

Play or Practice?

Many players in the game don't understand if practicing or playing will benefit their golf games most. Many also don't understand what areas of the game to focus upon when they do practice. It is a large reason we witness so many golfers spending countless hours hitting full shots and few playing frequently or practicing putting and chipping. Many elder players mention how this has worsened throughout recent years, even among top competitive players. These elder players commonly mention how current players spend more time practicing ball striking on driving ranges compared to prior years in the game. I would agree with their observations to a large degree. A large reason for this might involve higher amounts of instruction in the game combined with players' quests for technical perfection. Players today often focus on the game in a more technical manner than players of the past. Players need to remember golf performance is not a measure of technique appearance, but a measure of the lowest number of strokes throughout a round.

For this reason, players in the game today need to spend more time playing when compared to practicing, if they care about scoring above all else. When players do practice, they should practice their putting and short games more than hitting full shots. Unfortunately in the game today, the opposite is often seen. Players spend countless hours on ranges hitting full shots, often while focusing on technique, playing a limited number of rounds on golf courses, and rarely working on short games. I would love to see this change, to again see players spending the vast majority of their golf time playing rounds on the golf course, especially younger competitive players. With many younger competitive players today, this combination is even worse. I can't tell you how many young talented players spend too much time working on technique on driving ranges. These players instead need to be playing countless holes a day, and focusing heavily on their short games when they practice. I can't stress the importance of doing so enough.

Younger competitive players do not realize how much time tour professionals spend playing rounds on the golf course. Tour professionals play up to 100 holes a week during the majority of the year. Four of these rounds are often tournament rounds and the other two practice rounds before tournaments. Yes, they do practice, but a much smaller proportion of time when compared to actual rounds played. Tour professionals also work on their putting much more than younger competitive players today. I have seen this countless times throughout all regions of the country.

When players spend extensive time playing on the course, these players will not be focusing on technique, but instead focusing on getting the golf ball into the hole. They will be improving scoring, not improving technique. When players practice the short game and putting, they will again be improving scoring, doing so through practicing the area of the game where the majority of shots are encountered on golf courses.

I want you to realize there are some differences and exceptions to this approach. A select few individuals have an extremely high natural talent for the short game and putting. This select group of players doesn't need to spend as much time as others practicing the short game, this being said, these players should still spend the majority of their golf time playing rounds on the

course. There are no exceptions to this approach. All great players throughout the history of the game played on the golf course more than they practiced on the range. This is vital for competitive players to realize and implement. I cannot stress its importance enough.