

THE ART OF THE SWING



SHORT GAME SWING-SEQUENCING SECRETS THAT
WILL IMPROVE YOUR TOTAL GAME IN 30 DAYS



STAN UTLEY

AUTHOR OF *THE ART OF PUTTING* AND *THE ART OF THE SHORT GAME*
WITH MATTHEW RUDY

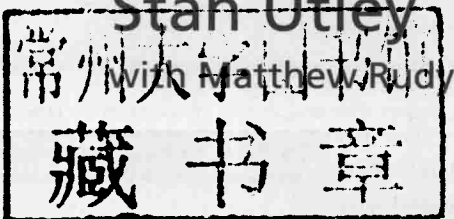
FOREWORD BY BRANDEL CHAMBLEE

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Stan Uteley



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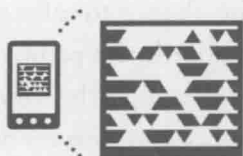
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THE ART OF
THE SWING

For Ruby and Frank

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK



Get the free mobile app at
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Throughout *The Art of the Swing*, you'll find a series of bar codes that look like the one printed here. These Microsoft Tags connect directly to a collection of my instruction videos designed to accompany the surrounding text in each chapter. To use the tag videos, you need a smartphone with a camera and the free Microsoft Tag app, which can be downloaded directly from the web browser on your phone at <http://gettag.mobi>, or through the Apple App Store. The app is free to download and use, and the videos connected to the tags in the book are exclusive to this book. The only way to get access to these comprehensive custom instruction videos is through the tag reader on your phone.

To use the app, simply click it from the menu on your phone, then aim the target in the viewfinder of your phone's camera so

that the tag is centered on the screen. The video will pop up automatically. You don't even need to push a button.

If you don't have a smartphone or access to the tag reader, you can still enjoy *The Art of the Swing* the old-fashioned way—in your favorite chair or on a flight. The pages have been designed to flow like a conventional instruction book, with a layer of technology added on top.

I do hope you get the chance to take advantage of the video component we've paired with the printed material here. For a small-town Missouri boy, seeing the videos come to life right from the page is very, very cool—and one of the most helpful long-distance teaching tools I've seen.

I hope you enjoy it.

STAN UTLEY
February 18, 2011

FOREWORD

by Brandel Chamblee

The first time I ever saw the name Stan Utley was in 1983 at a college tournament in Monterrey, Mexico, of all places. I was playing for the University of Texas, and I had a pretty good day, shooting 65. I expected to be leading, and I was—by three or four. I went in and was enjoying my *tacos al carbón* for lunch when some of my friends came in to tell me that that some guy from Missouri had tied me.

Missouri?

I hadn't heard Stan's name before that, but it was one I'd become familiar with pretty fast. That year, because of the way Stan played, Missouri won their first conference title in forever—and that was no small accomplishment when you consider they were up against Oklahoma State and Colorado and Texas and Oklahoma. He ended up being named second-team All-American that year and the following one, his senior season. He and I played the same circuit of amateur events around the Midwest those years, and we also went out and tried to find our way on the PGA Tour at the same time, so it's not surprising that we became great friends. He's just a quality guy.

Then and now, when you played with Stan, you were never blown away by his athleticism or how long and straight he hit it. In fact, he had stretches where he really struggled with his accuracy. But he knew how to play golf.

Stan and I made our professional debuts at the same tournament, and we roomed together that week. I'll never forget it. The course was billed as the hardest in the world—7,200 yards of forced carry, water, and OB, back before Pete Dye brought those kinds of monstrosities into style. We played a practice round the day we arrived, and if he had added them up Stan might have shot 90. That night, over dinner, he was lamenting about how he had lost his game, and that he might be better off going home and working on it before he wasted any more money trying to be a pro.

The next day, I went out and shot 75—a good score on a cold, windy day. I came in and walked over to take a look at the board. Honestly, I was more worried that Stan had shot something really embarrassing or hadn't finished. I started at the bottom right, where the scores in the high 80s and 90s were. I kept scanning, looking for his name, and didn't see it. Out of the corner of my eye, way up in the top left, I could see one name three or four shots clear, but I didn't really pay attention to it. Sure enough, it was Stan's. He had shot a 68—which was more like a 62 under those conditions.

I found him in the clubhouse eating lunch, and I made a joke about him “losing his game.” He smiled, and said he had found a go-to shot on the range—a fade—and he went around the whole day hitting that one shot. Stan would be the first to tell you he hasn't been blessed with tremendous speed or athletic ability. But he has incredible hand-eye coordination, and a disposition to not panic. Most people let ego strangle them. Stan stays within himself, and plays to his strengths.

The greatest of those strengths has always been hitting shots

and making putts. It's been fascinating to watch him go through the process of analyzing the hows and whys of putting and short game, and to develop his talent for sharing what he knows with other players. On the tour, Stan starts from a position of authority. Regardless of how easy Tiger Woods has made it look for stretches of the last ten years, winning even once on tour is extremely difficult. When Stan had a putt to win an event, he made it. That matters.

On television, we love to talk about swing analysis and mechanics—the mathematics and angles of the golf swing. But most players—and teachers—take this game and make it more complicated than it needs to be. Genius is taking this game and making it simple. There's a reason Harvey Penick's *Little Red Book* is the most well-read instruction book there is. I have watched people get drawn to Stan during practice rounds, at the 19th hole, in the locker room, and at dinner for those same reasons. He has that rare talent of being able to simplify the game, and to share it in a way that makes sense to players at every level. It's no surprise to me that people want some of what he has—the quality of getting the ball in the hole.

There are some parts of a tour player's game that the average guy will never be able to replicate. It takes a special body type and an incredible dedication to practice to be able to generate the clubhead speed that most tour players achieve. But for all the parts that can be copied—putting, short game, good sequencing—Stan has created a blueprint here that the average player can actually follow and use to produce real results.

Listen to what he has to say—I know your game will improve.

BRANDEL CHAMBLEE

GOLF CHANNEL COMMENTATOR AND PGA TOUR WINNER
SCOTTSDALE, AZ

NOVEMBER 10, 2010

FOREWORD

by Tom Cisar

I first met Stan Utley about six years ago, when I was looking for some help with my short game. We have a mutual friend, and that friend helped me get onto Stan's busy teaching schedule at Grayhawk.

He didn't have any reason to give me special treatment, but after that first lesson, I learned an important thing about Stan Utley. Nothing is more important to him than helping someone. Whether he's working with one of his tour players, an avid amateur player like myself, or a complete beginner, his goal is to help and to help people enjoy this game.

That first lesson with Stan grew into a deep friendship. We have a lot of the same philosophies about how to treat our fellow men, and we're both men of faith. Our families have become close, and Stan has a couple of great kids that I've taken a shine to. They remind me of my own children, now grown.

Stan could have had any of the tour players he teaches introduce him to the readers of this book—and given how much prize money he's helped them earn, I'm sure they would have gladly done so. I'm extremely proud that he chose me, and I

believe it's because he knows that the immense satisfaction he's helped me find in my own game is as valuable to me as any check a tour player could cash. I'm sixty-two years old, and with Stan's help, I've got a 1-handicap, and I'm playing as well or better as I did more than forty years ago as a college golfer at the University of Illinois-Chicago.

Stan is an incredible communicator, and he relates his message in such a clear way that anybody can take what he has to share and get better. Many teachers can give you something that will get you hitting good shots while they're standing there watching you, but then, when you're on your own, you lose your way. Stan helps you understand the way the club works, and how to manage your swing and your game on your own.

Shooting lower scores and enjoying the game more are obviously great, but for me, Stan's dedication and his connection to his students set him apart. He came out to play a round with me the last time he was in Chicago, and I was describing to him how my wife, Peggy, had just taken up the game. At the end of our round, he asked if it would be okay for him to take a look at Peggy's swing and give her a few tips. He spent the next hour with her, giving her an incredible foundation for her newborn golf game. By the end of the hour, more than forty people had gathered to watch the lesson. He went above and beyond to help someone enjoy the game he loves. That's just the way he is.

I've met a lot of people in this game over the past forty-five years, and I can say that Stan is one of the two or three best men I have come to know over that time. I'm lucky to call him my teacher, and I'm proud to call him my friend.

I know he can help you play better and enjoy this game. Isn't that what it's all about?

TOM CISAR

INDIAN HEAD PARK, IL

NOVEMBER 1, 2010

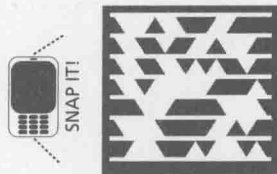
INTRODUCTION

One of the side benefits that comes with teaching golf full-time—and doing it five minutes from my house, at Grayhawk Golf Club in Scottsdale—is that I can build my lesson schedule in a way that gives me time during the day to spend with my kids.

Last year, I took a late afternoon break to go home and hang out in the driveway with my daughter Tatum. She had decided to try out for her school's basketball team, and I was looking forward to doing a different kind of helping than I'm used to day in and day out around the practice green. Seeing Tatum go to her first practice with some idea of what she was supposed to do was my main goal, but I won't lie—basketball is my first love, and it was only after facing my too-short and too-slow reality as a teenager that I focused on golf as my career.

Tatum and I grabbed the ball and went out to the driveway to work on the basics of shooting a basketball. She's a very focused and coordinated kid, and she picked up the individual mechanical pieces of shooting pretty quickly. She understood

how to hold the ball, and how the wrists and arms work. She understood how your legs provide the power to the shot. If you saw a picture of her in the ready position, right before taking the shot, you'd say that she looked like a basketball player.



But when it came time to sequence the motion—to fire her legs and release her right arm and put spin on the ball with her right wrist—she had trouble getting things in the right order. Sometimes she'd shoot it over the backboard, and other times the ball would come up three feet short of the rim. And her individual mechanics were great in both cases.

Helping her sort out the sequencing issue got me thinking about my golf teaching, and about the lessons I had gotten—or watched—from other instructors over the years. When a 20-handicapper with some serious short-game problems comes to me looking for help, it's almost automatic to want to sort out his basic setup and stroke mechanics first. And there's solid reasoning behind that. When you have good basic mechanics, it's much, much easier to make a good, repeatable motion.

But mechanics—the “form” of the golf swing—are only one piece of the puzzle. And for many players, they might not even be the most important piece. Tatum had the form of shooting a basketball down. But I think that if she understood how the motion unfolded first and started to get a feel for how to make the ball go as far she wanted it to, with some aim, the mechanics would have been easy to adjust later.

For many people, the golf swing should be no different.

Again, I'm not discounting the importance of mechanics. If you read my first three books and follow the mechanical basics presented there, your short game will improve. But there is a significant piece of the short game—and the full swing—that comes down to sequence of motion. And that's what we're going to talk about in this book.

In *The Art of the Swing*, my goal is to help you understand the relationship between the clubhead and your body, and how all of those parts work with each other. In putts and small short-game shots, the clubhead doesn't move very far and doesn't move very fast, comparatively speaking. But the *way* it moves in relation to your body is the same as it would in a full swing. And if you can understand that relationship in small shots, you can apply it to what you do with your full swing. It doesn't matter if you're hitting a shot ten feet onto the putting green or 230 yards off the tee. The clubhead moves the longest distance compared with your hands and your body, and it needs to move the fastest for your shot to be consistently successful. How you set the clubhead in motion and move your body—in other words, when and how much you move the clubhead in relation to moving your arms, transferring your weight, and pivoting and turning your hips and shoulders—is your swing's "sequence." Good players understand how to make the clubhead move fast in a consistent circle. Bad players move the club and body in the wrong order, making the club move more slowly and on a lopsided or inconsistent circle.

In Chapter 1, I'm going to tell you about form and sequence—what they are and how they should work together in your swing. Even if you haven't read any of my other books, I'll cover enough of the basic mechanics of a putt, short-game shot, and even the full swing so that you can adjust these fundamentals if and when necessary. In the second chapter, we'll talk about the main goal of all of this sequencing: to shift the energy in

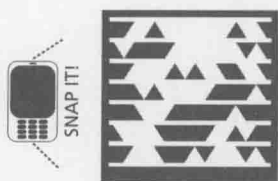
your swing to the end of the club that hits the ball. There, we'll talk about the major mistakes that players make—usually with the best intentions—and the way energy in the clubhead is important for every shot, from a 10-foot putt to a full-on tee shot with the driver.

Once we've covered the energy part of the equation, we'll talk about control of the clubface in Chapter 3. Once you start moving the end of the club that hits the ball, you can make a series of simple, intuitive moves with your hands and wrists to control the height, direction, and spin on any short-game or full-swing shot. Sequencing is more than just the ordering of physical moves. In Chapter 4, we'll talk about the elements of your pre-round, pre-shot, post-shot and post-round routine, and how they can work together to reduce your score—even if you don't change a thing about your actual mechanics. In the fifth chapter, I'll talk about the concept of swing thoughts or "feels"—how to find them, how to identify the ones that work for you, and how to track them over time and determine when and if you should bring other ones into play.

In Chapter 6, I'll show you how to grow your swing from a putt to a full swing by incorporating many of the same mechanical and sequence elements. How? By hitting five very different shots with the same club. In Chapter 7, we'll move on to the full swing, and I'll explain how improving your short-game sequencing can help smooth out your full swing—as it has for many of my amateur and professional students. In the eighth chapter, we'll talk about reading what the ball tells you, and how to diagnose and make changes to your game—and equipment—based on that information. And in Chapter 9, we'll go over your 30-day plan to reinvent your total game using twenty-minute practice routines that you can perform by themselves or before a round of golf to seamlessly transform yourself into a better player.

One of the challenges in producing a golf book or an instruction article for *Golf Digest* is to actually show a sequence of motion rather than a series of technically accurate “form” positions. Still photographs do a really good job of showing perfect setup positions and the technical checkpoints that happen during a chip shot or an iron shot from the fairway, but it’s a challenge to show how to get from one checkpoint to the other. I work with the best in the business—Matt Rudy and J.D. Cuban are staff guys at *Golf Digest*, and they’ve done hundreds and hundreds of instruction articles there, as well as all four of my books—and the words and pictures you’re holding here are going to help your game.

But if you have access to a smartphone with a built-in camera, like an Apple iPhone or a BlackBerry, you have a whole new way to get golf instruction. Using Microsoft’s Tag technology, we’ve connected more than thirty of the photographs in this book with instruction videos. Once you’ve downloaded the free Tag app for your phone (at either iTunes or <http://gettag.mobi> on your phone’s web browser) you simply activate the app and use your phone’s camera to snap a picture of the small square bar code next to each photograph. The instruction video will automatically launch on your phone.



The Art of the Swing is the first golf instruction book to combine traditional text and words with customized video instruction. We shot the photographs and videos you see here over a three-day period at the Titleist Performance Institute in Oceanside,