

# THE INITIAL MOVE IN THE DOWNSWING

Bob Jones Explains the Feeling  
He Has in Starting the Club Down

By ROBERT T. JONES, JR.

THESE are a number of really critical points in a golf swing where sometimes it is easier to do what is wrong than what is right, and where a mistake leads to confusion. I have long ago given up any idea that one point can be of vastly more importance than any other. Always the one under consideration seems the most vital, because one sees the utter futility of trying to hit the ball properly without the correct action here. But after all we come back to the fact that a chain is no stronger than its weakest link.

So I will not say that the start down from the top, the embarkation upon the hitting stroke, is most important. But certainly it is a critical point, where the proper action is not as obvious as we find it in some other places, and after which, in the increasing speed of the stroke, it is most difficult to retrieve an error.

The old idea, which has been utterly disproven by the high-speed motion picture camera, was that the downward motion was originated by a "throw" of the clubhead involving the initial use of the hands and wrists. There were a number of reasons why this would not work, but the chief one was that the power in the "cock" of the wrists was used up before it could possibly do any good. Obviously the capable players who promulgated this doctrine did not actually do anything of the kind. They themselves hit the ball just as we do now, but they had no high speed camera and they thought they were doing something else.

I dare say that no two expert players would describe the way in which they sense this motion exactly alike, even though the camera might show their action to be identical. And, after all, it is this sense or feel by which the golfer must play. But I do not believe that one expert could be found who would not say that throwing the clubhead was the last thing he would think of doing, and I do believe that everyone to a man would insist that the first action had something to do with the left side, left elbow or the left arm. (Continued on page 48)



This photograph of Gene Sarazen was made just at the instant of starting the club down. The left heel is just settling back on the ground, the left hip has started the move back toward the left, and the left arm appears as pulling stoutly on the hands and the club. Note that the left arm is fully extended, and that no evidence of wrist action is apparent. This action must be delayed until the hands get down to the approximate level of the waist when it is employed to speed up the clubhead

## THE INITIAL MOVE IN THE DOWN-SWING

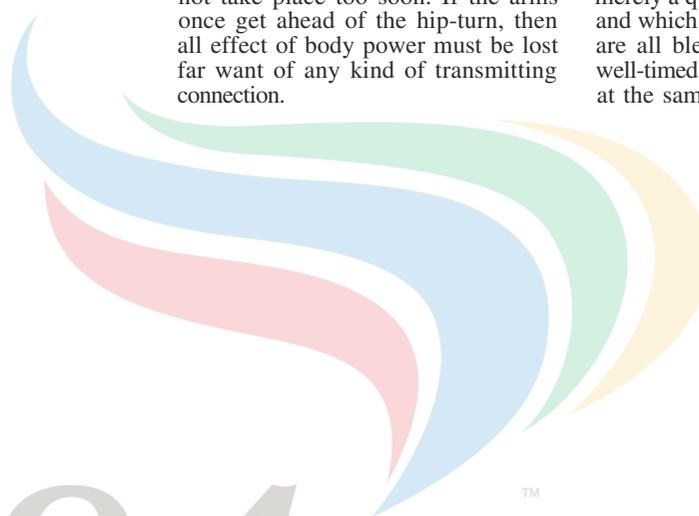
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Tension is a dangerous word to use with reference to a golf swing. When it is used it must be distinguished from stiffness. I think that one of the real necessities of timing and power in a golf stroke is the tension which must exist in the left arm at the top of the swing, and the stretching which takes place down the left side of the body in starting the swing downward.

The hips must be a source of great power, if they are used properly, and the trouble with any conception of starting the downswing with the hands or arms is that it involves danger of inducing a blow with which the hips can never catch up. In the end, there must be a movement of the hands and arms across the body, but this must not take place too soon. If the arms once get ahead of the hip-turn, then all effect of body power must be lost far want of any kind of transmitting connection.

My effort in hitting a golf ball is to direct every source of power which I possess toward increasing the speed of the clubhead. The first sense that I have in starting down is that of putting against the tension in my left arm, and this pull, as nearly as I can locate it, starts in my left hip. By moving this hip ahead of my swing the power of the hip-turn is first transmitted up the left side of my body and along my left arm to my hands and by leading with this hip all the way down, I am able to use the full amount of this power and supplement it at the right time with that of the arms, shoulders and wrists.

Naturally these actions are not separated by any clear line. It is merely a question of which starts first and which stays ahead. Actually they are all blended together and in the well-timed stroke they all reach a peak at the same time.



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