



A.A.A. – Not a Travel Service, but a Key to Great Golf

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As the spring golf season is upon us, I have been reflecting on my interactions with many collegiate golfers throughout the country. In some ways, their playing ability and skills are incredible, but in other ways, they need to be continuously reminded of certain mental fundamentals to playing great golf. This is not a criticism at all because the PGA and LPGA players need this constant reinforcement as well, but more of a reminder that golfers need to work their mental muscles consistently, especially in the game of golf.

The letters AAA are probably most known for the travel service that provides directions and information on exotic destinations. I have developed, however, three keys to stronger mental golf with these same letters – Awareness, Acceptance and Action. Implement these three variables after every shot, but especially following mistakes. This is the mental muscle work highly necessary for your greatest golf.

AWARENESS

Awareness occurs following a swing and shot. If the swing and shot are good, there is little awareness that takes place unfortunately. Golfers need to be aware of the swing thoughts and mental approach that allowed for such a good shot. They need to reinforce this awareness. When there is a mistake, awareness is important as well. Golfers need to learn what to do differently on the next opportunity and more importantly, on the next shot. This awareness step, however, should only take a few seconds. Greater detail can be obtained after the round in your journal, but on the course, simple awareness of what needs to be different after a mistake is enough.

ACCEPTANCE

This is the step that most golfers miss. Moving forward without this step is the reason for emotional frustration, anger and additional mistakes. Acceptance is simply the ability to surrender a mistake for what it truly is – a mistake. Many golfers overtly and harshly criticize themselves as a person and golfer after the mistake, saying things to the effect that they should not even be permitted to walk onto a golf course. This lack of acceptance is what prevents an effective next step – ACTION. Even though golfers do move to the next step, they are not mentally ready to do so. *Acceptance needs to take place before effective action occurs.* The action step will always be tainted and mentally clouded unless acceptance has taken place. Simply accept the mistake. Why criticize yourself for something that is supposed to occur anyway?

ACTION

The action step involves moving to the next shot. The action step involves mentally preparing for the next shot and keeping your mind on the pre-shot routine. It needs to be consistent from shot to shot. That is the only action necessary - engage completely in the pre-shot routine and the next

shot. It is the only one that matters. It is truly this simple if you allow it to be – Awareness, Acceptance, and Action.

Play Smart, Play Hard, Play Well!!