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# NCGA GOLF



VOLUME 37 | NUMBER 4 | FALL 2017 | PEBBLE BEACH, CALIFORNIA | \$3.95

NCGA.org

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE  
NORTHERN CALIFORNIA GOLF ASSOCIATION

GOLF  
ARCHITECTURE  
ISSUE

## SIMPLY THE BEST

No matter how you slice it,  
Northern California golf course  
architecture is unmatched



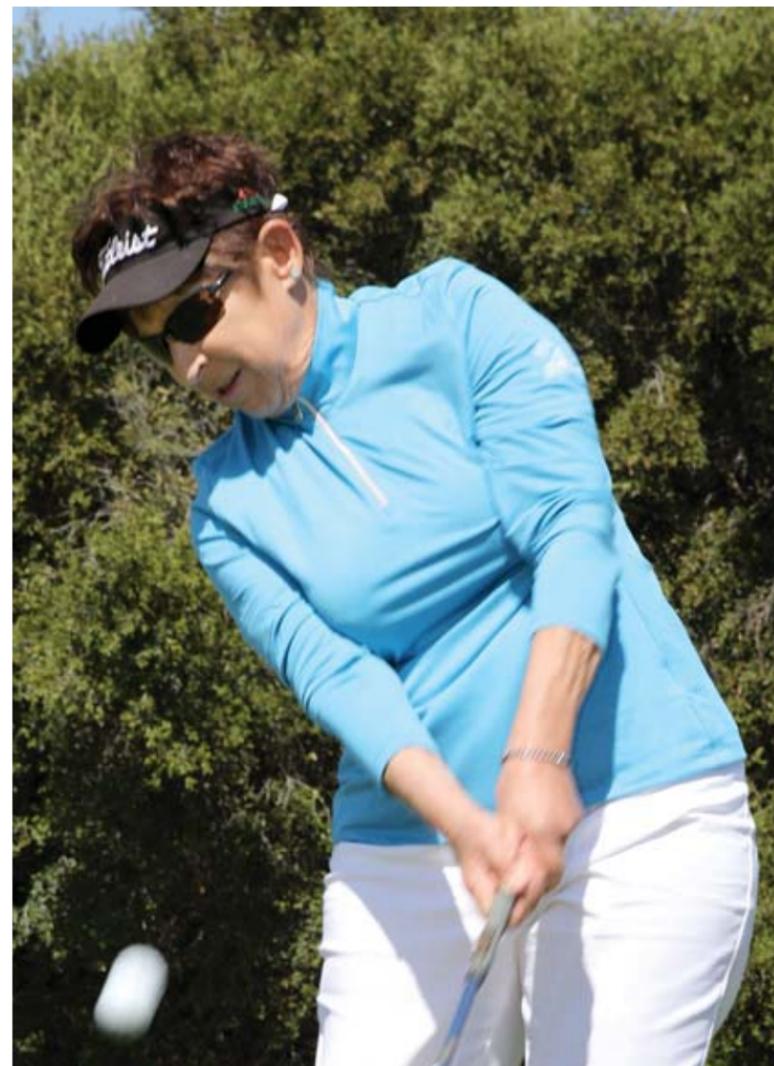


**N**obody practices their short game these days. That may be a slight exaggeration, but I see too many golfers neglecting what I consider the most important part of the game. And here's the thing: everyone is capable of having a decent short game from inside 75 yards. If you are a 20 handicap and can develop a 10-handicap short game, you can start shooting

some pretty good scores. Here are some drills and training aids that will help you improve and make your practice more enjoyable.

### Dial in Your Distances

**T**o improve, you need to practice with a purpose. Woody Wright, the golf professional emeritus at Lake Merced Golf Club, taught me to work on my distance control by pitching to soccer cones in 5-yard increments up to 40 yards. You can also use towels (as pictured right). I have my students start with a 56-degree wedge and hit three shots and try to land in between the towels. This will help you tighten your dispersion. In her prime, Annika Sorenstam used to practice this same drill. I also like it because it costs next to nothing and all you need is space. You don't even have to go to the course to do it.



### BY DEDE MORIARTY, PGA WITH ADAM SCHUPAK

Dede Moriarty is a San Francisco native who grew up playing at Harding Park Golf Course. She was the city's first female professional, and has been the teaching pro at Presidio Golf Course for more than 12 years. She was named the 2015 Northern California PGA Golf Professional of the Year.



# MASTER YOUR

# SHORT GAME

PHOTOS BY BRANT WARD

The towel drill also teaches you how you can get to the same place with different clubs. I like to start at the longest distance and work closer and then move down the bag to the wedge, 9- and 8-iron. While dialing in your distance, you learn how you can hit different clubs high and low—and to use the bounce of the club. For lofted shots, play the ball forward in your stance; for bump and run shots, move it back.

Bob McCaffrey, my teacher at Lincoln Park Golf Club in the 1980s, used to tell me to get sharp with one club and develop a meat and potatoes shot. For me, those clubs were my gap wedge and sand wedge. But I see a disturbing trend, especially in young people, in which every pitch shot is hit with a sand wedge or 60-degree wedge. You have to be so precise. Sometimes running an 8- or 9-iron is the better play. Golfers don't practice that shot enough anymore. I try to give my students options so they can become a complete player.





### Hoop It

**Y**ou can control your short game distance in several ways. I teach the importance of controlling the speed of your arms to hit pitch shots of varying length. I also endorse the concept of random practice. Likewise, try not to practice in a straight line. I encourage my students to alternate distances. One way I like to make practice fun is by playing games. I spread out five hula hoops. If a pitch shot lands inside the hoop, you earn one point, and if it stops inside the hoop, you get two points. We typically play first to 10, but you can adjust that figure accordingly. With my junior students, we play for Starburst candies and that always makes this game a big hit. The more you make practice fun, the longer you will practice.



### No Flip, No Pain

**T**o hit a proper bump-and-run shot, position the ball in the back of your stance, hands forward and shoulders angled to the left. Make sure the left arm is the leader to avoid flipping.

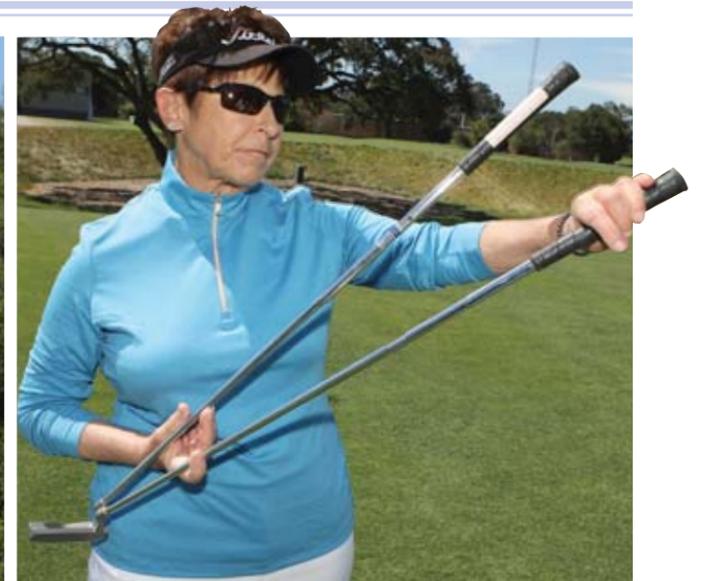
Shannon Donlon, general manager and head professional at Stanford Golf Club, (pictured above) demonstrates one of my go-to drills to drive this point home. Grip a short iron and an alignment stick at the same time. With a few feet of the rod past the butt-end of the club, try to hit pitch shots. This drill teaches you to square the clubface with the body instead of using the hands. It also provides immediate feedback if done incorrectly.

Release your wrists and the shaft of the alignment stick is going to whack you in the side (pictured left). Do it wrong enough times and you'll likely have a black-and-blue reminder of your mistake.



### Rhythm and Flow

**T**o help my students feel the different swing speeds needed for short game shots, I've often likened it to music. You have to find the right rhythm. When I'm pitching, I'm thinking of a good waltz with a 1-2-3 tempo. If you're an auditory learner, a helpful tool is a metronome. Download a metronome app onto your smart phone and follow the beat.



### Two-Handed Putter

**I**f you think it's hard putting with two hands together, try putting with your hands apart. At the 1990 U.S. Junior Amateur at Lake Merced, I befriended Jay Hebert, winner of the 1960 PGA Championship. One day, he said to me, "Come on little lady, I'm going to give you the best lesson on the putting green you've ever had." What he said was very simple: you have to move the handle and the head together. I've used that philosophy both with my own game and my students. I use a two-handed putter as a training aid. It produces the feeling of making a stroke without using the hands—and instills the feeling of the club and hands moving together. 🌿



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