

When the thought of distance is eliminated, I can sit back and relax. It's very interesting, because when I know all that's needed is a little drive, the fairway appears a lot wider. Trouble now exists way out at the periphery, totally irrelevant to my swing or the potential path of my shot. My little drive swing motion is identical to my practice swing. It IS my practice swing. No hole, however "tight," should scare me. I don't need a wide margin for error.

In his book, *The Touch System For Better Golf*, Bob Toski asks his readers to replay their last round and imagine how much better they could have scored had they been allowed to take every errant shot and place it in the fairway, 15 yards behind the spot where it entered the trouble (without penalty). Toski's remarks prompted me to consider this: Would I be willing to give up 15 yards in distance in exchange for every drive in the fairway? My inclination was to answer yes. What would I rather have, an eight iron from a miserable lie in the rough, or a six from the middle of the fairway?

"LITTLE SHOTS" FROM THE FAIRWAY

There are other instances where I find making little shots especially valuable. In particular, I refer to longer second shots where thoughts of distance crop up. Can I reach the green with a four iron? Once I've chosen that club, the worst thing I can do is try to hit it hard. I must think, "Okay, let's just hit a little four iron up there and see what happens." The little four can have only one possible detriment: it could end up a bit short. As long as I can accept that possibility, I allow myself to swing smoothly. And nine times out of ten I will have plenty of club.

In the situation just described, one might ask why I don't hit an easy three iron instead. Good question. I might do just that in some situations. My experience shows, however, that "little shots" (a mental concept) can actually tend to fly as far or farther than big ones since they tend to be struck more solidly and with potentially greater



swing speed. A smooth motion does not by its nature mean a slower speed through impact, although it may seem so to a golfer who is used to whacking the ball with great effort.

Another instance where this technique comes in handy is when a green seems out of reach. Trying to crush one, in this case, is a sure invitation to someone's backyard barbecue. Wouldn't it make more sense to take all the pressure off and hit a nice little three wood short of the green, in good position for a chip and a putt? Approaching the shot with this kind of attitude has produced some of the longest three woods I've ever hit in my life. I've hit greens I never thought possible. The feeling is exhilarating!

When the head flew off my seven iron earlier this year, I thought at first that it was a big loss. Then I recalled those great golfers of long ago who played with only six or seven clubs. These players were masters of little shots and many other improvisations. I found that a little choked-down six worked just fine for a seven iron distance. By the time I got the seven iron back, I seriously considered leaving it out in favor of an additional wood.

“LITTLE DRIVES” IN COMPETITION

This was the ultimate test. Could I swing the club to propel my ball out to an easily reachable location in the fairway, regardless of what was happening around me? I can honestly say that numerous times I failed in this endeavor. I failed because I did not believe strongly enough (have faith) that it would work. At the moment of truth, ego took over and the old “kill it” swing returned, the consequences of which were not pretty.

More fun is to relate a recent instance in which I succeeded. On this particular day I drove to the course with a *different attitude*. It was *set*. There would be no indecision or change of mind on the first tee. Consequently, there was no aura of tension surrounding me as I

