



Key to Golf Success: Do Not Think

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This statement may sound funny at first, but the goal for all golfers is to “just play.” There is a tremendous amount of thinking that goes on in golf, but tournament play should not be one of them. If golfers are thinking too much on the course, they have probably not prepared themselves well enough. Thinking too much on the course is definitely an impediment to performance.

One of the main reasons golfers “think too much” is the expectation for perfection. Many golfers discuss with me the perceived need to strike the ball perfectly and establish a perfect swing. I hate to burst any bubbles, but the perfect swing does not exist and it never will. The ultimate goal in golf is to put the ball in the hole in as few strokes as possible. That is what is recorded on the scorecard and that is how pay checks are decided on the PGA and LPGA tours. It does not matter how “perfect” a swing may or may not look, but how many strokes are on the card after the 18 holes. When it comes to tournament play, golfers need to focus solely on competing and putting the ball in the hole.

Another ineffective mental habit that golfers develop deals with thinking about the outcomes or scores. This is totally unproductive because it usually creates a sense of pressure and anxiety, thus changing the swing, then changing the shot, and finally the score. Why think about outcome when it only typically hurts performance? Golfers must learn to focus on the process of the game and not outcomes. There are two things that golfers – when playing their very best – do not think about: swing mechanics and outcomes. They “just play” and the outcomes take care of themselves. Thus instead of thinking about how you must get a birdie the next hole, think about taking a smooth and committed swing at the target,

Golfers make an extremely challenging game much more difficult by thinking. When it comes to tournaments, go out and play. It is time to compete and put the ball in the hole, not worry about the swing. Here are some tips to keep in mind:

1. The greatest golfers know how to compete and play even when they only have their “B” swing.
2. Prepare mentally, physically, technically, and tactically so that you can “just go play” in tournaments.

3. Perfection in the golf swing does not exist. Golfers who accept it as “perfectly imperfect” will be the most successful.
4. Focus on the process when playing tournament golf. Outcomes are out of your control.
5. Over-thinking creates mechanical flaws and tightness in the swing. Simply let go and trust the tools you have developed up to that point.

Play Hard, Play Smart and Play Well!