

Your Hands May Be The Weak Link

IN 1938 Seymour Dunn wrote a splendid little book on the golf swing, one that I have always had much pleasure in reading and re-reading. Who is Seymour Dunn? Well, in America for long years he has been considered one of the best teachers in the game, and those who read his book can tell at a glance that he knows what he is talking about.

I am only going to pick on one or two paragraphs of his for the purpose of this article, but it would help you to know the person from whose pen some of the wisest words written on golf have flowed.

Seymour Dunn is a brawny Scotsman, a hail-fellow-well-met, soft-spoken, smiling and even-tempered—but always serious when golf is mentioned. Long before Seymour Dunn was born, his father, Tom Dunn, of North Berwick, was teaching the game, and before him, Seymour Dunn's grandfather, Willie Dunn, of Musselburgh, was doing the same thing, and now his grandson is training his sons to carry on the family tradition. Nor is that all. Long, long ago, back in the history of Britain, the Dunns were even then carrying on, spreading the gospel of golf amid the dunes and moors of Scotland. For back in those forgotten years a certain Douglas Gourley, a

maternal ancestor of Seymour Dunn, established himself as the first royal instructor in golf when he initiated King James V. of Scotland into the intricacies of the Royal and Ancient game—so the tale goes.

Getting back to the book, into which has gone a veritable lifetime of study, we come to this paragraph:

"The speed and power of the hips, shoulders, arms and wrists must be transmitted to the club by the hands. Their effort must, therefore, be greater than that of all other forces combined. I repeat, the hands are the weakest part of every golfer, no matter how strong they may be. Therefore, the combined effort of all the sources of power must be kept within the carrying capacity of the player's hands or they will collapse and the stroke will be ruined."

I used to say, as part of the gospel I preached as a teacher: "You cannot hit harder than the hands can hold." A bit Irish, if you like, for clearly one can hit harder, and does, than one can hold all the time, but its implication is clear.

So to be a good golfer it is necessary to have strong hands—this does not mean big hands, for the champions throughout the years have obviously used the hands

they had, and their form and shape would vary as with their physique.

In the series of photographs of myself on this page, I selected those which I feel give quite an alive view of the hands "doing their stuff."

No. 1—half-way down on a mashie shot—apart from the usual points which are commented on, the stance, the position of the ball and the left arm—the chin behind the ball can be mentioned, too!—the fact that the shaft is bending shows that the hands are already beginning to accelerate the club-head—none of that waiting until the last instant stuff.

No. 2 is a wonderful photograph of what in teaching I call "hitting against the left hand"—the camera even has caught the whip of the shaft. This is the part that counts, the part of the swing where holding on is imperative, and where the strength of one's hands tells.

No. 3—the head still down—the left side braced, but look at the hands—the right hand firm as a rock, the index finger guiding the club-head through, and all the fingers of the gloved left hand holding the club as in a vice. I want to mention that I always use a left-hand glove because I am satisfied it helps me to attain a firmer grip, in all conditions, than my bare hand.

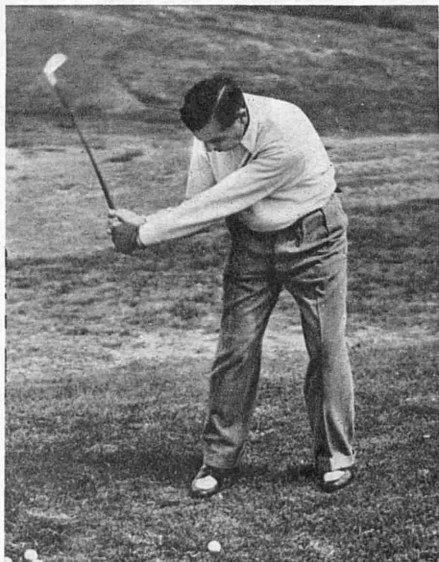
I have added photograph 4 because, apart from the ordinary points one could mention, there is an impression given that the club-head has been swung through by the hands and that the body has followed on.

I know that in photographs of golf-swings the writer can often read into the chosen pictures what he is trying to put over, but out of the large number of pictures I have, I do not think any illustrate better the point Seymour Dunn makes about the necessity for the hands being strong.

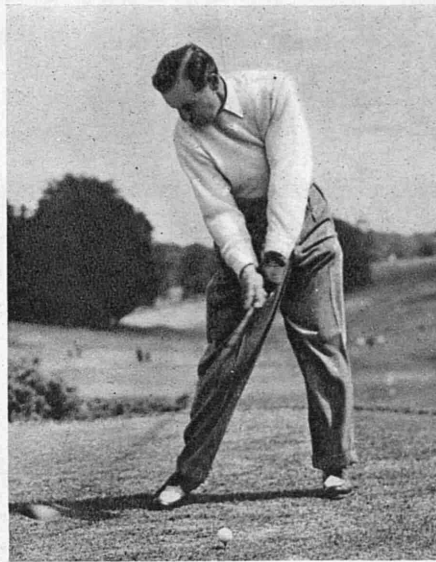
So if you wartime golfers find that your shots go awry, then it is 10 to 1 you are hitting above the strength of your hands—the two remedies are obvious, either strengthen your hands or hit within your power.

Henry Cotton

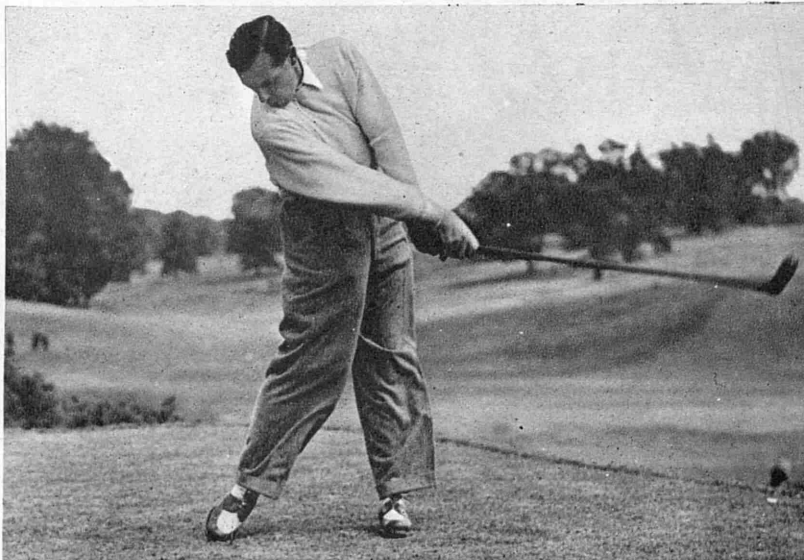
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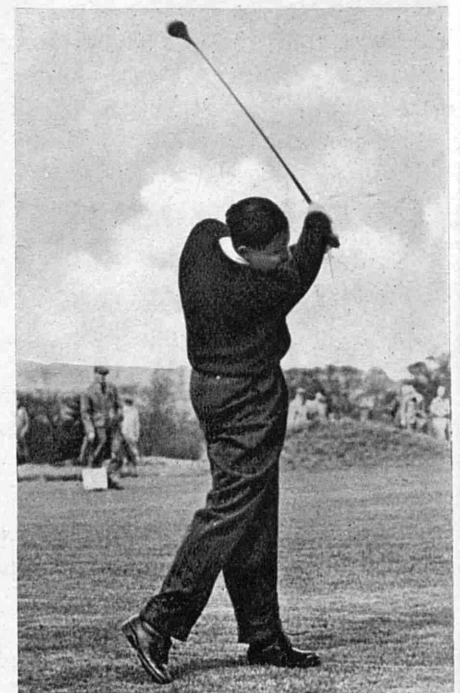
No. 1. The shaft is bending.



No. 2. Hitting against the left hand.



No. 3. Firm as a rock.



No. 4. Swung through by the hands.