I coach golfers, one of the first questions I ask is why they play. Many people are amazed when the question is difficult to answer. Some people have never even thought about it, and yet have belonged to country clubs for the majority of their lives. Why, because it is something that they do, or have done for years.

There are many reasons why we play golf: because we enjoy being outdoors, seek to challenge ourselves, compete with others, develop relationships or spend time with family and friends. I suggest that you come up with something to focus on during the round that allows you to understand the value the game can provide. As I stated in a previous article, if you scored a 90 and it took you 10 seconds to hit each shot, that is only 15 minutes of ball hitting time. An average 18-hole round of golf takes us 4 hours to play. If you're only hitting the ball for 15 minutes, what are you doing with the other 3 hours and 45 minutes?

The same can be true for many people, how you choose to show up and what it is that you are seeking to get out of the experience is a key component. Sure we all want to play well in golf, score low, and in business make more money, but those are out comes to the overall experience. Defining the clear intent on what it is that you want to do to make a difference for others and yourself.

2 - Strategize Each Hole

Before you play, map out each hole of your round. If it is a course you've seen before, go through the scorecard or virtual tour online

to see where you could take advantage of the course and achieve your desired outcomes. If there is a hole where you always seem to shot a less than desired score, take a closer look and determine how you could score lower while still playing within your abilities.

If it is a course you haven't seen before, preview it online and map out how you will play each hole. Develop a realistic idea of what your score could be for the course and set a target. It is also important to realize that you may miss certain shots on the course, but you can still recover from those you did not execute to your liking.

3 - Permission To Score Low

How many times have you been scoring one of your career rounds, only to have a major breakdown on the final few holes? This often happens to golfers of any ability when they are unprepared and haven't given themselves permission to score low or win a particular game or match.

Take, for example, Tom Watson several years ago. At age 59, was leading the British Open for three consecutive rounds, and played 17 ½ great holes in his final regulation round, only to find himself over the green on his second shot on the par four 18th hole. He simply needed to get up and down in order to win the tournament, but during the next two shots, he looked as though he lost his target and was distracted by the circumstances of his situation. He didn't get up and down, and lost the next day in a playoff. At his age, winning a major would have been an unprecedented accomplishment, likely putting doubt into his mind as to if it was possible. In order to score low, you must believe you can do so.

4 - Awareness Of Your Thought Process

When teeing off on the first hole, you first need to recognize that you are playing a game. For many people, the first tee can be a frightening experience. It is often the only place on the course where others may be gathered around to watch you tee off. It is critical to be aware of the interference in situations like these (in this case, the people) and redirect your thought process to your intended target.

If you notice yourself losing the target or hitting a number of undesired shots in a row, you first need to ask yourself why. Are you keeping the target through impact? Or are you lining up your shot and then focusing on how to hit the ball? The mind can drift into many different places in a short period of time. Without a conscious thought to hold the target in our minds through impact, the ball can



easily go off course. Being aware of your target at all times will limit your distractions and keep you in the zone.

5 - Dealing With Frustration

Frustration is another reason why we lose focus on the target. One of the main causes of our anger is because, when we hit a bad shot or two, we are afraid we will repeat our mistakes. It isn't so much the disappointment of missing the target in the first place, but the fear of continuing to do it. If I told you that you would start the round with two double-bogeys but end up with seven birdies and the rest pars to score a 69, I bet you'd be pretty happy. However, after those first two bogeys, there is no way of knowing that you will break through and play great for 16 holes to end the round. Being aware of the possibility of a breakthrough can reduce frustration and bring your mind back to the task at hand.

Our peak performance will happen when we remain 100% clear on our intention and 100% unattached to the outcome. Remaining clear on the possibilities and letting go of what you can't control.

