

How Is Your Balance Fixed?

Not at the Bank, But in the Distribution of Weight on the Right and Left Feet Through the Swing?

By Grantland Rice

"SOME time ago," one of our readers writes in, "you suggested that correct balance and the proper distribution of weight at the top of the swing were an important factor. But you didn't go quite far enough. Where should the weight be—on the left or on the right foot? Where should the weight be at the beginning and at the finish of a swing as well?"

Ideas upon this subject vary with considerable effect, but there are certain essentials to which most of the leading lights subscribe without any wide difference of opinion.

Alex Smith, for one example, a fine player and a fine instructor, believes that most of the weight should be upon the right leg at the start and throughout all the first stages of the swing, only shifting to the left foot when the body is drawn forward by the finishing stroke.

But it must be known that Alex favors a slight sway of the body to the right on the upswing, which would, of itself, throw most of the weight on the right leg.

Barnes and Duncan

JIM BARNES and George Duncan, among others, believe there should be a more even distribution of weight between or upon the two feet. Barnes says that at the start of the swing, upon fairly level ground, such as one is expected to find upon most tees, this order should be followed:

1. At the start—Main weight upon right foot and leg with left carrying minor portion.
2. Top of swing—Weight fairly well distributed between two legs, slightly more on right but with firm grip on ground from inside of left foot.
3. Finish.—Weight all forward on left foot.

At the top of the swing it is highly important that one have a feeling of natural balance. For it is from the top of the swing that one must strike downward, and this can't be done with any effect, if the balance is out of focus. Ball players caught off balance at bat are easy prey for any pitcher. It is the marvelous balance of Ruth and Cobb that helps in their savage onslaughts upon all types of pitching. They are always in position to hit the ball in the right way.

At the start of the swing the natural feeling of balance is to have at least sixty-five or seventy per cent of the weight on the right foot. When the top of the swing is reached for an ordinary type of shot, there is still a slight preponderance of pressure on the right, but the left must also carry its share. If one sways a trifle to the right, the bulk of

the weight goes in that direction on the back swing.

Here is what George Duncan has to say about "transference of weight": "Nearly every good golfer addresses the ball with

the great toe. The weight passes gradually up the right side until the up-swing is half completed. Then the left side starts to take charge of the weight in the levering process, and continues to do so until the uptake is finished, when the ball of the great left toe will be carrying the maximum amount allowable, but not all the weight. Just before the impact the left heel is on the ground to receive the weight coming forward on to it.

"The height of the shot all depends on the amount of weight that was on the left foot at the top of the swing. If one wishes to keep the ball down into a wind, extra weight is crowded on the left during the backswing. When it comes to the high mashie pitch we can all but do away with the left leg.

"In playing the ordinary approach the trouble with most golfers is this—they are short of weight on the left foot during the upswing."

Weight and Balance

THE essential idea is that the bulk of the weight in addressing the ball should be upon the right foot. Thereafter there is much argument as to where most of the weight should go, but unless one wants to play a high pitch or a low shot into the wind, he won't go far wrong with a fairly even split of weight at the top of the swing.

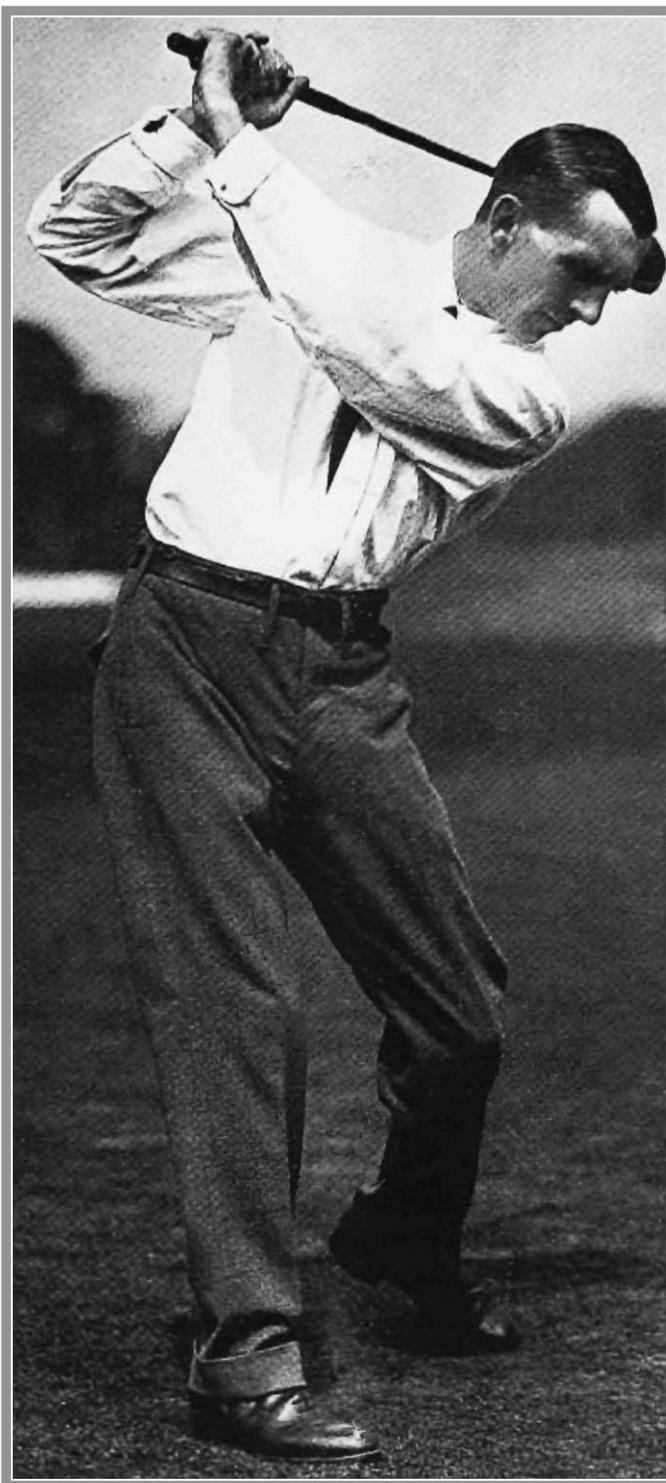
Alex Smith contends that if there is too much weight upon the left foot at the top of the swing, most of the power is taken from the punch and there is no great chance to come through with a clean, full sweep.

As important as this subject is the average golfer has never considered it at all except in a vague way. He has never made an experiment to see that his balance is adjusted. His entire weight may be on one foot or the other and frequently at the finish of his swing you can see that most of his weight is still upon the right leg and right foot. This being so, what chance has he to put any power in the blow?

There can be no balance with the left shoulder raised during the back swing, yet this is another common fault. It is absolutely necessary that the left shoulder start around with the start of the club head, for if it doesn't, the player will find himself locked without any leverage left.

On the down-hill shot the weight must be back on the right leg to keep one from falling forward. On the up-slope shot, the weight must be a trifle forward to prevent the tendency that comes to fall backward.

So it can be seen that whatever the variety of stroke, it is necessary to take into consideration the matter of weight upon the right
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International

This snapshot of Cyril Walker at the top of the swing shows a slight preponderance of weight on the right foot. Walker is a remarkably long driver, considering his slight physique, and his balance is well-nigh flawless

most of the weight on the right leg. On the upswing one should always be careful to feel the weight that has been taken from the left heel being transferred to the ball of

How Is Your Balance?

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and left foot, for unless one does his swing can never function as it should and so get the desired results.

This distribution of weight should take place in a natural way, but it must first be started and developed with a certain amount of care and thought. If one is inclined to slice through falling into the ball, the weight should then come back more to the heels. In addressing the ball the bulk of the weight should be upon the heels in any case.

In putting most good golfers advise placing the bulk of the weight on either the right or left foot. Barnes advocates the weight on the left foot with the right helping to brace the body but carrying little weight.

Willie Hunter's View

IN discussing the matter of balance with Willie Hunter, British amateur champion, he was more inclined to agree with Alex Smith. Taking a club out of the bag for a test swing Hunter figures that almost his entire weight is upon the right foot at the

top of the swing.

"There is very little weight or pressure upon my left foot", he said. "In addressing the ball the weight is equally distributed. But on the way back this weight gradually shifts to the right foot. When I get to the top of the swing I find that my best balance is reached with firm pressure and control along the right leg, the left foot and leg merely holding this balance in place without very much pressure. Then as I start downward the weight goes forward to the left leg and foot.

"At the finish of the swing the weight has been transferred almost entirely to the left foot, a reverse of the back swing at its finish. I am a great believer in having the weight on the left foot while putting. However many prefer the right foot, which, I suppose, is well enough. But in all cases the bulk of the weight in putting should be on either right or left foot and not evenly distributed between the two. For when that happens, the tendency to sway the body is much more pronounced."