



Talking in the 19th Hole

DRIVER. Reading the greens or seeing the break means calculating the effects of the slopes, speed, grain, and wind on the putt to be made. The break is the direction the ball rolls onto the green as a result of these factors.

Many putts are missed before the player even moves the putt due to errors in reading the green. Reading the greens is the most underrated aspect of putting.

Most amateurs read less break than real. Some studies recommend that it is better if players took twice the break that they see.

If a player will make a mistake in assessing the break, it is better to play with slightly more break than very little. Some reasons for this are:

- A ball is more likely to enter if it reaches the hole's high edge than if it goes through the low edge.
- The balls that jump due to irregularities in the surface of the green more often do so downwards than upwards due to gravity's action.
- When the subconscious of a player thinks that he is playing with little break, he tends to hit the ball more firmly, and if he does not find the hole, he passes a lot of the hole at a distance of three-putts.
- The odds of holed a deviated putt on the high side of the hole are not close to 100%, but the odds of holed a deviated putt on the low side of the hole are close to zero.

A good player must be able to read the greens and use good strategies in this regard. Let's look at a primary factor about greens reading: slopes.

- The dimensions. The slope of the green can have two dimensions:
 - The front / vertical dimension has the following variations:
 - The putt is flat.
 - The putt is uphill.
 - The putt is downhill.
 - The putt is a mixture of the above.
 - The lateral / horizontal dimension has the following variations:
 - The putt is straight.
 - The putt breaks from left to right.
 - The putt breaks from right to left.
 - The putt breaks with a mixture of the above.

For most putts, the most crucial judgment to make is the front / vertical dimension as it determines how hard or soft the ball needs to be hit and how much break it will catch.

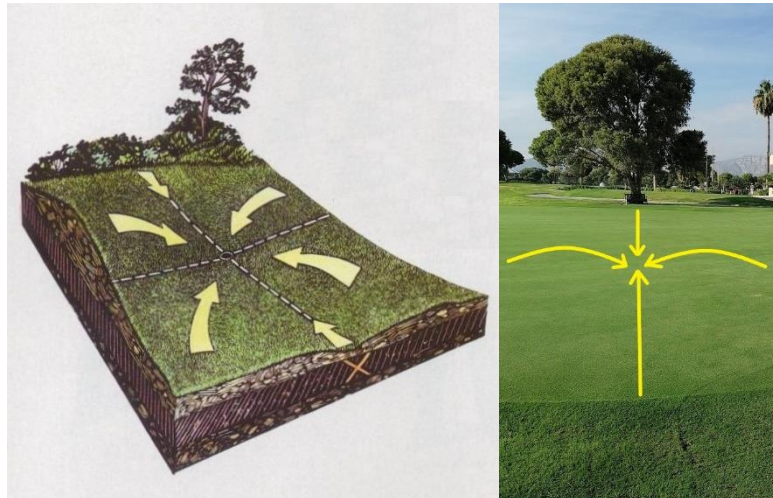
Most players and caddies tend to see the break first (lateral dimension), then the touch (front dimension), or only see the break. It is essential first to see the touch and then determine the break.

Most putting players are more likely to underestimate slopes than to overestimate them. This conservative behavior is reflected in the fact that in the uphill putts the player leaves short, in the downhill putts a lot is passed and in the breaks from left to right or from right to left the putt fails on the low side of the hole.

Hitting downhill putts too hard and uphill putts too soft are common mistakes made by amateurs. To reduce these errors, you should focus on estimating the frontal dimension (uphill - downhill) and understand its impact on the putt's speed.

A basic rule of thumb of the frontal dimension is that a ball gains more distance when it rolls downhill than it loses when it rolls in an uphill. Slopes close to the hole have more effect on the break than those far away.

- Course designers build the majority of the greens with a slope receptive to the shots, that is, the back is higher than the front. Based on this slope, in general:
 - If the ball is before the hole, the putt will be uphill.
 - If the ball is after, the putt will be downhill.
 - If the ball is to the left, the putt will roll from left to right.
 - If the ball is to the right, the putt will break from right to left.



These tendencies are a general guide. The undulations, the hills, the bumps, the green levels, and other factors also influence.

- Drain. Drainage is a general guide to identifying slopes. The greens are designed so that the water drains, preventing it from stagnating. Drains tend to flow into surrounding low places like sewers, lakes, rivers, etc. An easy way to identify drains is to imagine where the water flows when it rains or when the green is watered. The ball will roll to the lowest point, just like the water. The grain (the direction in which the grass grows) tends to comb towards where the water flows.



Based on the slope of the drain:

- If the drain flows into the hole, the putt is downhill and fast.
- If the drain flows to the opposite side of the hole, the putt is uphill and is slow.
- If the drain flows to the left side of the hole, the putt will break from right to left.
- If the drain flows to the right side of the hole, the putt will break from left to right.

To identify where the drainage is, imagine where the water would run when it rains or is watered. Sometimes it is evident because you can see the sewers outside the green. To illustrate this point, take a water bucket to the green, then toss the water into the hole and watch the water flow. Wherever the water goes, according to the drainage, that is where the break will go. In the following example, the break is downhill from right to left.



- The mountains. On golf courses where the greens are close to the mountains, the break is to the mountain's opposite side. This also applies to greens that are next to hills or high ground. This occurs because the water's erosion tends to comb the grain towards the opposite side of the mountain.

In general, two heads or four eyes see the break better than one head or two eyes. That is, you and your caddy can see the break better, but each player has his routine about it. Let's see the different ways:

- The player sees the break. Some players do not carry a caddy, or if they do, they ask them not to participate in the decision of breaks.
- The player consults the caddy on certain occasions. Some players read most breaks and only consult the caddy when they are unsure of the break.

- The player only consults, but he decides. Some players consult the caddy on all putts, but in the end, he decides the break.
- The player obeys the caddy. Some players fully trust the caddy and play with the break that the caddy gives them.

The caddy must know the player's putting style because this will give the break based on the player's touch. If the caddy does not know the player's touch and tendencies, it will be difficult for me to hit the break.

My recommendation to caddies and players is that we strive to be experts at reading the greens. **FORE.**

Mateo Melgar Ochoa – Golf Pro
www.handy.golf
www.youtube.com/jugargolf
mateomelgar1969@hotmail.com