



AVOIDING RHYTHM BUSTERS

What in the world is a rhythm buster? It's a term that I use for something that takes place during a round of golf...when the golfer makes a bad decision and finds him or her self frustrated to the point of a loss of focus in the present. Now let your mind visualize this situation:

Justin is a 7-handicap golfer who is on the green of the sixth hole. He is one under par and is looking at a birdie putt of about eight feet. It is a slippery downhill putt that is going to be quite fast. He lines it up and imagines making it to take himself to -2 for the round. Standing over the putt, he wants it so bad, he can taste it! He strokes the putt and gets excited as he sees it breaking toward the hole..."yes, yes, it's going to drop!" No, it doesn't drop but lips out and goes beyond the hole about six feet. Now he has to make a six-footer just to save his par and remain -1. He ends up missing that putt and disgustedly walks off the green with a bogey.

On the way to the next green, Justin is madder than a wet hen! "How could I have done that?"...He laments. "I can two-putt that same putt ten times in a row if I wanted to...why did I have to be so bold in trying to make it?" While deciding how he is going to play the tee-shot on the seventh hole, his mind keeps thinking about the blown shot on the last hole. "I don't get many opportunities to score this well and now I three putt from eight feet." "What an idiot!"

He then proceeds to hook his tee-shot into a water hazard. Drops out in two and before he hits his next shot, he can't help but feel like the wheels are coming off of this round. He then hits his short iron approach fat and into the bunker short of the green. From there, he blasts out and two putts for a double bogey...six.

Can you see how this particular round of golf is on the fast track to destruction? Believe me, this happens on a regular basis to most golfers. If

you haven't experienced a round such as this, you probably just haven't



played that much golf. Justin has just suffered the aforementioned “Rhythm Buster!”

I describe a rhythm buster as a negative event that is the result of a bad decision regarding course management or just a lack of focus. I want to persuade all those I work with, to eliminate rhythm busters during their rounds of golf. There are times when any of us would three putt from eight feet...even if we are careful not to! If I three putt from eight feet but walk off the green feeling as if I still used caution and focused well...that does not constitute a rhythm buster.

In other words, there was not anything that I would have done differently in the way my thought processes worked. I would then accept that the three-putt is an isolated event that happens on occasion to any and everybody and it just happened to me. Acceptance of that reality allows me to refocus on the task at hand and not be distracted by what could be described as a “stupid decision” or “lack of focus.”

Rhythm busters are avoidable if we stay focused and realize that the shot we are presently hitting, is setting up our next shot. That mind-set substantially decreases the odds of suffering a rhythm buster.

Something that can be helpful in learning to lower your scores is to recall your round after you are through playing. Re-live each shot; think about the strategy that you had planned for each shot. Recall what you were trying to accomplish with each shot. After going through your entire round, (which will usually take about five to ten minutes) think to yourself how many shots you could have saved if you had used a little more caution with your course management.

Honestly, the golfer who averages 90 let’s say...will probably be able to shave five shots or so from his/her round just by eliminating those aggressive decisions that ended up costing them another stroke or two each time they made a poor decision.



Have you ever watched a tee-ball game? You know...the baseball games that are played by kids that are in the 5-7 age group. They can be quite entertaining! Many times, someone will hit the ball to let's say...the shortstop. The shortstop fields the ball and then throws it to first base. The first baseman doesn't catch the ball as it skitters past him and rolls another twenty feet or so. He runs to pick it up and then throws it to second base in hopes of nailing the runner. The second baseman jumps to catch it as it flies over his head and into left field...but he cannot jump high enough. The runner now decides that he can make it to third base so off he goes. The left fielder picks up the ball and throws it to third base. However...his throw is off the mark and now the runner is headed to home plate. By the time one of the other players picks it up and throws it home, the player is safe with an inside-the-park home run...but only because of the errors that had been committed. In other words, what was really only a single, turned out to get the player home because of faulty decisions.

Those games used to remind me of watching "The Keystone Cops". They can be hilarious. Couldn't those kids see how many mistakes they were making and that they would probably keep many runs from scoring if they'd just play a little smarter? There were so many times that I wanted to scream at the players just to hold the ball for a second just to make sure the runner was not trying to advance...and then throw it back to the pitcher. If that strategy were employed, much fewer runs would be scored in a typical tee-ball game.

Well guess what? Very often...uhhhh, I mean the majority of the time that I play with golfers; it is close to the same scenario. I am dumbfounded quite often by the lack of reason that the average golfer uses when playing golf. Many times I just want to stop them and say "do you not realize that it would be much more advantageous for you to just punch the ball back into the fairway and set up a nice short iron approach than to try to hit it through those trees 225 yards trying to reach the green?"



Please understand this; if you are the average golfer, you are guilty of the same thing on a regular basis. Shocking? I am being rather pointed here after all. What am I doing...insinuating that you are an idiot? No...not really, you're just normal! As such...you are at risk of succumbing to such mistakes. I am just asking you to learn from those mistakes by recalling them and trying to not make the same mistakes on your next round.

In summary, always remember that the shot you are getting ready to hit...is setting up your next shot. Try to plan accordingly! Recognize a situation that can get out of hand quickly and result in some lost shots because of not playing cautious enough. Make a conscious effort to notice when you have a rhythm buster and learn from that experience for future situations.

Good golfing!

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