

TECHNIQUE



MANAGEMENT



MENTAL



PHYSIOLOGY



EXCELLENCE



FUN

Purposeful Practise

The keys to building a tournament tough game

Jonathan Wallett MGCP PGA
Elite performance coach

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INTRODUCTION

Many players throughout the world possess the ambition to improve and some players have the ambition to be among the best players in the world one day. But how do you achieve such an ambition? Is it just down to god given talent, or is it down to practise? And if it is down to practise, how, when and how much should one practise?

A very common phrase now is, "Quality is more important than quantity" when it comes to practising. I think quality is a **MUST**, but quality *with quantity*? That also sounds good! So how do you achieve quality practise?

Through our study, research and experience at our Academy, we have devised what we call the *five golden rules*. Perhaps that description is not strong enough – perhaps the *five commandments* would be a better description – because these concepts are the **foundation to every player's future success**. These concepts or 'rules' must be understood, respected and obeyed at all times – *without exception*. The player who has the discipline, dedication, desire and determination to follow these 'commandments' will be the player who achieves their dreams.

"It isn't the hours you put in at practise that count. It's the way you spend those minutes"

TONY LEMA, BRITISH OPEN WINNER 1964

Let's introduce these concepts to you now, and then in later chapters we can see how these can be applied effectively.

I hope you enjoy your journey.

Jonathan Wallett

Jonathan Wallett

Training Center, France
August 2008





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- | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
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|------------------|-------------------------------------|
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1

PRACTISE Concepts and philosophies

the 5 golden rules

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It's the way you spend
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TONY LEMA
BRITISH OPEN WINNER 1964



Introduction

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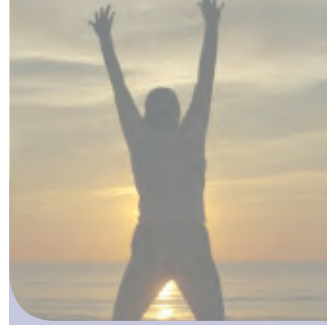
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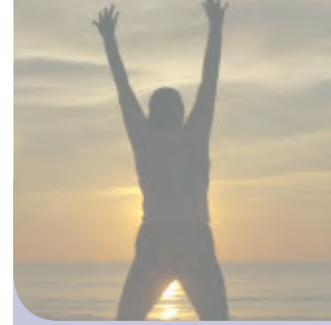
1. Develop competitive confidence through practise specificity

What do we mean by practise specificity? Well it means to make a part of your practise simulating competition – i.e under **stress or pressure**. Extensive testing by University researchers in the field of Sports Psychology has emphatically shown that practicing in pressurized situations is by far the most effective way to inoculate yourself against the negative effects of pressure. Slapping away on the range is like practicing for a football World Cup shootout with your 5 year old son in goal!

During WWII, Allied commanders saw that their new recruits would often hesitate at critical moments – *at the point of pulling the trigger* – very understandable as they had a natural reluctance to take a life. But this cost the lives of many Allied servicemen, as the battle hardened german soldiers did not suffer from this critical delay at a life or death moment. The Allies devised a system to train soldiers to kill, and at the point of pulling the trigger to have no conscious thought. They achieved this by one simple change in the training of their soldiers - **simulate battle conditions on the training ground**. They introduced more realistic targets - 'faces' as targets not 'bullseyes'. The next step was training with live bullets (and over the years some recruits have died in training accidents as a result of this, but despite these losses military chiefs understand that it is necessary).

"You play as you practice and you practice as you play"

BOB TOSKI



They discovered during live tests that young soldiers' heart rates go up to 200 to 250 beats per minute during the first live session. But then they saw after more and more live training the heart beat went down and down — **the recruits had started to become inoculated to the pressure.**



I often see some elite players very confident in practice, and in practice rounds, but then this confidence dissipates during tournaments. To compete you need **competitive confidence. This means confidence during competition.** This is the type of confidence every player requires to play peak performance golf. And you create it through **simulating tournament conditions in practise.** How can you do this? In Section two we detail strategies for simulating competition in practise.



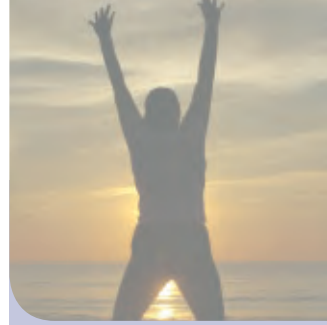
2. Train in all areas

I just dabbled with it compared to Tiger. The game is no longer about talent alone – the physical and mental side have become huge. The 14 – 15 year olds in my Faldo Junior Series, never mind the Elite squad, get the best diet, training, practice disciplines, guidance in thought processes, the best. I wish I knew then what I know now. I simply scratched the surface of a deeper, more professional approach. But I would experiment less with my swing for sure, I mean there is no such thing as perfect is there? Looking back it was ridiculous how much I overcomplicated things.

NICK FALDO 2002

A question I often ask players at the beginning of mental seminars is; "What percentage does the mental game play in your overall game?" I get varying answers, but in general they range from 40 to 90%. The next question I ask is, "What percentage of your practise time is devoted to the mental game?" The most common answer is 0%! Is that logical – you spend 0% of your practise time on an area of up to 90% importance!

Every player has to take a **multi dimensional view** and look at all aspects of the game when compiling an effective practise/training program. Many players are unsure how to train the mental aspect of their game, although they understand it will play a significant part in their success. However, developing an effective mental training program is outside the scope of this workbook.



Our other workbooks such as "Creating your Inner vision" and "Born to Win" give an excellent grounding to starting and developing a mental skills development program.

The physiological side of the game has become increasing important for the modern day player, partly due to Tiger Woods. When was the last time you had a physical screening? Have you got a training program specific for you and your body as it is now?

You cannot compete at Tour level without a **high degree of expertise from 100 meters in.**

A Tour player will hit approximately 50% shots from within this distance – and therefore it's logical that at least 50% of your practise time is devoted to the short game and putting. This will enhance your ability to score, especially on those days when you are competing with your 'B' or 'C' game.





3. The 1/3 rule – keeping your practise in balance

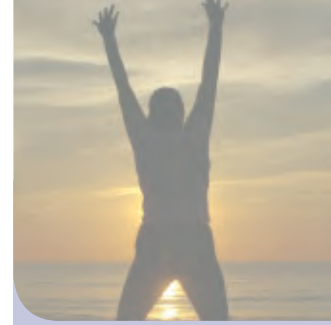
Michael Campbell, 2005 US Open champion, once said that when he practice he divides his balls into three groups – **1/3 concentrating on his technique, 1/3 concentrating on rhythm or motion and 1/3 simulating competitive conditions** with a **'trusting mentality'** i.e as if he was playing in a tournament – exactly what we said in Rule One, in order to develop **competitive confidence**.

This is a fantastic rule, because it means that his practise is always **in balance**, albeit if he's practising his swing, short game or putting stroke. For example, on a 60 minute range session Campbell would spend 20 minutes working on his technique, 20 minutes hitting balls focused on developing good motion, and then 20 minutes simulating competition, utilising both his pre shot routine and post shot routine. If he is spending 60 minutes on the putting green, again he'd spend 20 minutes working on his technique, perhaps using a training aid for his stroke path, and then 20 minutes focused on developing consistent rhythm, and then finally 20 minutes with trying to hole 20 putts in a row from 2 meters.

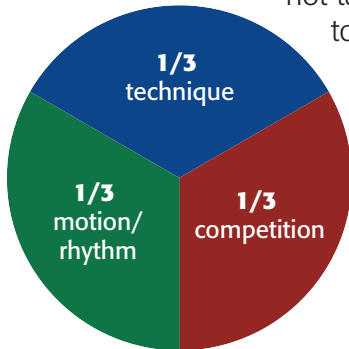
A common mistake many players make (especially Satellite tour players in my experience), is that they **over emphasise the technical side of their practise, and lose this**

"The Swing is a symphony – mechanics and technique are vital – but they should, and must, play second fiddle to the dynamism and flow of the swing itself"

MITCHELL SPEARMAN



balance. We have a saying at our Academy, *“If you don’t learn to trust your training your training is for nothing”*. What we mean is that if you do not take your new technical move through to the trusting stage, it will never become automatic and hence will never help you in competition.



Another common mistake is that players disregard totally the technical side of the game, saying that they want to ‘find their own swing or develop their own technique’. This is as equally destructive, as one of the reasons

for the higher level of play in all tours over the last 30 years is that through research, technology and coaching, teaching of the game has evolved so that the critical success factors, the common denominators that are present in all great players, are much more understood. Denis Pugh, one of the best coaches in the world of the modern era, uses the term ‘swing identity’. Every player has their own signature moves, but there are some critical factors in **building a solid and repeating swing**, and these factors are aspiring tour players should respect at their peril. To use the analogy of someone’s face – everyone has a unique look, but there are common denominators – i.e two eyes, one nose, one mouth etc



And regarding devoting 1/3 of your practise time to motion or rhythm, every top player and coach will testify that great motion is a **critical skill in all aspects of the game** - albeit in putting, pitching or driving. As top coach Mitchell Spearman explains in his quote at the top of this page, the **dynamism and flow of the swing is a must**. Imagine building a powerful engine but then using no engine oil – the engine would not be able to function.



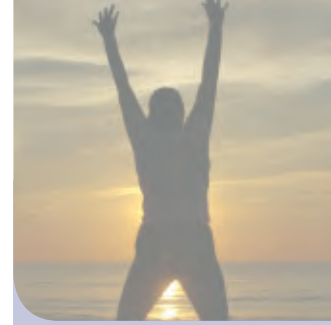
4. Make practise tougher than the tournament itself

Take the example of elite military forces, commonly referred to as 'Special Forces. They train for an eventuality that may never occur – in fact they could train all their life and potentially could never face a war or a conflict. One of the key philosophies of Special Forces training is that they gain their edge, their advantage, through training tougher and smarter than 'normal' military forces.



"To improve, you must practice. But the quality of your practice is more important than the quantity"

DR BOB ROTELLA 1995



As a young assistant Pro at a Country Club in the UK, the Manager was the famous Australian distance runner Ron Clarke. He broke over 20 World Records during the 1960's in distance running. He said that he did this not by training harder than the other runners of his generation—because many were equally as dedicated as him—but by training BETTER. Whilst the other runners of his generation were out pounding the tarmac mile after mile, Ron trained running up the sand hills of Melbourne. Have you ever tried running up sand hill after sand hill?!? Running on the hard surface of a race track then becomes a definite luxury! It's interesting to note that one of his heroes was the Australian cricketer Sir Don Bradman—undoubtedly the finest cricketer in the history of the game. Sir Don developed his unrivalled batting skills in his backyard, using a cricket stump (considerably smaller than a cricket bat), and hitting small stones (smaller than a cricket ball). What they both did, is make the training HARDER than the actual game.

It is well documented that American basketball star, Michael Jordan, developed his world class offensive skills by often practicing against two defenders in training. So when he came to the match himself, even if he was facing one of the best defensive players in the world, it was still going to be a lot easier than facing two people.

What did all of these elite sportsmen do? Through looking to make their training environment tougher than the tournament environment, it gave them the edge, their advantage over their fellow competitors in competition. They didn't necessarily train longer, but they trained smarter.

In Chapter Two we will look at training scenarios that allow you to do this in a golf situation.



5. Develop a lifelong learning mentality

Tiger Woods started working with Butch Harmon towards the end of his amateur career, starting in 1994. Tiger turned Pro at the end of '96, and then promptly won his first major as a pro, the '97 US Masters by 12 strokes. But at the end of '97, he felt that although his game was great when it was 'on', it was not so great when it was 'off'. He needed to develop a much more consistent and repeating ball flight in order to compete with the incessant demands of week to week professional tournament golf. Tiger decided to radically overhaul his swing, and through 1998



did not win, or seriously contend in any of the majors, because he was 'building his swing for the future'. The fruits of his labour were delivered to him in 2000, when he won 3 of the 4 majors, and then went on to win the 2001 Masters as well, holding a 4 majors at one time (commonly referred to nowadays as the 'Tiger Slam'). Most people would then be happy to employ this swing for the rest of their career. But read the quote again at the top of this page to understand Tiger's cognition – even though he had won 4

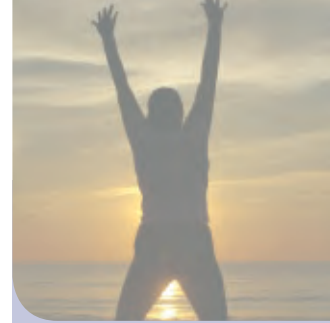
"One of the reasons I made the changes I made is I knew I could attain another level - and here we are. I'm hitting shots that I never could hit before, even in 2000 (the season he won three majors). I'm actually hitting the ball better now than I did during that stretch. I still have holes in my game that I need to fix and need to improve on. I just think that what I've been working on, I'm headed in the right direction."

TIGER WOODS 2007

consecutive majors, he knew that he could play even better. Is this fact or fiction you may ask? The answer to this question is actually irrelevant – he would never have even got to this position without this **lifelong learning mentality mindset**, so he's not going to abandon it now. In 2003 he started working with Swing Coach Hank Haney, and endeavoured once again to develop his game to a higher level.

Annika Sorenstam as an amateur played for the Swedish national team. At this time Pia Nilsson was the National Coach. After each tournament, every member of the team would receive a personalised report on their performance, and 3 things they could work on/develop for the future. This became one of the mainstays of Annika's tournaments assessments evaluations through her early career as a Professional. In 1996, Annika made a breakthrough victory with a win at the US Open. This represented the 'pinnacle' of the mountain she had been striving to climb since her early amateur days. She had long last achieved her dream. In a telephone conversation with Pia the next day, they were rejoicing in the triumph and recollecting the early days as an amateur in the national team and how far they had come since then. Then as the conversation was finishing, Annika then asked when she would be sending though the report on the 3 things she could improve on – Pia was initially shocked – here Annika was, a day after the US Open victory asking for her report on 3 things to improve!" But Pia quickly realised, **champions absorb themselves in a mindset for success**, and that means constantly striving for improvement. So the next day, she identified 3 things that could have been better and promptly sent off her report!

High achievers and elite performers in any field of excellence, albeit golf, sport or business, make a **lifelong commitment to developing, improving and excelling**. They understand that it's not about the destination, but about the journey. In order to be the best that you can be, you need to also develop and absorb this philosophy.





Summary

Learn, absorb and apply the 5 'Golden rules' for Purposeful Practise:

1. Develop competitive confidence through practise specificity
2. Train in all areas
3. The 1/3 rule – keeping your practise in balance
4. Make practise tougher than the tournament itself
5. Develop a lifelong learning mentality

Summary