



Herb Rubenstein Consulting

***The Wisdom of Dave Bisbee:***  
***GM/ Director of Golf Seven Canyons Golf Club***

By Herb Rubenstein  
March, 2017

***Introduction***

Dave says, “There are two enemies of golf: par and 18 holes.”

How often do we take a huge risk to try to save par and make double bogey? How can a beginning golfer ever make a par? Par is a good score only for a very good player and should not be viewed as the score most golfers get on most holes. Jack Nicklaus teaches that some holes, even for the pros are par four and one-half due to their length and the hazards involved near the landing area of a long drive. On such holes he would hit four iron, four iron, and wedge, and either make four or five, avoiding the potential double bogey or worse if he tried to hit a long drive and ended up in a hazard or, worse yet, lost his ball.

Dave makes an excellent point with 18 holes

being an “enemy of golf.” We are starting to see more nine hole golf tournaments. 18 holes often takes five hours or more to play, and when you add driving to the course, warming up before you play, this can easily be a seven hour experience. We all need to play golf faster, and we need to find ways to break the game up into smaller bites, play several holes at a time, as few as three, to have fun on the course. There is a new app being used at some golf courses that charges you based on how many holes you play.

***Where to Focus Your Practice to Becoming  
A Better Golfer***

Dave says that being a great ball striker is not as important as having a good short game, chipping, pitching, and putting with confidence and skill.

The first question every golfer must answer

with every shot is: *Where is this ball going?* Not, where do you want it to go or where do you not want it to go. You need to develop an ability to direct the ball where you want it to go and to see where the ball is going before you hit the shot.

So, understanding the cause and effect relationship between path, face, and angle will allow you to make adjustments to your technique. Second, every golfer needs to be able to swing in a way that minimizes pain, the potential for injury, and is repeatable without undue strain on the body. Knowing your body and which muscles “fire” or become engaged is a great thing to know, but it is not easy to figure this out. Certainly, one should only think about this during purposeful practice sessions and not during a round of golf where all thoughts should be “target” focused, not “swing mechanics” focused.

Rhythm is the essential ingredient in a good golf swing and allows for proper sequencing. Doing the right thing with your body in the right order.

### ***Short Game Insights***

When it comes to the short game, you have to ask your question, “What do you want the ball to do?” Go high, low, roll a lot or stop quickly? These four options must be clear in the mind as they will guide the club selection, landing area to be selected, length and shape of the backswing and follow through, ball position, and how the face of the club will be set for the shot (open, closed, or square).

Dave recommends, when you can, hit chip and pitch shots as low as the shot will allow. This minimizes error.

When it comes to putting, golfers must understand greens. Every golf architect wants to achieve two goals when designing greens. First, every part of the green must “hold” enough water to survive. Second, every part of the green must “drain” water. The direction the water drains is the direction the ball will break, so always find the drains off on the side of the greens to give you a sense of the direction of the major part of the break of a putt.

When hitting the golf ball, always know what part of the ball you want to hit. With a driver and putter, you want to hit the middle of the back of the ball. With a short or medium iron, you want to hit the bottom of the back of the ball.

### ***Understand Your Golf Mistakes***

When it comes to two mistakes – blading the ball and hitting behind the ball, Dave has a simple approach to understanding why these things happen. If you blade the ball or hit it “thin” you are very likely hitting the ball on your upswing, caused by having your weight too far on your right side or swinging up on the shot rather than swinging down through the ball. When you hit behind the ball, you are very likely swinging too steep with the club and this can be made much worse by not having most all of your weight on your front foot by the time the club gets to the ball.

### ***The Future of Golf***

Dave is excited about new indoor facilities, Top Golf, and other ways to give people the experience of hitting golf balls, seeing results in a short time frame. Dave is the co-author with Connie Charles of the new book, ***Back On Course***, which provides a great explanation of how golf, and proper golf etiquette, makes golf the perfect game for

developing business and personal relationships.

### ***Final Thought***

Dave does not use a 60 degree wedge. His most lofted club is 58 degrees. He believes the 58 degree wedge is easier to hit, and one can always “open the blade” to get more loft. Seve Ballesteros said the same things as the most lofted club he used was a 56 degree wedge.

After my interview with Dave, I ordered a 58 degree wedge and will cut down my 60 degree wedge for a junior golfer who will love the thrill of hitting the ball very high and will have much better hand-eye coordination that I have at the age of 63.



Photo Credit: Dawn Mercer, PGA

---

### ***About the Author***

Herb Rubenstein is the Executive Director of the Brooklyn Golf Alliance, a nonprofit organization that promotes improving the access to golf. He was a four-year letterman at Washington and Lee University and Captain of the 1974 golf team. He is the author of numerous books and articles and will be the co-author with Peter Gyscek, PGA, of the forthcoming book, ***The Summary of Golf Wisdom: Your Guide to A Better Game.***

His email address is [herb@sbizgroup.com](mailto:herb@sbizgroup.com) and he can be reached at (303) 910.7961. For more information about him see: [www.herbrubenstein.com](http://www.herbrubenstein.com); [www.brooklyngolfalliance.org](http://www.brooklyngolfalliance.org) is currently under development.