



# Lifetime Sports – Golf

## Note to parents

The two major purposes of the lifetime sports projects are to:

- Encourage parents to learn a lifetime sport with their child
- Begin learning an activity or sport you can use over an entire lifetime

These purposes encourage parent involvement directly with their 4-H member as a co-learner or a parent leader. Either way, both of you would gain an enriched relationship with one another.

You will find discovering a new sport or sharing your expertise with your child are delightful opportunities. Playing together also provides a great time during which you can visit and converse.

This series adds flexibility to 4-H. The activities are designed to allow varying amounts of involvement. You could extend them for three or four years by practicing, learning new skills and entering competitions, or you might want to learn a different sport each year.

A 4-H member could make a substantial or minimal investment while participating in this project. Investments and additions could be a part of a family's financial planning. Purchase equipment during holidays, birthdays or other occasions. A gift could be a planned investment in learning.

## 4-H golf project member's manual

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Club Name: \_\_\_\_\_

This project covers:

- Different clubs and their uses
- Golf courses
- The Vardon grip and proper stances
- The swing
- Par
- Types of competitions
- Etiquette
- Terminology

## Golf history

The first golf games were probably played in prehistoric times with a stick and rock. Scholars think the name golf came from the German word kolbe, which means club.

The Dutch frequently receive credit for the origin of golf. They played a game known as kalven, which has many similarities to golf but is much more like hockey.

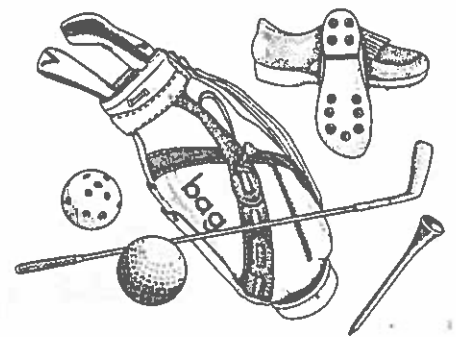
The Scots receive credit for being the first to play a game that involved hitting a ball cross-country into a hole without an opponent's interference.

John G. Reid, of Yonkers, New York, is the U.S. "father of golf." In 1888, Reid interested a group in the game, and they established the St. Andrews Golf Club, the oldest in the United States.

## Game overview

Golf is a popular individual sport people of all ages play. Players use long-shafted clubs of different shapes and weights to hit a small ball from the tee, or starting point, to a sunken cup many yards away. The goal is to use as few strokes as possible.

The space from the tee to the cup is called the hole. The fairway is the grassy area over which the ball is supposed to be played. The area outside the fairway is called the rough because the grass is longer,



which makes it harder to hit the ball; the smooth grass on which the cup is placed is the green. Players avoid the hazards, both natural and constructed, because they make it harder to hit the ball.

A standard game is usually played over 18 holes. The spaces separating holes vary in length from 100 to 600 yards. Each hole has a tee where play begins. A flag marks the location of the cup on the green.

Game play is based on the number of strokes required to place the ball in the hole. Each hole is given a par, which is the number of strokes a first-class player takes to reach the hole from the tee. A player could compete against the par score for the course or another player.

### Etiquette and safety

Observing some basic rules of behavior helps make golf more enjoyable. A person's conduct on a golf course usually reflects his or her

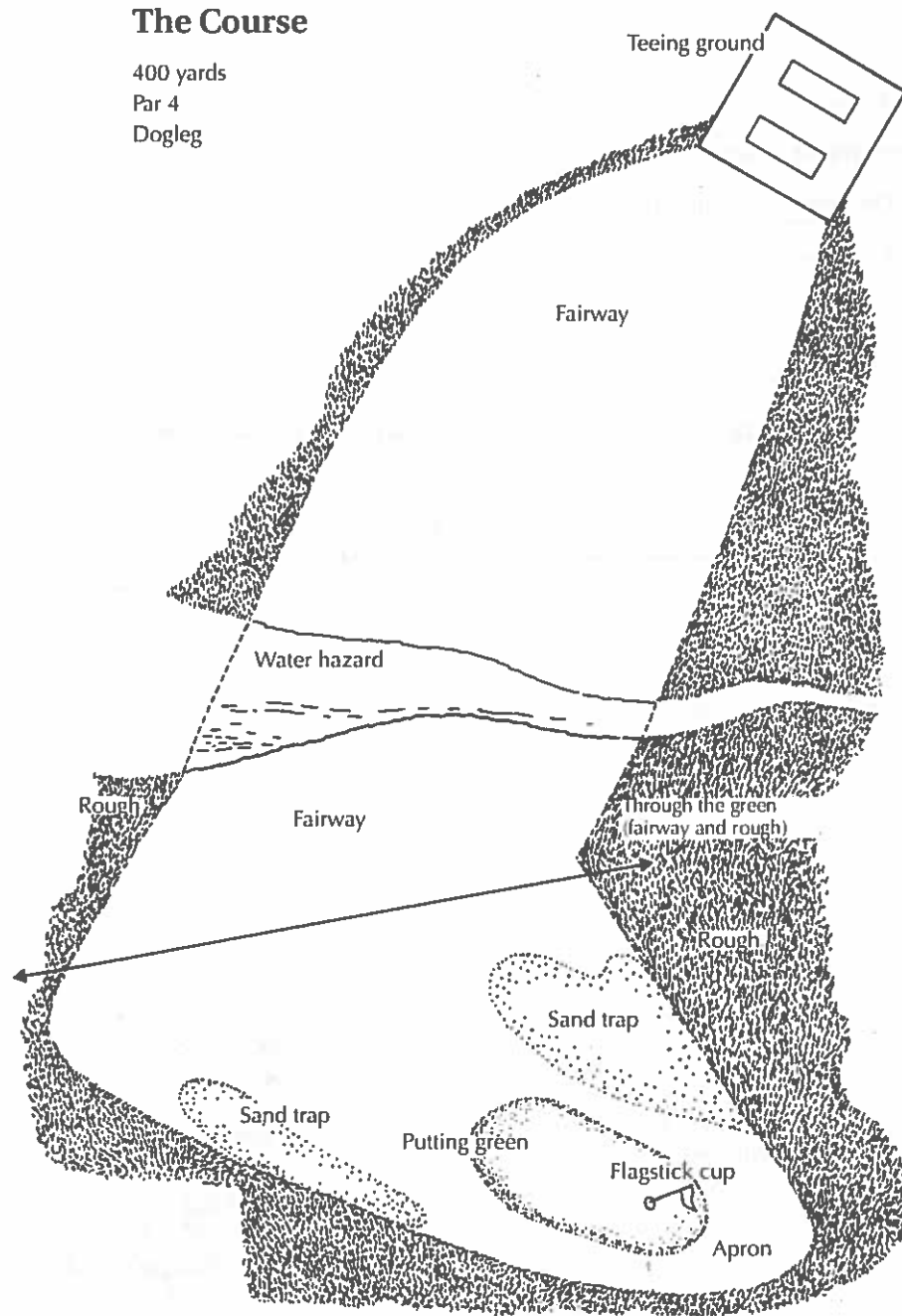
general attitude toward life. Always be courteous to others and follow proper golf etiquette.

### Points of etiquette

- Don't talk or move when a player is addressing the ball or making a shot
- Don't stand close to the cup or behind a player who is making a shot. Always stand where you won't be in his or her line of vision
- Allow the person who has the honor to play a shot before you tee your ball
- Never play a shot until you are sure the players in front of you are out-of-range
- Play without delay. When a ball is lost and you need time to look for it, allow other upcoming players to pass. Then, do not shoot until passing players are out-of-range.
- Let faster groups play through. Signal to them to pass, and continue your play after they are out-of-range.
- Replace divots and ball marks on the green
- Smooth out any holes your play made in sand traps
- After everyone in a match has puttied, be sure to replace the flagstick in the hole and leave the green immediately so following players can hit
- Never pull or drive a golf cart next to or onto a green. Keep golf carts of all kinds off the tee area.
- Do not drop clubs or the flagstick on the green
- Never step on the line of putt

### The Course

400 yards  
Par 4  
Dogleg



## Terminology

### Ace

Hole-in-one

### Address

The position a player takes while preparing to hit the ball

### Approach

Attempting to hit the ball onto the putting green

### Apron

The fairway grasses within a 6-foot circumference of the green

### Away

The ball farthest from the hole; it is the next ball to be played

### Backspin

The counter-clockwise spin a ball has when hit with a lofted club

### Backswing

The movement of the club away from the ball in preparation for the downswing

### Bag

A container used to carry the clubs

### Ball lost

A ball is considered lost if its player cannot find and identify it within five minutes

### Birdie

One stroke less than par

### Blind shot

A shot into an unseen area

### Bogey

One stroke more than par

### Bunker

A hazard, usually a depression, that could be covered with sand

### Casual water

A temporary accumulation of water that interferes with play but is not intended as a regular hazard, such as snow or ice puddles

### Chip

A short shot made from the edge of the green

### Club

The stick with a wooden or metal

head used to hit the ball

### Clubhead

The part of the club that hits the ball

### Clubface

The part of the clubhead that contacts the ball

### Course

The land area on which the game is played

### Cup

A 4.25-inch hole into which the ball is hit

### Divot

A piece of turf dug out during a stroke

### Dogleg

A fairway with a curve in it

### Double bogey

Par plus two strokes

### Downswing

The movement of the club to the ball after the backswing

### Drive

Each hole's first shot hit off the tee

### Eagle

Two strokes less than par

### Fairway

The area between the tee and the green

### Flagstick

A flag-topped slender pole that stands in the cup on the green and serves as the indicator for the cup's location

### Follow-through

The continuing motion of the club after the ball has been struck

### Four-ball

A match in which two golfers play their better ball against the better ball of two other players

### Foursome

1. A match in which two golfers play against two others. Alternating strokes, each side plays one ball.

2. Four golfers each playing his or her own ball together

### Fringe

The clipped area around the green

### Green

The area of closely cut grassy on which the cup is located

### Grip

The placement of the hands on the club

### Halve

Halve a hole if each side holes out in the same number of strokes

### Handicap

A particular number of strokes deducted from a player's score. It is based on 80 percent of the strokes over par in which the golfer's average game is played. A handicap allows players of different skills and abilities to compete on an equal basis.

### Hazard

Any obstruction on the course. Examples include bunkers, traps, ponds and ditches.

### Hole

1. Each combination of tee, fairway, green and cup. The standard golf course has 18 holes.  
2. The cup

### Honors

The privilege of hitting first, which is given to the player with the lowest score on the previous hole

### Hook

Hitting the ball with a counter-clockwise spin, which causes the ball to curve to the left for right-handed golfers

### Iron

A club with a metal head used for intermediate- and short-distance shots.

### Lie

The ball's position on the course

## Terminology

### Loft

The height of the arc the ball will take when hit

### Match play

A game in which one side competes against another at each hole. The side that wins the most holes wins the match.

### Par

The established number of strokes a player should use on a particular hole. The length and difficulty of the hole determine par. Normal distances for men and women to deliver par on a hole, in yards, are:

Par	Women	Men
3	0-210	0-250
4	211-400	251-445
5	401-575	446-600
6	576 and over	

### Pitch

To loft a ball into the air

### Pivot

The body's turn during the golf swing

### Practice green

An area of closely cut grass intended for putting practice

### Provisional ball

A second ball played when the first is lost or out-of-bounds

### Pull

A right-handed golfer's hit to the left

### Push

A right-handed golfer's hit to the right

### Putt

A short stroke to make the ball roll along the ground, usually on the green

### Rough

Unkept ground along the fairway with tall grass, trees and other natural obstacles

### Single

A match between two players

### Slice

Hitting the ball with a clockwise spin, which causes it to curve to the right for right-handed golfers

### Stroke

The act of swinging and hitting the ball. The total number of strokes per hole determines the player's score.

### Stroke play

A competition in which the winner has the least number of total strokes for nine or more holes

### Tee

1. The place from which the ball is started for a hole
2. A small artificial elevation made of sand, rubber, wood, plastic or metal that the ball sits on

### Tee markers

Indicators of various sizes or shapes located in the tee between which the player should stand to make the tee shot

### Three-ball match

A match of three golfers all playing their own ball

### Threesome

1. A match in which one golfer plays a ball against two others who play one ball
2. The players engaged in stroke play

### Toe

The end of the clubhead

### Top

To hit the ball above its center

### Trap

A depression filled with sand

### Water hole

Any hole in which water is located. Examples include a pond or stream running across the land area.

### Wood

A club with a wooden head used for long shots

## Equipment

Golf clubs are categorized into either woods or irons. The primary purpose of the woods is distance, and the primary purpose of the irons is accuracy. However, there must be a certain amount of accuracy with the woods and distance with the irons for the clubs to be useful.

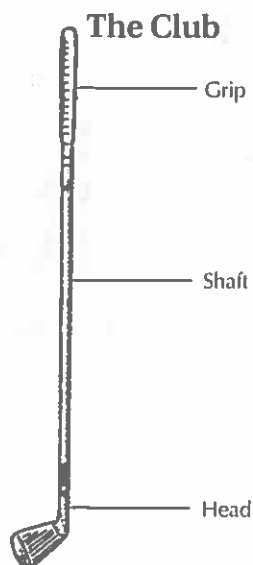
Shaft length and loft angle determine distance and accuracy. As the shaft length decreases, the loft angle increases. Clubs with longer shafts and little pitch give the most distance with little loft, while those with a short shaft and much pitch will carry the ball a short distance with more loft and greater accuracy.

### Beginner's set of clubs

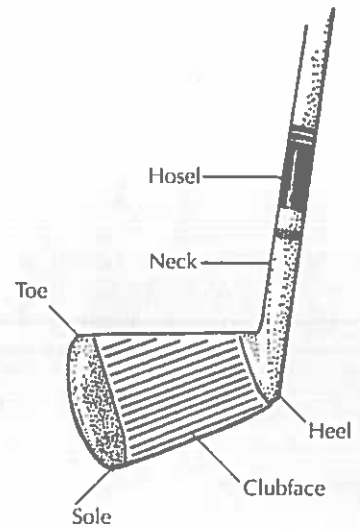
Most beginning golfers start with a set of clubs comprising a driver (1-wood), 3-wood, 3-iron, 5-iron, 7-iron, 9-iron and a putter. This should give you a club for any shot you are likely to encounter on the course. Start with the irons, then use the woods, and later use the putter. A beginner might spend a considerable part of the game in the sand, so a sand wedge would also be useful.

### Additional equipment

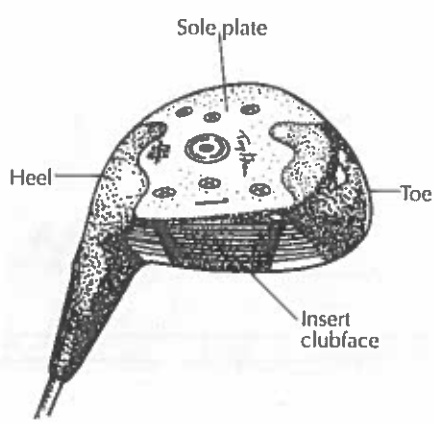
In addition to clubs, beginning golfers will need balls, tees and a bag. When buying balls, choose the lower compression types. They are softer inside and compress more easily, so they will get good distance. Your golf bag, either made of plastic or leather, should have a pocket on the outside for holding your balls and tees and straps inside for separating the clubs. Golf shoes have spikes that keep you from slipping when you swing. Other equipment you might want to add later includes head covers for woods, a golf cart, gloves, additional clubs and hats.



### Iron



### Wood



Types of clubs		
No.	Description	Uses
Woods		
1 (Driver)	Shaft: longest of the clubs Loft angle: shallowest of clubs Distance: more than 200 yards, little loft	Use to tee off on holes for which distance is a major factor, for example pars 4 and 5
2	Shaft: long Loft angle: slightly pitched clubface Distance: long, a little more loft than the driver	Use off the tee when playing with the wind. Use for distance off the fairway.
3	Shaft: long Loft angle: pitched clubface Distance: about 200 yards, more accuracy than long irons	Use to approach the greens on a par 4 and to position the ball on the second shot of a par 5. Can be used from the tee on a par 3.
4	Shaft: medium long Loft angle: highly pitched clubface Distance: about the same as the 3 wood, high degree of loft, has the same accuracy as a medium iron	Use from the tee on a par 3. Use when the ball is in the rough at a distance from the green.
5	Shaft: shortest of the woods Loft angle: clubface pitch more than 4 Distance: the same as the long irons, loft about the same as a 5 iron	Golfers who prefer to use woods in place of the long irons use this club
Long irons		
1	Shaft: long Loft angle: very slightly pitched clubface Distance: about the same as a 3 wood, very low loft	Use to keep the ball low in a high wind. Only professionals special order this club.
2	Shaft: long Loft angle: slightly pitched clubface Distance: about the same as a 4 wood, very low loft	Use for distance on the fairway in high winds. Use to tee off from medium-length par 3.
3	Shaft: long Loft angle: slightly pitched clubface Distance: about 170 yards, considerable loft	Use from the fairway on distance shots. Use to tee off from medium-length par 3.
Medium irons		
4	Shaft: medium long Loft angle: pitched clubface Distance: about 150 yards, much loft	Use on fairway for shots of medium distance
5	Shaft: medium Loft angle: pitched clubface. Distance: about 130-140 yards, much loft	Use from the fairway on shots that do not require considerable distance. Use for chip shots. Use to clear hazards.

## Types of clubs

No.	Description	Uses
6	Shaft: medium short Loft angle: moderate pitch on the clubface Distance: about 100-130 yards, much roll after the ball lands	Use for chip shots and short pitch shots. Use on the fairway for short distances.
Short irons		
7	Shaft: short Loft angle: high degree of pitch on clubface Distance: about 100-120 yards, has some backspin	Use when accuracy is very important. Use for pitch shots, to clear hazards, for short approach shots, in traps or in the rough.
8	Shaft: short Loft angle: very high degree of pitch on clubface Distance: about 80-100 yards, very much loft	Use for pitch shots to the green that require the ball to stop soon after it lands. Use in the rough and in traps.
9	Shaft: short Loft angle: extreme amount of pitch on clubface Distance: very short, high degree of loft	Use in traps, the rough, for pitch shots that require the ball to stop suddenly after it lands and in place of the sand wedge
Special Clubs		
Putter	Shaft: very short Loft angle: none	Use on the green for putting
Chip Iron	Shaft: very short Loft angle: slight amount of pitch	Use near the edge of the green to chip the ball onto the green
Pitching Iron	Shaft: short Loft angle: high degree of pitch on clubface Weighted club	Use for lofted shots, to pitch the ball onto the green, for example. Use when the ball needs to stop in a minimum amount of space.
Sand Wedge	Shaft: short Loft angle: extremely high degree of pitch on clubhead Weighted club	Use for sand bunkers

## The grip

The single most important thing to master in golf is the proper grip. The one most often used is the Vardon grip. Harry Vardøn, an English professional golfer, developed this grip around the early 1900s, and golfers have found it to be the easiest, most accurate and most powerful grip in golf.

The Vardon grip consists of placing the little finger of the right hand over the forefinger of the left hand. Overlapping the fingers helps the hands work as a unit and allows only four fingers of the right hand to be on the club, which reduces the right hand's dominance over the left hand's.

To grip the club:

1. Place your left hand on the club shaft about one inch from the end of the club (see Figure 1)
2. Lie the shaft diagonally across the palm from the second joint of your index finger (see Figure 2)
3. Close your left hand with your thumb placed on top of the club handle pointed down the shaft toward the clubhead (see Figure 3)
4. Place your right hand on the club so the little finger goes over the forefinger of your left hand
5. Close your right hand around the left side of the shaft (see Figure 4)

Relative loft and distance chart

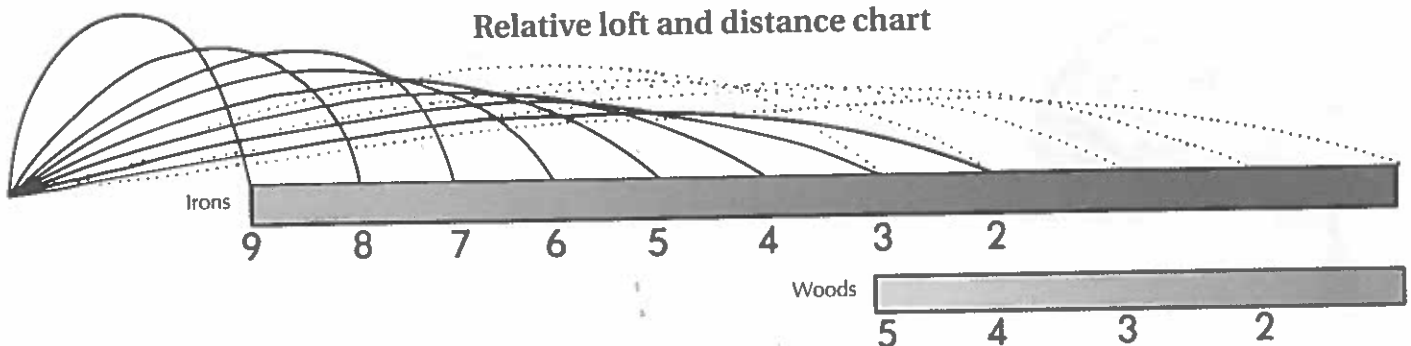




Figure 1



Figure 2

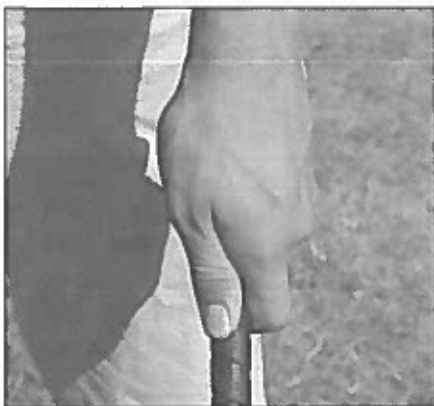


Figure 3



Figure 4

## The stance

There are three types of golf stances: square, closed and open. The club, its loft angle and the distance of the shot all determine which stance you use.

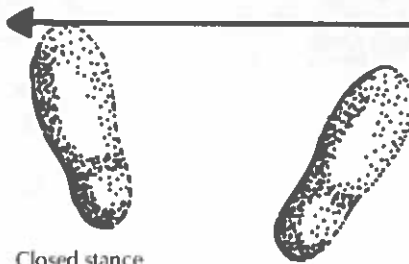
For wood shots, spread your feet shoulder-width apart. For iron shots, place your feet closer together. As the loft angle of the iron decreases, so should the space between your feet.

Your body will turn according to the distance of the shot. It should turn slightly to the right of the ball for long shots and slightly to the left, toward the hole, for short shots.

Use the closed stance for the drive and long wood shots. For the long irons, use a square stance, and use the open stance for short irons.

### Closed stance

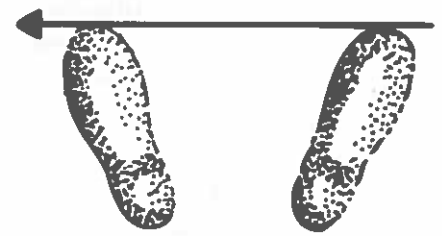
1. Place your feet as far apart as the width of your shoulders
2. Place your right foot slightly back from your left foot
3. Turn your body slightly to the right of the ball



Closed stance

### Square stance

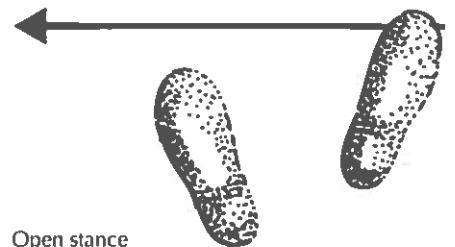
1. Place your feet closer together than shoulder-width apart
2. Even your feet to a line parallel with the flight of the ball



Square stance

### Open Stance

1. Place your feet closer together than for the square stance
2. Place your right foot slightly forward from your left foot, which you should toe out
3. Turn your body slightly to the left of the ball



Open stance

The player's height and arm length as well as the length of the club used determine how far to stand from the ball.

## The address

The address is the position a player takes in preparation for hitting the ball.

Follow these steps:

1. Grip the club
2. Take the appropriate stance
3. Reach for the ball with the club by flexing your knees. The clubhead should fall behind the ball.
4. Keep your back straight; do not bend over from the hips
5. Out your hips and shoulders parallel with the line of flight.\* Your hips should feel loose and free to turn.
6. Hold your head steady

7. Waggle the club by moving your hands and wrists. This will relieve tension and establish the swinging rhythm of the golf stroke.

\* The most common mistake in golf is made by turning either the hips or the shoulders toward the target. A slice is the result.

## The swing

### The backswing

A good backswing is one continuous, rhythmic motion involving the hands, arms, shoulders and hips. The purpose of the backswing is to get the body into position to supply the power needed to hit the ball for distance.

To execute the backswing:

1. Go directly into the backswing from a series of waggles. See step 7 in the previous section.
2. Keeping your left arm extended straight, swing the club straight back
3. Turn your shoulders twice as far as your hips
4. Keep your wrists and hands in the address position until you are halfway through the backswing, then start to bend your wrists backward. They will be entirely bent back by the end of the backswing.
5. Shift your body weight to your right leg, and bend your left knee in
6. Keep your head steady
7. The tension released at the top of the backswing will give you power for the downswing

### The downswing and impact

The downswing is the reverse of the backswing. Your head is steady through the entire swing.

Here are the seven steps to help you with the downswing and impact:



### Backswing

Following the steps of the address on page 7, get into position to hit the ball. After a series of waggles, enter into the backswing by swinging the club straight back and bending your wrists backward at midswing.



### Downswing and impact

After a short pause at the top of your backswing, bring the club back down, snap your wrist as the club meets the ball.





### Follow-through

Swing through the ball, not at it. The position of your body at the completion of your swing will show whether you correctly followed through. If you are not in the correct position, check your downswing.

1. Pause at the top of the backswing. All good golfers hesitate at the top of the backswing to improve their concentration.
2. Shift your weight back to your left leg, and bend your knee in toward your left knee
3. Start the downswing with your hips turning toward their address position. Your shoulders will follow and pull your arms and hands back down parallel to the ground.
4. Keep your left arm straight
5. As the downswing progresses, unlock your wrists
6. Snap your right wrist as the club meets the ball, but do not try to help the ball into the air
7. Swing through the ball, not at it

### Follow-through

A correct follow-through completes the swing. After the swing, you should be standing in an upright position with your weight on your

left leg, right knee bent in, right heel raised and hands high with your right arm extended. Your body should be facing the ball's line of flight.

The follow-through helps you check your downswing. The correct follow-through would only be the result of a correct downswing. If your follow-through is incorrect, check your downswing.

### Special shots

#### Short shots

The short shots in golf are played on the last 100 yards with the 8 or 9 iron. Accuracy rather than distance is important here. To execute a short shot, grip lower on the club shaft, move in closer to the ball, use the open stance and shorten your backswing. Play short shots primarily with your arms and hands and little body action.

#### Putting

No two people use the same grip or have the same style when putting. The best advice is to experiment,

practice and then use the style that is the most comfortable and natural.

Useful putting tips include:

- Keep your feet close together with your weight on your left foot
- Keep your head straight
- Always hit with your hands
- Move the putter blade in a straight line toward the hole
- Allow for the slope in the green

### The pitch shot

The pitching iron allows for much loft. Have confidence in the iron, and don't try to help the ball into the air. The primary purpose of this shot is accuracy.

Basic rules for a pitch shot include:

- Keep the majority of your weight on your left foot. Do not shift your weight during the shot.
- Cock your wrists and hit down and through the ball
- Grip lower on the club shaft
- Use a slightly open stance
- Shorten your backswing according to the distance the ball has to travel
- Hit with your arms and not your body
- Keep your head steady

### The chip shot

The chip shot is made from an area around and near the green. The importance of the chip shot cannot be overstressed. The purpose of this shot is to get within one putt's distance of the hole, about 3 feet.

The chip shot is played with a square stance and often requires a slow, soft shot. The idea is to hit the ball on a low trajectory and let it roll up to the hole. So, the ball should land on the green without much of a backspin.

Keep your weight on your left foot. Be sure to play the shot with just the hands, and keep your body still. On this shot, make sure the ball lands on the green and not the fringe.

## The bunker shot

Few players other than professionals have mastered the bunker shot. Amateurs have a lot of trouble with bunker shots because they do not have the right objective in mind. When making a bunker shot, the major objective is to get onto the green in one shot. The average player tries to put the ball in the hole from the bunker, which results in a loss of concentration and extra shots.

Bunker shots should be played with a sand wedge. Practically no body movement should be used when hitting the ball in sand.

Contrary to other golf shots, the clubhead in bunker shots strikes the sand 2 to 3 inches behind the ball. The clubhead should travel through the ball. This action will result in lifting the ball out of the bunker and onto the putting surface.

Follow these basic rules when making bunker shots:

- Use an open stance with your feet firmly planted in the sand and your hands a little ahead of the clubhead
- Keep the majority of your body weight on your left foot
- Keep your head steady
- Use little or no body turn
- Play the ball off your right heel
- Strike the sand 2 to 3 inches behind the ball
- Be sure to follow through with the shot and finish high

Remember, the idea is to get the ball out of the bunker and onto the putting surface in one stroke.

## Competition

Match play is a game in which one side competes against another at each hole. The side that wins the most holes is the winner.

Stroke play is a competition in which the winner has the least number of total strokes for nine or more holes

### Matches

In a single match, one golfer plays against another. This is the most common type of match. One golfer could also play a ball against two golfers playing one ball, which is a threesome. A foursome involves two golfers playing against two others. Alternating strokes, each side plays one ball. Or, the four golfers could each play their own balls.

Three golfers playing their own balls against one another is a three-ball, but a four-ball involves two golfers playing their better ball against the better ball of two other players.

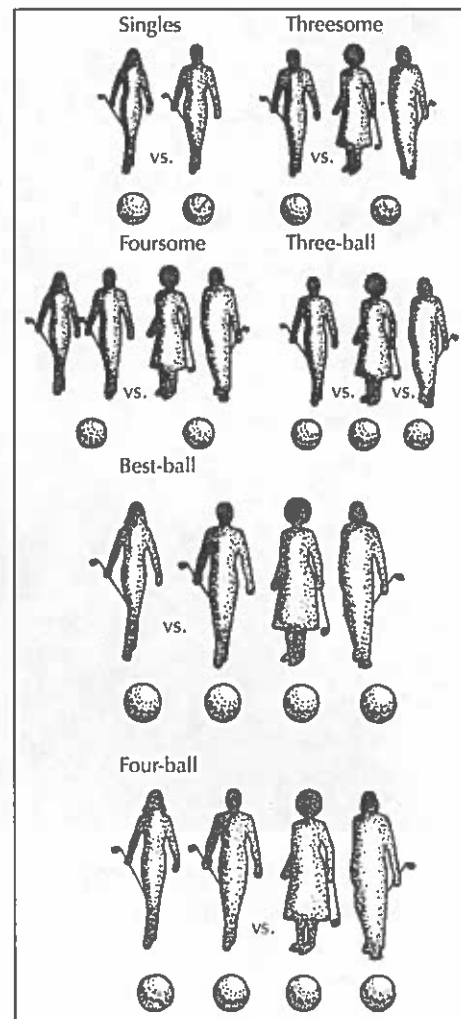
Best-ball is a match in which one golfer competes against the better balls of two or three players.

### Par

Par is the number of strokes it should take a professional to hole-out on a particular hole. It implies faultless play. Depending on the length and difficulty of the hole, each hole has a par of 3, 4 or 5. The total of the pars of all 18 holes adds up to the par for the course. On most courses, total par is 72, which is ten holes of par 4, four of par 5 and four of par 3.

Par allows two strokes for the putting green. So, the ball should reach the green in one stroke on a par 3, on a par 4 in two strokes and on a par 5 in three strokes.

A score one stroke less than par is called a birdie. If you play a par 3 in two strokes less than par, it is a hole-in-one, the ultimate achievement in golf! An eagle is two strokes less than



par on pars 4 and 5, and a double-eagle is three less than par on a par 5.

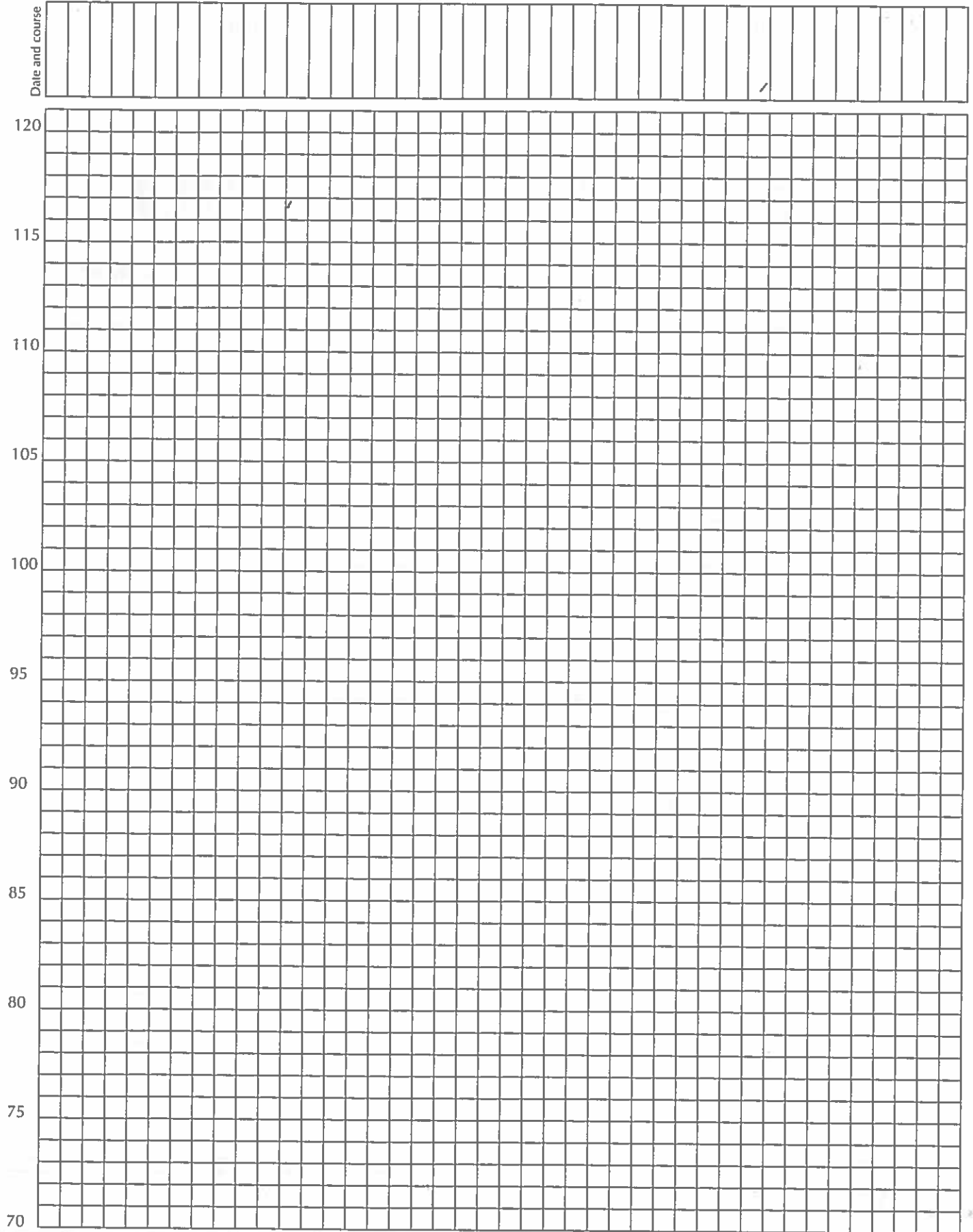
It is much more likely you will score a bogey, one stroke more than par, or a double-bogey, two strokes more than par.

Special recognition goes to Mrs. Noe, a Lincoln, Neb., 4-H volunteer leader who prepared much of the material in this manual; Rebecca Brayman, who edited and condensed material; and Susan Shay, a physical education graduate who read the material and made recommendations.

Adapted in part from the University of Illinois-Urbana-Champaign Cooperative Extension Service's *4-H Sure Shot Golf Manual*.

All photos by Steven Morse, University of Missouri Extension.

Graph your progress. Each time you play golf, record your score with a dot in the appropriate box. Connect the dots to observe your achievements.



Date	Course played	Par	Score	Strokes over or under	Improvement