

Essay



"The County Home"

By Tom Childrey

THE COUNTY HOME

The building is of old brick and affixed to the front entrance is a sign stating, "County Home – No Trespassing". Upon close examination you decide immediately you should obey the sign.

When you look at the front porch you observe people sitting in old rocking chairs or on benches. They sit and stare as if they have no care. When you go inside you see people of all ages and descriptions. As you walk down the hall you pay close attention to the residents and you notice that each person has a cardboard square around their necks. This is held there by a brown piece of string. Written on this cardboard is the person's name, date of birth and their room assignment.

Most of the people you encounter are wearing mismatched clothes and they smell of urine. These are the people that are often called the dregs of society.

In this place there is no 5 o'clock tea or wine, no bingo parties, or other social events. This is not the place portrayed on television as being occupied by the rich and famous. This is certainly not labeled as "a place for mom".

As we noticed the mismatched clothes earlier, we are told these clothes were the ones provided by the family when they dropped their loved one off. Sometimes the clothes are donated by thrift stores and it's first come first served. So many times, when the residents are dropped off it is the last time the family will contact them. It is often like dropping off an animal at the animal shelter. Sometimes the people are dropped off at the front door only to be found by the administrators the next morning.

An old TV hangs from the wall but no adjustments are made, and the sound and picture are of poor quality. When you observed the workers, you can tell they are there to make time and to

get a paycheck. The requests made by the residents fall on deaf ears. The residents only receive lip service and are treated as if they have no value. When you stand and watch the residents your heart goes out to each one.

Annie is an older resident and she rocks back and forth clutching her doll. She has a running conversation with the doll in a language that cannot be understood.

Further down we see Mike sitting in his wheelchair. He looks weary in his old-World War II uniform. The uniform is soiled from having food spilt on it. When people walk by, he salutes them and from time to time he yells "Attention!".

Sarah is confined to her room and she has a death grip on her Bible. She quotes scripture and from time to time she yells, "Hallelujah". The next-door resident, Jack, responds to her yelling by saying, "Dammit, shut up".

While standing in the hallway you observe an elderly man walking toward you and he is holding the hand of a small child which you find out is his great granddaughter. They walk into a room occupied by what appears to be a pile of rags on the bed. These rags are the clothing and blanket that cover an elderly female. This female is the wife of the man. She makes a very shallow sound as she breathes. After a few minutes the breathing stops, and she passes away. The old man leans over and kisses her, and the tears begin to flow from his eyes. As you watch this you know that she is in a better place than the County Home. At this time, you remember what you have always heard. Poor people hurt just like rich people.

Essay



"Before You Putt"

By Doug Bayliff

PREFACE

When par is being set for each hole in golf, two strokes are allowed for putting. That means that on an 18-hole course, 36 or ½ of the total strokes are allowed for putts. Therefore, it makes sense to spend at least half of your practice time on putting. Reduce your number of putts and you reduce your handicap. Duh!

This document is not an attempt to teach you HOW to putt. The internet is full of websites designed to teach you that. Rather, it contains considerations for PREPARING to putt.

I just want to share with you some things I have learned over my 60+ years of golfing. Hopefully, if you apply some of these tips, you will be able to shave at least one stroke off your handicap!

Remember, golf is a mental game played with a ball and stick!

BEFORE YOU PUTT

By
Doug Bayliff

You need to have a good EYE for the game of golf in order to play it well and enjoy it more. EYE stands for Equipment, You, and Environment. If you master the things suggested below, you will surely putt better and enjoy it more!

EQUIPMENT

In order to master a putting stroke, all you need is a putter and ball. Simple enough, but there are many variations of both. There is no one putter or ball that works best for everyone.

PUTTERS

Putter Heads

Putters come in a variety of club heads, shafts, grips, and material. The bottom of some club heads are parallel to the putting surface at address, whereas others have a raised toe. Some heads are lighter or heavier than others. The top of the club face may have a mark to indicate the 'sweet spot' on the club face. Some club heads are solid metal while others have a composite insert.

Putter Shafts

Shafts may be long, short, straight, angled, offset, steel, graphite, or wood. I putt with a hickory shafted putter. It still works! Sometimes!

Putter Grips

Grips come in standard, oversized, round, and flat-sided. They can be made of leather or rubber composition. However, the grip may not be molded to fit the hands. The way you hold the club is also called a grip. Some popular grips include overlay, interlock, claw, cross-handed, palm facing, and finger down the shaft.

Experiment with many different putters and grips and select the putter that 'feels' best to you, and helps you roll the ball in the direction and at the speed you want it to go.

BALLS

They come with different core and cover material. Dimple patterns are different.

Compressions and spin rates vary. I recommend that you putt with a variety of balls, then select the one that works best for you. Using the same style ball on every putt should add some consistency to your results.

Regardless of which ball you choose, put a unique mark on it that identifies it as belonging to you. If your ball doesn't have a pre-printed straight line on it, add one. Then, when replacing your spotted ball on the green, point the line in the direction you want the ball to start rolling. Note: This same technique can be used for tee shots.

YOU

You are the only connection between the putter and the ball. You need to do your homework in selecting a putter and ball that is right for you. You also need to practice, practice, practice the tips or considerations in this document.

Missed putts can be traced to failure to consider one or more preparation factors. Wear a cap or hat to help protect yourself from the sun and to help eliminate glare. When you shake hands with your competitors at the end of your round, take off your cap or hat to show respect for them and for the game.

When you walk out of a sand trap, clean the sand from the bottom of your shoes. This will prevent you from tracking sand onto the putting green.

ENVIRONMENT

So you have just hit the ball on the green! Congratulations.

Watch the ball roll until it stops. This will give you a general idea of the direction of the break, if any, for your first putt.

As you approach the green, survey the natural factors that may have an effect on your putt. For example, wind can influence the path of your ball; in higher elevations, the air is thinner and offers less resistance to the ball; cold air is heavier than warm or hot air and offers more resistance to the ball; a rolling ball will tend to break away from a mountain and toward a body of water. The greatest factor that has an effect on the putt is the contour of the green. If you have to putt near a greenside bunker, be aware that the green near the bunker may have been built up over time by the sand being pitched onto the green by shots from the sand trap.

THE PUTTING GREEN

While on the green, be careful not to step on your putting line or that of your competitor.

A foot print can change the direction of the ball, especially if the green is soft. For the same reason, do not lean on your putter when it is touching the green.

This would be a good time to verify that the ball you are playing is yours. Also, check to see if the ball has been damaged and should be taken out of play. Mark and clean your ball in preparation for your first putt. If your ball is in the line of putt of your competitor, move it but don't forget to replace it on the original spot before putting. Failure to do so will incur a penalty.

Repair any ball marks that you see. Remove debris or loose impediments from your line of putt. Be careful not to 'feel' the texture of the grass. There is a penalty if you do.

As your competitors putt their balls, watch carefully how their balls break. Also note the club head speed they use when making a stroke.

If the green has recently been aerated, sand mixed with seed is normally used to fill in the holes and will cause slower rolls and less break. The green will be somewhat bumpy due to settling.

The green you putt on in the morning is not the same green you putt on in the afternoon. Morning greens have been freshly mown and the grass will consistently be the same height. Afternoon greens are somewhat bumpy since all its blades of grass do not grow at

the same rate. This is especially true of poa-annua grasses. Also, repaired ball marks and footprints from the morning's play may cause subtle depressions or ridges.

Another factor to consider is the amount of moisture on the green. Rain, dew, or fresh watering of the green can impact the amount of speed and break.

GRAIN

The grain is the direction that the grass is growing. Normally, it grows in the direction of the sun but not all grasses on the same green grow in the same way. If the grass looks shiny, it is growing away from you or 'with the grain'. If the grass is a dull or dark color, it is growing toward you or 'against the grain'. Grain can have an impact on the path and speed that the ball will roll. Putting with the grain makes the ball roll faster and break less. Putting against the grain makes the ball roll slower and break more.

Survey your putt from both sides of the cup. Then look around the hole to see where the grass grows toward or into the cup. This could be a factor, especially if you putt to die in the hole. On your way back to your ball, stop half way and visualize the path that the ball needs to take to get into the hole. If it is a breaking putt, try to find the break point on the green.

Flag Stick

You may leave the flag stick in the hole or take it out when putting. If your putt is downhill, it will generally be fast. The flagstick could be useful as a backstop.

Also, some players feel that the vertical plane of the flagstick gives them a better perception of the distance and direction.

THE PUTT

Taking the above considerations into account, select the path that you want the ball to travel into the hole. Find a nearby point along the line that you want to start the ball rolling over. When you are ready to putt, take some practice strokes while visualizing the ball traveling over the spot you have selected and into the cup.

Step up to the ball and clear your mind of all you have just read,

Knock the ball into the cup and go to the next tee!