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How To Read Greens Like A Pro

By Jack Moorehouse

Ever hit a putt you thought was going in only to have it drift wide right? If you have, chances are you misread the green. My golf lessons teach that reading greens takes skill, good judgment, and experience. Since there's no formula for determining the direction a ball must start based on the slope of the green and the distance to the hole, reading greens is key to sinking more putts. And sinking more putts, as my golf tips emphasize, produces a lower golf handicap.

Let's talk about ball speed for a second. Ball speed is critical in putting. The factors affecting speed are (1) the type of grass you're putting on, (2) the direction the grass is growing, and (3) the moisture of the grass. Wet greens tend to slow a ball down. Fast greens tend to drift the ball away from the hole.

Reading a green correctly—accounting for how these factors affect your putt— helps you determine not only the speed of a putt but also the direction. To sharpen your skill at this technique, we recommend developing a green-reading routine.

Let's look at the putting sequence before getting into specifics. First, your subconscious mind absorbs all the factors affecting ball speed and direction. Next, you decide how hard and where to hit the ball. Then, you putt. You judge the accuracy of your read by watching the putt. If it goes in, you've read the green correctly. If it goes by the hole, you've may have misread the green.

My golf tips stress that experience contributes greatly to reading a green correctly. But I also recommend that you keep the following in mind as you approach a green:

- Start thinking about the line of the putt as you walk to the green. The best view of the green's slope (whether it slopes to the right or left) is from 20 yards or so away. Standing on the green can't tell you this. If the terrain surrounding the green slopes to the right, the green probably slopes to the right. If a green slopes in the opposite direction, it creates a basin that collects water. No self-respecting landscape architect will do that.
- Check from the side of the green if you have an uphill or downhill putt. You can make this judgment by standing behind the putt. The side provides the best perspective for this and for determining the

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speed of the ball. For downhill putts, the low side of the green offers the best perspective for judging the terrain's slope.

- Stand behind the hole to judge the area around the hole. This area is crucial because a ball loses most of its speed by the time it gets to the hole. Here, the terrain can really influence the ball's direction.
- Read the green with your feet. Use your sense of balance to determine the green's slope. It will also give you clues about the putt's speeds
- Stand behind the ball to make a final decision on the putt's direction and speed. When you stand above the ball, your perspective changes, as does your impression of the line. Behind the ball is the best place to take a final look. Once you've made the decision, don't change it.

In addition, here's a few putting tips I always highlight in my golf instruction: watch the roll of another player's ball, don't underestimate the break on a putt, and pay attention to the influence of the wind and dampness.

Watching another player's ball, especially if he or she has a similar shot, provides hints on how the ball rolls. Sometimes, it even provides you with a near perfect line. Also, miss a break on the high side of the hole not the low. That way the ball has at least a chance of rolling in. And it doesn't roll as far away from the hole on the high side as it does on the low. In addition, a strong wind affects the speed and direction of the ball as does dampness. So factor these elements in. A ball rolls a lot slower on wet grass than on dry grass.

Finally, watch the ball if it goes by the whole. Don't turn away in anger. There's little feedback before and during a putt, so you can't check your reading accuracy until after you hit the ball. Key questions you need to ask yourself are: Did it have the right direction? Did it have the right speed? Did it have the right on line? Answering these questions is crucial to improving your ability to read greens and sink more putts. And doing that, as my golf lessons point out, will lower your golf handicap.

Jack Moorehouse is the author of the best-selling book "How To Break 80 And Shoot Like The Pros

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." He is NOT a golf pro, rather a working man that has helped thousands of golfers from all seven continents lower their handicap immediately.

6 Styling Tips For Your Fresh Cut Flowers!

By Willie Jones

So your going to bring your grocery store or florist bought flowers home, now what! I have seen many

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people just plunk them in a vase of water and that's it. Sometimes that works but here are some simple tips to make you look like you're a pro at it.

- 1) In a clean vase, take your greens first, snip the ends off to the size you want and then start criss crossing the stems into the vase so that you have stems all around inside the vase. There are two reasons for this. One is because you now have a base for the flower arrangement and two; a criss cross of stems makes it easier for flower placement.
- 2) If you are making a small, low arrangement, slide in the flowers in a criss cross so that the stems are all around the inside of the vase. You should now have a vase with a ring of flowers on the out side and nothing but stems showing in the middle. (The more stems you have in the vase, the easier it will be to have flowers stay put!) The rows of flowers are going to be higher each time you get them in until you have a nice rounded arrangement.
- 3) If you are making a tall arrangement, then use a tall slim vase. Your flowers will hold up better and it will look well proportioned. Great flowers to use are gladiolas, blue delphinium, lilies, snapdragons etc. Sometimes you can get tall tulips and that looks fantastic too.
- 4) A design mistake I have often seen is placing the flowers in a vase perfectly even. The reason this does not work is because it looks unnatural. Have a look at any garden and you will see some of the blooms are sticking out, some are tucked in; some are almost hidden but still contribute to the overall look. Mimic nature and you won't go wrong! Don't be afraid to tuck some of those flowers in a bit.
- 5) A good rule of thumb is to use odd numbers of flowers. What I mean by that is to use 3 roses together or 5. Even numbers are not as effective. If you use 5 roses for example, Place 3 together (touching but at slightly different lengths) near the bottom center of the vase and then two more higher up.
- 6) The next best advice I can give you if you are really new at floral design, is to collect pictures of floral arrangements you like and with the tips I've stated above, practice while looking at the pictures. Before long, you'll be looking like a pro!

Willie Jones is a freelance writer, researcher, floral designer, and artist, for Art Inspires, Inc. Make sure you enroll in the free motivational poster drawing at

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