

The power of momentum

Why do football clubs compete better at home than away? It's the same pitch, the same opposition? Why do tennis matches have such swings with a player dominating one set winning 6-0 or 6-1, and then losing the next set? Why do superb golfers like Michael Campbell have such good winning streaks, and then go seasons with only making several cuts in a year?

I spent much of last week talking with and watching David Howell play in the Barclays Singapore Open. David has had a very consistently progressing career to date—Walker Cup player as an amateur, progressing to keeping his tour card in his first year as a Tour Pro, then establishing himself as a top 50 player, then a tournament winner, then onto two Ryder Cups and to some big tournament wins such as the 2006 BMW PGA Championship and beating Tiger Woods head to head to win the HSBC Champions trophy, the biggest tournament in Asia. Seemingly an upward spiral of success, and approaching the best part of his career, and seemingly the next logical step a major victory. Then in 2007 his season was ravaged by injury, and then after a decent comeback year in 2008 it seemed all the pieces of the puzzle were coming together for a great 2009. An increased work ethic and recently married - so a more stable personal life—the expectations for 2009 were justifiably high. The result? The worst season of his career by far, currently lying in 156th place on the money list.

Positive and negative momentum

Last week at the Singapore Open was unfortunately an excellent example of negative momentum David is currently embroiled with. On a very difficult course, which had the likes of major champions Harrington, Mickelson, Els and Ogilvy struggling, David stood at -2 after 27 holes. Playing very steadily and with 4 under at that stage being in the top 10, it looked as David was beginning to find his form. On the par 4 14th hole, David was unlucky and the ball got a firm bounce from an excellent 2nd shot, and it ran through the green. An excellent chip shot followed, but David missed the 5ft par putt. Then on the next hole, another missed green and another missed 5ft putt meant he just needed to keep one eye on the cut. On the 17th hole a poor tee shot resulted in a double bogey and David missed the cut.

When positive momentum was working for David I'm sure his -2 after 27 holes would of resulted in him probably finishing at -4 or so and in the top 10. But this season he is experiencing extreme negative momentum resulting in a poor last 5 holes and the 5th missed cut in a row on the back of an already miserable season.

Momentum can work in both ways, as this example of David Howell demonstrates. When things are going your way, success is like a downhill rolling snowball, just gathering more and more momentum—everything seems so easy. The opposite, like what David is currently enduring, it seems however much work, however much you try, its like trying to carry a boulder up a mountain and it's just fruitless. So is every player at the mercy of momentum and cannot do anything about it?

How do you get momentum working for you and not against you?

The difference is **VERY SUBTLE**, but isn't golf a game of subtleties? The key is look to **make very TINY steps of success**. "Success breeds success" is so true. But what's the definition of success? It need not be a major tournament win. So for instance, a step of progress for David may be to play a round with a mindset that he had in 2006, and when he walks around the course he aspires to walk with the feeling of some of the confidence he enjoyed then, **regardless of his score**. Speaking extensively with David before the tournament about his season so far things were doom and gloom, and of course justifiably so, but it can become a self fulfilling prophecy. Focus on making the tiny steps of change on the inside (i.e in your mind), and you'll soon find that things will start to change on the outside. And 'Be your own best coach' - recognise these tiny steps of progress, and do not judge yourself against perfection or your career best results but instead acknowledge **EVERY** tiny step forward. David has incredible determination and desire, and the heart of a champion, I have no doubt he will turn this negative momentum into positive momentum very soon.

Interested to learn more about developing your success mentality so that you can become the player you aspire to be? Send an email to info@elitecoaching.com and we will email you our free 15 page GMAP questionnaire, and then we will give you a free of charge mental game analysis.



TOURNAMENT PLAY—learn to win with your B and C game



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The book is divided into three sections - 'before the game', 'during the game', and 'after the game'. The 'before the game' section is devoted to developing a mindset that allows the *possibility* of performing your best. Section two, 'during the game' is focused on the on course skills you will need during the round such as course management and concentration skills. Section three, 'after the game' discusses the critical success factors of how to **build a successful career**.

The response so far has been excellent—so much so that ALL our first print run were sold within the first month! But don't worry, the 2nd batch has been ordered and is available next week. The early feedback from readers has been very encouraging.

Invest in yourself—whether you are a coach or a player—and remember you have nothing to lose and everything to gain—we will refund your payment price in full within 28 days with our no

Transcend your technique

The best players in the world know and applied the training and training mindset concept we have presented to you. Nick Faldo and Sam Hogan were two of the most successful players in the last century of the game. Hogan was a journeyman who who early in his career (until he was 30 years old) had limited success because of what he called "the rattlesnake in his pocket", a destructive hook shot which invariably showed itself under pressure. Hogan went about dramatically transforming his technique, and the rest is history – incredible success in the second half of his career, culminating in the fact that in the 1953 season he only played 6 tournaments the whole year, and won 5 of them, including all 3 "majors" he entered. I think many people have misinterpreted or misunderstood Hogan's philosophy: no one worked harder perfecting his technique in training, but Hogan also said that he would spend hours every day working on his shot making, trying to his every different type of shot that he may encounter in a tournament. In the famous book Hogan wrote, "The Lessons: Modern Fundamentals" he cites:

"If one really wishes to be master of an art, technical knowledge is not enough. One has to transcend technique so that the art grows out of the unconscious"
DAISEI SUZUKI



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