

## GOLF WITH RODGER DAVIS



# TAKEAWAY TIME

With the proper routine established, starting the swing simply follows on as described in the last of a four-part series leading up to the BRW World Corporate Golf Challenge.

● The commencement of the swing as the club arcs away from the ball – the takeaway – is often described as the time when things start to go wrong when in fact it is simple for the player with a nicely tuned routine who has already set the grip, addressed the ball and adjusted the posture for the shot being taken.

A lot of golfers recommend taking the club back straight for 30 centimetres. This applies if the ball is close to the body, such as when hitting a putt (picture one). However, because the ball is away from the body, and depending on the shaft, the club will come slightly inside a direct line from the back of the ball, as shown in the photo (picture two).

Taking the club straight away off the ball is outside the line of a golf swing. Because the golf swing is a mirror image, whatever you do going back, you will do coming through. Taking the club straight back takes you outside the line, so coming through it will be inside the line – that's a fade. The harder it's hit, the harder it will slice – to your detriment.

Take note: the length of time the

club will move straight back depends on height. If you are very tall like Nick Faldo, the club will go nearly straight back. However, if a fairly small player such as Gary Player takes the club back, the path of the club is more on the inside than the taller player.

The easiest way to explain it is that the head of the club should just brush the surface of the ground for 30cm without any breaking of the arms or wrists when taking the club away.

A good checkpoint for this is at hip height: on the back swing, the club face should be pointing straight to the sky (picture three). This is a great practice routine on the fairway.

Canadian golfer Mike Weir has added this into his routine. He always imitates the takeaway with the club going back until the face is pointing at the sky before bringing it back and taking his full swing.

Observing people on a golf course, you will notice they all do something different before performing the takeaway. It's a routine like priming a motor before kicking it over.

### BRW WORLD CORPORATE GOLF CHALLENGE

Rodger Davis is event ambassador for the BRW World Corporate Golf Challenge. Winners of the state finals will progress to the Australian final at Twin Waters Golf Club on the Sunshine Coast, Queensland, next April. Davis will then accompany the winning team to South Africa to act as coach and mentor in the world final in May next year. To enter a team or for more details, go to BRW.com.au.

As for myself, I am a forward presser, whereas Player kicks his right knee and Jack Nicklaus twists the head back slightly. It's a normal process and part of the routine that has to happen for a player to take the club back smoothly.

The easiest way to find your own quirk is to go to a practice fairway with a video camera and film 10 shots of your preamble to the takeaway. In these shots, will see a little bounce of the club or forward press or something that you do the same each time. This has the same function as the starter button for your motor vehicle, but in this case it's for your golf swing.

Everything discussed over the past four weeks forms your routine and it is the most important part of the golf game. Do it correctly and it will take pressure off a player, no matter the handicap. Never break a routine.

The Nicklaus routine, as an example, is simple and effective. He gets behind the ball and pictures his target and the type of shot required. He then moves forward, checking to see his left thumb has moved into the right position for the shot he plans.

Moving into the dress position, he puts the club in first and then his feet. His posture will reflect the type of shot he has already decided on. Then he does the head tilt and brushes the ground for 30cm.

"You can forget the rest," he says, "because it's going to happen." **BRW.** With Damon Frith

