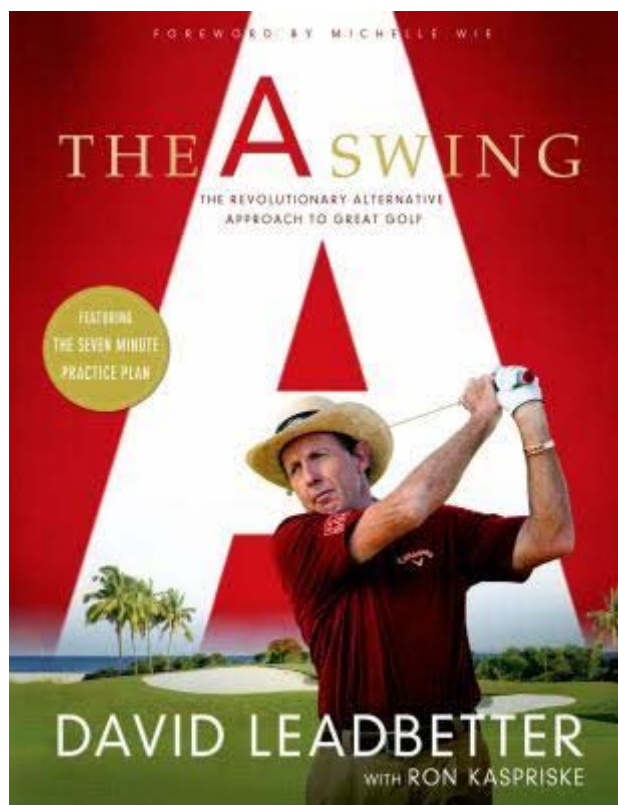


Have the swing model teachers got it all wrong?

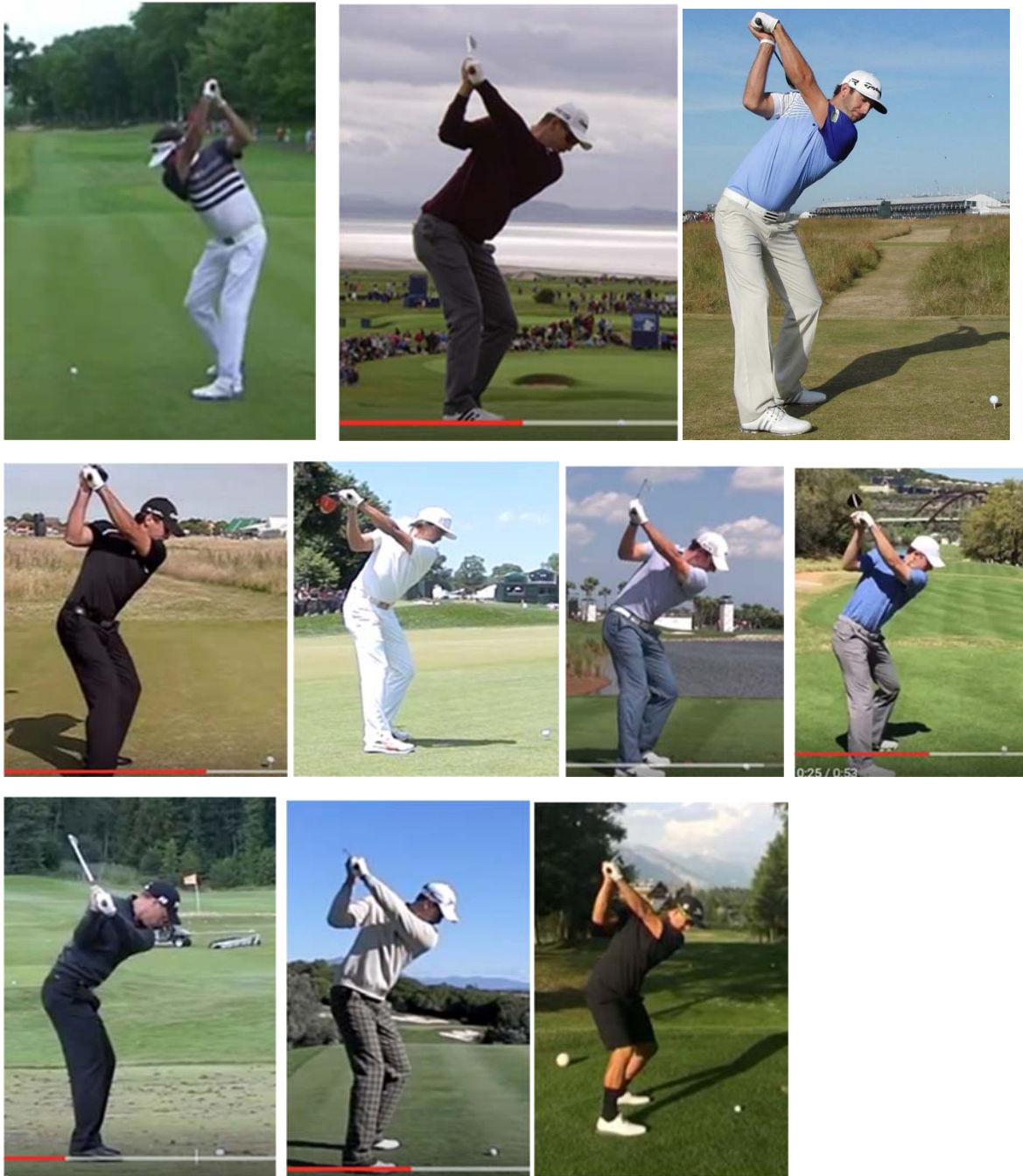
It must be challenging for elite players to understand what good technique is – after all there are a myriad of different swing models out there in golf coaching. The Golfing Machine, The Biodynamic swing, MORAD, Stack and Tilt, the 'A' Swing, The Right Sided Swing to name just a few. Many contradict each other and all are based on a series of stitched together positions the student is encouraged to engrain and burn in their muscle memory through repeated practice. Each has their 'star' player or pilgrim who embodies their model which has apparently underpinned their golfing success and pathway to success at Tour Level. But less written about are the hundreds and sometimes thousands of players who have failed and gone backwards as a result of following these theories (I know – I was one of them!). Then just like warring religions each camp steadfastly defend their views whether on social media or face to face and the player is often left with the decision to make a choice on what is 'right' and what is 'wrong'! **But have all the Gurus got it wrong?**



To illustrate how bizarre, fickle and opinionated (as opposed to scientific based researched truth) it has become, the original swing guru (David Leadbetter) has now drastically changed his own model to his new 'A swing' which is radically different than what he coached his Tour Players for the last 30 years! And a memorandum has gone out to his Worldwide Academies saying all coaches must now coach this new method only! (so do students from the last 25 years receive refunds?!?)

Because if we look at the top 10 players in the world, no more than 1 swing would fit into ANY of the models propositioned by the Tour instruction gurus pedalling their models. Typically, a player will go to a guru, and then he will teach and impose his particular 'model' on that player. A classic example is Luke Donald, who in 2011 became World no. 1 and the first player to win both the PGA Money list and European Tour Money list in the same year. At the 2013 US Open at Merion Donald headed into the last day with a very realistic chance to win his first major, but in the end submitted to Justin Rose after shooting a last round 74. In the weeks that followed Donald decided he needed to change his swing as 'it had not held up onto the pressure of the back 9 of a major'. To me that was a ridiculous statement – after all the swing was good enough to become World No1!!! And the course at Merion was brutal – I can vouch for that personally because I was there! – and no one equalled par the whole tournament – so 74 far from a terrible score. But in fairness to Luke this type of attitude is very prevalent in the elite game. So for the next 2 years Luke he went on a journey with renowned US guru Chuck Cook who is coach to Jason Dufner. Off they went trying to change signature moves of Donald in the search for this swing that would be unflappable on the back 9 of a major. Well unfortunately for Luke the hard work resulted in very poor results, and he finally decided to abandon the project, and in the process lose at least 2 years at the peak of his career.

The Top 10 players in the World at the top of the backswing



There is no right position' from a 2D perspective at the top of the backswing but there is a right position from a 'forces' perspective

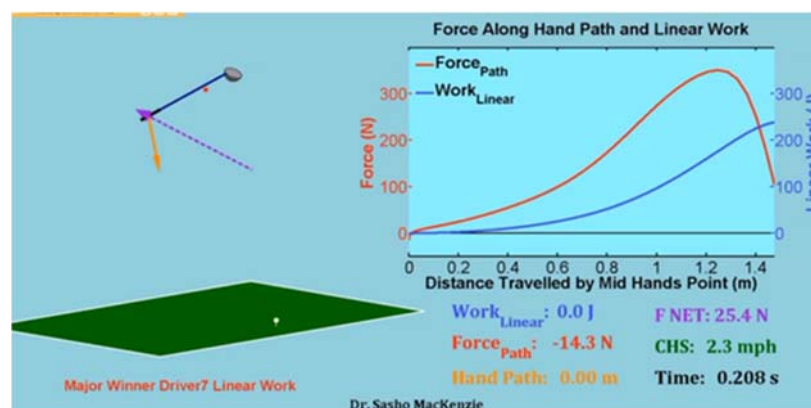
I think there has been a massive mirage in technical coaching, and that coaches developing theories based on 2D swing video, and watching positions on a 2D Screen. Take a good look at the top of the backswing '2D positions' of the top 10 players in the world. No two are alike from a positional perspective:

- The club shaft with every player differs (Rickie versus Rory!!!)
- Wrist angles differ (Jordan versus Dustin!!!!)

- Club face positions differ (Rory versus Dustin!!!)
- Left arm position angles differ (Day versus Rose)
- Right leg flexes differ (Scott or Day versus Watson or Johnson!!!)
- Shoulder/hip turn differ (look at Willett's hip turn!!!)

but they are ALL similar from a 'forces' perspective. Over the last year I've researched a lot more into biomechanics and technical swing models, studying through Dr Mike Duffey at Penn State in the USA and Dr Sasho Mackenzie in the search to learn further the real deal-breakers to technical excellence. The swing is in truth not a series of 2D positions but in fact a 3D movement that is about creating potential energy (backswing and transition), then delivering this energy to the ball (downswing), and the best swings do this in a functional way i.e. delivering the ball from A to B with less variance than non-functional swings. My view is that the swing is about building and managing forces (through pressure) and that coil (the stretch-shorten cycle), ground reaction forces, leverage and torque, and then sequencing and kinematics (the transfer of power from one body segment to the next) are the true determinants of great swings. And then if you look at the top 10 players in the world, whilst positioning you will see differences, these swings then become very similar from a forces perspective – because they all create, manage and apply forces in a functional (less variable) manner.

[Click HERE to view video on Linear and Angular Work during Downswing of a PGA Tour Major Winner](#)



It's now possible through Dr Duffey's and Mackenzie's work to accurately measure forces and truly understand in the inner workings – the engine room – of the golf swing. Finally, there is empirical research rather than just opinions of swing gurus. For me this was the eureka moment after 25 years as a coach and almost 40 years as a golfer. This explained so many things – for example why some players need to lift their arms on the backswing, and others (e.g. like Westwood) can match their arm plane with their shoulder plane.

So what are the deal-breakers to great technique and what do all 10 players have in common?

- Functional impact geometry (this is where Trackman has been so useful in putting quantifiable numbers to impact positions)
- Clubface control and normally a very manageable rate of closure through impact zone
- Sequencing and synchronisation
- Creating forces and torques and delivering these in a functional way through muscle engagement/activation and then stretch shorten cycle



If your coach draws a load of lines on the screen and wants you to get the club 'in position' at the top, or on plane....RUN!!!! A massive mistake in teaching has been drawing lots of lines on the screen based on 2D positions – the golf swing is a 3D movement and so much is distorted in a 2D picture and the critical information – the creation and delivering of forces and impact geometry is not displayed.

Let me tell you a story of a young player I coached from 2008 -13 who went from elite junior player to having a full card on the European Tour. This player hit it long and strong, but to make the move up to establishing himself on Tour was about 1.5 to 2 shots off the pace from 100m and in. However in 2013 his National Federation appointed a new technical coach for the National team, funded a 'Pro Tour team' and this coach was permanently resident with these pro's travelling from tournament to tournament. This coach wanted him to change his top of the backswing position – from high hands and club across the line to more laid off with a flatter left arm.

His results started to take a downward dive but the coach said be patient and that he has to go backwards to go forwards (another reason to RUN if you hear this from a coach – the function of coaches is to make players better not worse!). In 2015 he missed every cut on the Challenge Tour – but still working at the same moves just needing to 'burn it in more' through repetitive practice.



The new position the coach wanted at top



resulted in club getting too much behind and big pushes and hooks



Across the line again!



But even the position police will like this!

The fact was that a few frames later the club was in 'perfect position'. But this takes us to the biggest misunderstanding my opinion in modern technical golf coaching – **IT'S NOTHING TO DO WITH POSITIONS BUT EVERYTHING ABOUT CREATING AND DELIVERING FORCES and TORQUES**. Read that sentence again and tattoo it into your subconscious because it took me 35 years to get to this understanding.

This player had been working on getting his left arm flat, and the club more laid off for 2.5 years. I asked him to hit 2 drives and the first one he virtually missed the range on the left side. The second one he virtually missed the range on the right side. I then said to him to NEVER try to do this again in his golfing life – to get the left arm more flat and the club parallel. We did some instinctive golf drills, and within 5 shots his swing reverted back to 2013 – high hands and across the line. 2.5 years of practice for nothing. But he started to hit some good shots – and said it felt great, powerful and that he could feel as though he could start to hit it strong – of course because of releasing him from the left arm flat and club parallel thought it meant he could create his leverage, angular force on the club and shaft again in the transition and downswing.

Fortunately for him that he came on our winter program and we reverted him back to the swing map he had when he was having success from 2008-13. After returning to Europe in March he has now had a 2nd place finish (11 under total) and at the time of writing this email is in 11th place at 5 under going into the last round of a pro tournament. Of course he has 2.5 years of missed cuts, poor golf in his mental locker so it will take time to regain his confidence but so far so good.

What you can learn from this article

- Run AWAY if your coach just talks about positions
- Run TOWARDS him if he talks about creating and applying forces and how you can optimise this in your swing to take your ball striking up to the next level – this is the holy grail of the golf swing...not positions
- Focus on IMPACT GEOMETRY and understanding both your positive and negative patterns
- Focus on the 3 key technical moves that are present in all the top 10 players in the world, and top ball strikers possess (you'll need to come on an ECGA program to learn these!)

Interested to know more?

Since 2009 ECGA has been the contracted coach (1 to 3-year period) for 7 main tour players (Men's and Ladies Tours) – **with a 100% success record in lowering their scoring average.**

Our winter camps are an ideal way for players to develop and progress their game – this winter in our Australia camp 8 players out of 8 reduced their scoring average (some very considerably) – **again a 100% success record.** Availability is very limited and it's on a first come first served basis.

And we will not preach any models or positions but we will reveal the **critical keys to creating forces, delivering forces and repeatable impact geometry.** Perhaps we can call this the F swing (f for forces!)!!

ECGA provides programs in:

Summer Camp Programs – Hong Kong, Switzerland, Austria, Belgium, Germany and Slovenia

Winter 2016/17 Training Programs – Australia, Florida USA and Spain

1:1 coaching with Jonathan Wallett - Hong Kong/UK/Switzerland and Australia

Contact info@elitecoaching.com to receive more information