



## **A KISS is the Key to Great Golf**

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You may be thinking a certain way when you read the title of this piece, but for the golfer, KISS stands for Keep It Simple, Stupid. This type of mindset allows golfers to reach their maximum potential in golf, especially in tournament situations.

One of the most common mental errors made by golfers is making things too complicated. There are so many advancements in technology, approaches to the swing, supplements, and hundreds of books and videos on how to improve your game. Many of these things are wonderful assets to the game of golf, but sometimes they complicate matters. The bottom line is this simple fact: the goal of golf is to get the ball in the hole in the least amount of strokes. This is simply and stupidly what it is, nothing more. When playing golf in tournament conditions, the question is not “how”, but rather “how many.” In other words, it does not matter how ones gets the ball into the hole, but how many strokes it takes to get the ball into the hole. It does not matter if a golfer hits 16 greens in regulation, the winner will be the person with the lowest amount of strokes.

One of the primary ways in which golfers get in their own way is by making the game or round too complicated. As Tom Kite once said, “Work hard, but when you play, *play*.” This message is that you must allow yourself to just go out and play golf. When you *play*, you give yourself the chance to *score*. There are so many thoughts that can get into a golfer’s mind, especially since there is downtime between each and every shot. Many golfers think about mechanically what they are doing wrong, how they need to birdie the next three holes to get back to even par, or that they are the worst putter in the world because of three-putting. When golfers complicate the game, there is a rise in their physiological arousal level, thus creating muscle tension. Muscle tension certainly does not help the golf swing. Think about this question – do you think your physiologic arousal and muscle tension would be better with more or less thoughts? Successful golfers would agree that the fewer the thoughts, the better the chance for a relaxed, smooth swing. Thus, Keep It Simple, Stupid.

Preparation is one way to help keep things simple when competing. If you have prepared well, then you trust your swing, know the course, feel good physically and are ready to go for “Vision 54.” (a.k.a., 18 birdies). Great preparation has allowed you to just go and “play.” The other mental piece is to make certain is to keep your thoughts very simple. One thought that has been used by the most successful golfer of all-time, Jack Nicklaus, is “How am I going to win this tournament?” Anytime he made a mistake, he would not think about it, just “How am I going to win?” Hard to argue with the best golfer in history. Another K.I.S.S. thought is “What’s my target?” When golfers simply

think about their target and nothing more, there is a good chance they will hit it. Let's not make this article any more complicated – K.I.S.S.. Enough said.

Play Hard, Play Smart and Play Well!