

# Hit with the Clubhead

*A Plea for Simplicity in Analyzing the Golf Swing*

By Ernest Jones

**B**EFORE starting in for any discussion of the golf swing, I should like first to say that my own impression is that most golfers go quite the wrong way about learning the game. This refers to being always on the alert to find out what is wrong instead of getting to know what is right.

I know the old saying that to know what is wrong is one way of knowing what is right. Personally I don't think that idea is good. It doesn't seem to me to be constructive. It seems

## THE MAIN LESSON

**E**RNEST JONES, professional at the Women's National Golf Club on Long Island, is one of the soundest teachers in the game. He believes in starting back to first principles before any further technique is developed, in laying a foundation upon which to build. It was Ernest Jones who took over a three-week instructive period for Miss Mary K. Browne some time back and sent her to the final round of the women's championship with a victory over Miss Glenna Collett.

Last winter in California Jack Neville discovered a few kinks in his game and went to Jones for help. After a series of instructive lessons Neville went to the big tournament at Houston, Texas, and defeated George Von Elm, amateur champion, in the final round, playing brilliant golf.

There are too many golfers looking for the complex technique of the game, overlooking its first and main principles of play. Jones takes up this discussion in the accompanying article and it is something well worth careful consideration.

THE EDITOR.

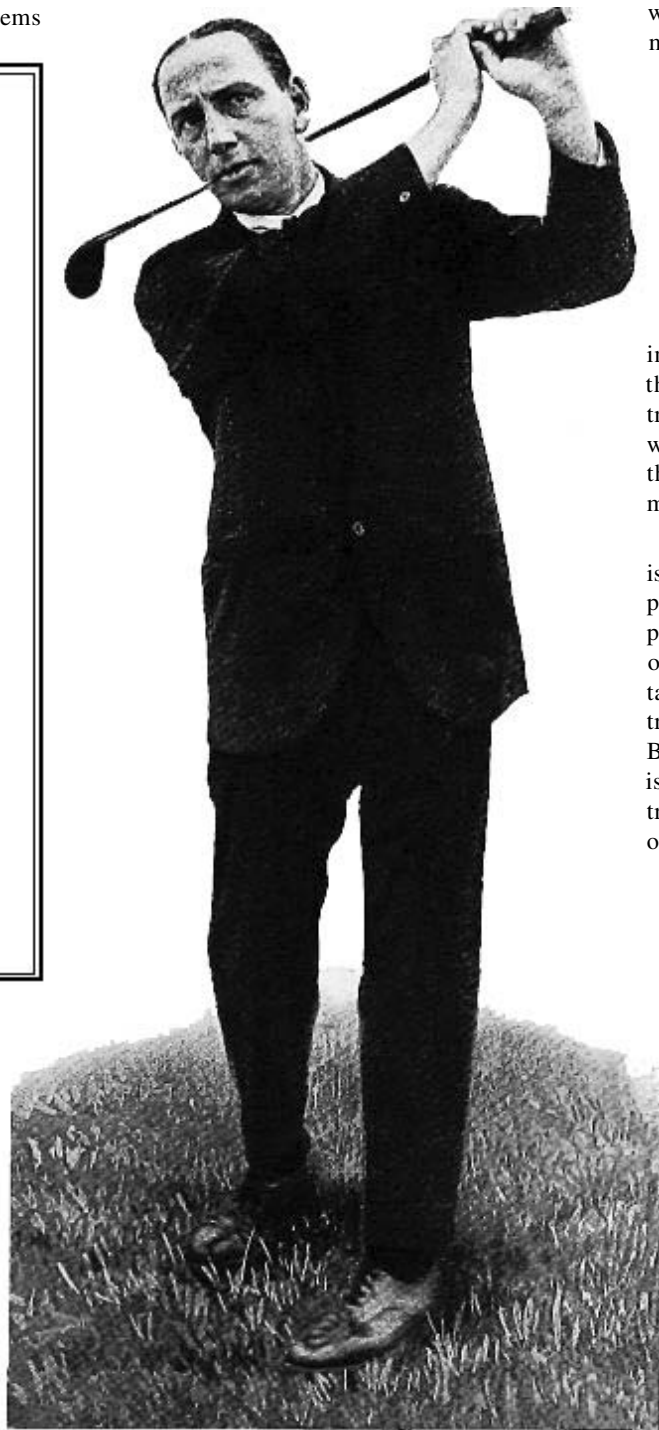
to lead to nothing but counter actions of things that are wrong. I certainly consider that it is much simpler to find out what is right, and try to keep to that standard, or as near as possible, so the thing to try to get at first is "What is Right?"

Every good golfer concedes that you must have "control," that you must have good "balance," and that you must have "timing." But when one asks what is "control," or what is "timing," or what is "balance," the answers usually received are, to say the least, vague and indefinite. For instance, any one can say that Bobby Jones has "control," but just what is meant by "control"? What does one control? And how does one contrive to control?

Briefly just what are we trying to do? There are no end of things that sound simple, in fact silly, until they are thoroughly understood. This is one of them. Obviously what we are trying to do is to hit the ball with the head of the club. It is so entirely obvious that most golfers forget it completely in trying to think of the thou-

sand and one tips to help them do that very simple thing. Then we can say that what we are trying to do is to hit the ball with the head of the club. Once more, obviously, to do this we must have control of the head of the club to hit the ball with it.

The next question that confronts us is "What is the action of the club in hitting the ball?" To be able to get the maximum distance with the ball,



ERNEST JONES

Keystone

the clubhead must be traveling at the maximum pace when it reaches the ball. We must then devise a method that will enable us to cause the clubhead to reach its maximum speed as it comes to the ball.

Now let me call your attention to the action of a pendulum. At first thought the action of a pendulum does not in the least suggest pace.

But a moment's consideration will convince one that there is nothing can travel faster, for if a pendulum should continue its course in one direction, the result would be a complete revolution, and unlimited speed may be developed in revolutionary motion. So then, consider the action of the club as the action of a pendulum. It doesn't matter how long or short the stroke is. This is merely a question of the degree of the angle through which the pendulum swings. Hence when we say we are trying to acquire control, we mean we are trying to make the club move through a true pendulum motion.

Then comes the question "Whence do we get the control to swing the club?" Obviously once more it is possible to feel what we are doing with the clubhead only through the points of contact between ourselves and the club, that is the hands and fingers. If we have control, it means we can feel what we are doing with it. Mostly control is intuitive. For instance, in writing, we feel control of the point of the pen on paper, or in tossing a ball we feel control to throw with the thumb and fingers. Thus we have to feel that we have the sense of moving the club in a pendulum motion, through or by means of the hands and fingers.

We now come to the question of what balance is. This too has developed into a terribly complicated problem, in that nowadays we are supposed to have to consider it in the sense of transfer of weight, in thinking of the golf swing. Maintaining balance in the golf swing involves the transfer of weight, all right; that much is agreed. But so does the simple action of walking. Here is possibly the simplest demonstration of the transfer of balance, yet we never so much as think of it at all when we walk.

Now this latter is true of the making of a golf swing with a good golfer. He never worries about the transfer of weight any more than he does of shifting the weight forward from one foot onto the other in walking. Now then I should like to explain balance in this manner. Balance without motion is even distribution of weight, that is poise. Where there is motion involved, balance is responsive motion. For instance, in the case of a top spinning, it is the speed of the motion that maintains the balance. In the actions of a swinger of Indian clubs, balance is the responsive motion to the swinging of the clubs. It must be plainly and distinctly understood that balance is not something that has to be pulled into action. It is never an initiative action, but merely the response to an initiative one.

Now then in hitting a golf ball it is possible to hit only with the clubhead, and not from balance or the responsive motion of the body.

The greatest trouble in golf is that the player will try to hit or force too much from what should be balanced motion. On the other hand it is equally fatal to try to keep still. If we are to put any power or force into the stroke, the body must move, and balance in motion must be maintained. (Continued on page 52)

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It is all very simple if one can only get the idea. The golfer's main thought must be on the clubhead, on hitting with the clubhead, and not upon other outside details. You will frequently see golfers miss a drive when the ball is teed up just as they want it—and then hit a nice shot from some bad lie. In the first case they are not concentrating on the main job of merely hitting the ball. They are thinking of arms or hands or body or pivot or something else. In the second case they are thinking of hitting the ball, regardless of unimportant details.

All this may seem to be too obvious. Yet in every thing one must get back to first principles, and this is something so few golfers do. Golf is largely smoothness, ease, rhythm and subconscious effort. How can one get this? One can help by practising swinging the clubhead through in a natural way and developing balance under control, instinctive balance just as one has in walking. You **MUST** have this instinctive feel of ease and balance if you ever expect to play any golf worth while and enjoy the game. You **MUST** have the feel of the clubhead swinging through naturally, unimpeded by any conscious movement or action.

You must understand, you must get the mental picture of hitting with the clubhead, just as you have the same mental picture of hitting a nail with the head of a hammer. That must be the start of any golf swing that will ever get you anywhere. Don't think this is too obvious to be given any thought. It is the first basis of the swing, and it is something few average golfers ever consider at all.