



## HOW TO FOLLOW THROUGH

By GLENNA COLLETT VARE

**F**AILURE to follow through is, of course, one of the principal reasons, not only why mediocre and poor golfers do not improve, but also why first class golfers sometimes go so badly off their games. Now, it is easy enough to say or to be told as the reason for a poor shot, "You didn't follow through!" On the other hand it is often quite difficult for a player or observer to understand just what made the player fail to follow through and how the failure can be corrected.

I have observed this condition in the swings of duffers and temporarily distressed experts alike, and shall try to analyze what I consider to be the primary cause of this failure. It is the collapse of the left elbow immediately after impact. For many years one of the principal features of the ideal orthodox golf swing, as described and instructed by writers and critics, has been the straight left arm. While agreeing entirely with (although not entirely using) this theory and feature of the swing, I am of the opinion that the particular phase of the stroke in which the straight left arm is most important has been neglected by the instructors and writers. That important and particular phase is the quarter arc immediately after impact, commonly known as the follow through.

Most of the comment and instructive articles written about the straight left arm have been devoted to the parts of the swing before impact, starting with the address, all through the back swing, and down swing, up to the moment of impact. This is all quite correct and in accordance with generally accepted best practice by most all the best players and instructors. It undoubtedly tends to increase accuracy in hitting and control of the club-head up to the moment of impact. However, some outstanding stars have achieved greatness in golf without employing the straight left arm throughout the back swing. Harry Vardon, as the most prominent example, the world's greatest golfer of his time, and one of the greatest of all time, bent his elbow quite considerably at the top of the backswing. Thus we see that, while certainly advisable for all to cultivate, the straight left arm throughout the backswing is not absolutely essential.

Now consider the follow through, or the part of the swing just after impact through about forty-five to ninety degrees or one-eighth to one-quarter of the club-head's arc. Here I am sure that it is absolutely essential that the left arm must be straight, and that this feature is part of every first-class player's swing, when hitting the ball properly. With the left hand (Continued on page 38)



The four action pictures of Mrs. Glenna Collett Vare above, show clearly how the left arm must be straight and firm at impact, as she points out in the accompanying article. In the last picture of the series, that immediately above, the momentum of the swing is carrying the hands around toward the left, but only well after the ball has been despatched on the way



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gripping firmly, just as in the address, and the wrists straightening or "uncocking" at the moment of impact, if the left arm be kept straight thereafter, the clubhead is bound to follow straight out along the line of flight with the face at right angles to this line, resulting in a straight, well-timed shot. This is the proper follow through.

If, on the other hand, the left elbow should bend at or just after impact, the clubhead will, not follow out along the line of flight, but will swing sharply inside and the face will turn down or up, respectively, depending upon whether the right or left hand predominates. This results respectively in either a smothered hook or a weak slice or, if by remote chance or a combination of counteracting faults, the clubhead should remain straight and hit a straight ball, the shot will always be lacking in distance because the collapse of the left arm spoils the effect

of the wrist snap and thereby cuts down the clubhead speed.

The straight left arm in the follow through keeps the elbows together thus leaving the hands together as in the original grip, where they can work as one. The player will then naturally finish the swing with hands under the shaft and his grip undisturbed in a graceful, comfortable position. Should the left elbow collapse, however, it carries the left hand away from the right around under the grip, spoiling the single, action of the hands as a unit. The player will then find himself or herself at the finish of the swing with the grip entirely disrupted—the right hand under the shaft, the left hand on top, his left elbow flying in the air and the club wrapped around his neck.

Therefore, keep the left arm straight and firm, not only on the back swing but throughout the down swing until the follow through has been effected.