



Amateur Golf
— association. —

RICHMOND, VA

TEE IT UP WITH PAM



April Showers Bring May Flowers and a BRIGHT Green Golf course!

“April showers bring May flowers” is a reminder that even the most unpleasant of things, in this case the heavy rains of April, can bring about very enjoyable things such as the start of our golf season.

It's time to dust off those golf clubs and join us on the golf course as we leave winter behind us and enter our Spring Season. We have our 3rd Annual Tee Party Scramble on April 7th followed by a “Swing into Spring” Brunch and 9 hole golf outing at Richmond Country Club on April 27th.

I expect to see several members showcasing new skills acquired as a result of attending our indoor clinic which was held on March 9th at St. Catherine's. We had 36 golf enthusiasts come together on a cloudy, windy and rainy day to work on putting, chipping and long iron techniques thought by Windy Hill golf professionals. The day was a huge success and we had 4 new members join our wonderful organization.

Now it's time to move our game outside. Try and make at least one trip to the driving range before you get out and play. Here are a couple of ideas to ensure you practice with a purpose and get your season off to a good start:

Clean your Clubs and Grips

No kidding....DUST OFF YOUR CLUBS!! It is important to clean your clubs after you play to remove dirt and grass from the grooves so that you can hit the ball crisply and have better control and spin. It is equally important to clean the grips. Regular grip-cleaning helps remove dirt, sweat and oils from our hands, sunscreen residue or spilled wine/beer or anything else that might get in the way of having a proper hold on the golf club.

Restock your Bag

Prepare your golf bag for the season. Make sure you restock your little emergency kit with small sizes of lip balm, sunblock, Band Aids, athletic tape, aspirin and safety pins. You never know what you're going to need on a given round so it's better to be ready for anything.

Stretching

Start your session off by doing some general stretching of your shoulders, back, hips, and legs. Working on flexibility is one of the best things you can do for your golf game. It is important to get your golf muscles loose anytime you go to the course or range, but especially this time of year when you haven't been very active.

Putting

The short game is the hardest area of the game to get your feel back. Good putting is critical to scoring well so spending some time on the putting green is really important. Start out by finding a putt with very little break. Place several balls at a distance of about three feet and work on hitting solid putts into the back of the hole. Try to make 10 to 15 in a row before quitting.

Next, get a feel for distance. Pick out the two holes farthest away from each other on the putting green. Take several balls and putt the balls back and forth, trying to get all of the balls to stop within a foot of the hole.

Chipping

The motion made chipping the golf ball is a miniature version of the full swing. Hitting crisp, solid chip shots will translate into solid hit shots with the full swing. Remember, the correct technique is to set-up with a narrow stance, weight on the front foot and the ball position off the instep of the back foot. Grip down on the handle of the club and make a short, brisk accelerated stroke. To make the ball go up in the air, let the leading edge of the club work down to the ground.

Full Swing

Start your practice of the full swing with your shortest club. Making short, easy swings with a pitching wedge or sand wedge. As you start to get a feel for finding the center of the clubface, start to make full swings. Progress your way through you clubs by hitting a series of shots with every other club in your bag. Move from sand wedge to nine iron to seven iron. Finally, hit your fairway woods and driver.

Going through this type of practice session will give you a good idea of where the golf ball is going and give you a feel for hitting the ball solid. Confidence plays such a huge roll in how we play so starting the season off on the right foot will make lowering those scores much easier.

Most Importantly....Just Relax and Focus on the Fundamentals

When you start thinking about the golf swing, it can get ugly pretty fast. Try to limit yourself to one or two key thoughts. The trick is to begin at the setup and work your way forward until you find something that clicks. Here's one tip at each stage of the swing, from Golf Digest Teaching Professional Todd Anderson:

Setup: Push your hips back, and angle your spine toward the ball.

Backswing: Turn into your right side, and feel your left lat stretch.

Impact: Keep your head behind the ball, and straighten up your left side.

Finish: Point your chest at the target, with your right foot up on its toes. Work on these keys at the practice range, and create a short list of swing thoughts to bring out on the course.

I'm headed to the range! Hope to see you there!

Pam