

# Correcting Your Faults

## *Recovering From Difficulties—The Chip Shot*

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**I**N previous articles of this series, I have dealt with the slice, and with the proper methods to employ in playing from an up-hill or down-hill lie. For the average golfer, the slice is probably the most provoking and even disastrous trouble encountered on a golf course. Also on most golf courses, the terrain is such that up-hill and downhill lies are continually confronting the player. In this instalment I am going to consider situations which are not quite so frequent as the above, but possibly for that reason appear to cause more trouble and bewilderment for the average player in making recoveries.

The tendency nowadays is to make sand traps somewhat deeper than a few years back. This means that quite frequently a player finds himself up against the proposition of recovering from such a trap where the ball has settled close up to a rather sheer bank. Of course, the purpose of traps is to penalize faulty play. However, the luck of the game sometimes leaves the ball where it can be played out easily without serious loss of distance, and again, conditions will be such that to get out at all is quite a problem. If the former conditions prevail, the player is lucky;

if the latter, then it becomes a question of making the most of a bad situation.

The primary consideration in either event, of course, is to get out of the trap. If you can get distance without taking too big a chance on failing to get out, all right, but at all events *get out*. And where the ball is lying close to the wall of the trap, as suggested above, it is very much better to lend all efforts to getting out without trying for any distance.

### *How to Proceed*

**I**N order to effect this, it is best to take every precaution to that end. In the first place, the player should be equipped with a heavy deep-faced niblick well laid back. The stroke at hand is one in which physical strength is quite an asset, and a powerful substantial working implement is desirable. The first consideration in playing the shot is to choose an angle of escape that will simplify the job as much as possible. This may frequently deviate considerably from the line from the ball to the hole. But it should be remembered that the prime object is to get out of the trouble.

I use an open stance, standing well up over the ball, with the latter about opposite my left instep. I lay the face of the club out and well back, giving as flat a surface to cut under the ball as possible. I take the club up directly back of the ball a bit outside, keeping the wrists rigid. The club need not be taken up over the shoulder. Instead, when the left arm, held straight, has reached its limit, the top of the stroke has been reached.

In bringing the club down aim at a spot a half inch or an inch back of the ball, and not at the ball itself. Drive the club head stoutly into the sand, rather than try to stop it immediately after the moment of impact. This would mean robbing the stroke of much of its force, which, as has been suggested above, is quite a factor in playing the stroke. The stroke should be played across the ball rather than directly through it, an accomplishment which will be aided in bringing the club back a little outside the ball, as mentioned above.

Closely akin to the task of playing out of a trap under condition outlined above, comes another problem which sometimes arises of  
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This remarkable photograph of an actual shot in the New Jersey open championship illustrates Walker's method in recovering from a ditch. Note the firmness with which the stroke has been played as indicated in the position of the hands and arms

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recovering from a ditch or water hazard. There are, of course, times when even though the ball is lying so that it could be played but for the water, the depth of the latter may be such as to make the shot impossible. On the other hand, it is frequently quite possible to play a ball and get some distance and possibly reach the fairway, where to lift would mean dropping back in the rough.

As in the case of bunker play treated above, the shot can best be played with a heavy, deep-faced niblick. It is necessary to get a firm, solid foothold in taking the stance. The club must be gripped firmly. Aim to take the water at least an inch back of the ball, where the latter is entirely under water. Sugges-

tions with reference to the backswing on the bunker shot above also apply here, except that the club ought to be brought straight back and not outside the ball, since the down swing is made directly through the ball. The club head must be driven through without any hesitation. Confidence and firmness in playing the stroke are essential.

Having dealt with these two conditions which may be regarded somewhat as emergencies, not occurring so very often, it may be well to get back to another trouble, which is liable to be met many times during a round. Reference is made to the short chip shot of from ten to thirty yards off the green. Possibly the leading cause for trouble in making this short is

faulty work with the wrists. The wrists must be held firm, and not allowed to exert a flipping motion with the club head.

### *The Proper Club*

**I**N playing the chip shot, the selection of the club should tend toward one with a fairly straight face, a jigger or midiron, preferably. To take a niblick or mashie-niblick is simply adding to the margin of probable errors in the simple mechanics of the shot.

My method is to select a straight-face club and grip it low down on the shaft to obtain better and more accurate control. My next move is to rest my right elbow on my right thigh, thereby giving a kind of fixed pivot

on which to swing the stroke. Also this arrangement regulates the length of my swing, because when I take the club back as far as I can without removing the elbow from its pivot, I have reached the limit of the swing.

This back stroke should be made deliberately without any tendency to hurry it. The wrists and forearms must be kept rigid. In making the clown swing, allow the club to take the ball and the turf at the same time, just grazing the latter. Keeping the wrists rigid means that the hands must follow on through with the club, finishing the stroke with the club pointing in the direction of the hole. This shot can be mastered with a little practice, and will do much to reduce one's score.