



Talking in the 19th Hole

WEEKLY TRAINING 12

THE READING OF THE GREENS. 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 putter due to errors in reading the green. Reading the greens is the most underrated aspect of putting.

Most amateur players read less break than real. Some studies recommend that it is better if players take twice the break that they see. If a player is going to make a mistake in assessing a 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 high edge of the hole than if it goes through the low edge.
- Balls that jump due to irregularities on the surface of the green more often do so downwards than upwards, due to the action of gravity.
- 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 making a putt off the high side of the hole are not close to 100%. But the chances of making a putt off the low side of the hole are close to zero.

A good player must be able to read the greens and handle good strategies in this regard. Let's look at two main factors about reading greens: slopes and grain.

THE 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.

The essential judgment for most putts 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 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 falls 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 for amateurs. To reduce these errors, you should focus on estimating the frontal inclination (uphill - downhill) and understand its impact on the speed of the putt.

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

- The design of the greens

Course designers build most greens with a slope that receives the shots, i.e., the bottom higher than the entrance. Based on this slope in general:

- If the ball is before the hole, the putt will be uphill.
- If the ball is after the hole, the putt will be downhill.
- If the ball is to the left of the hole, the putt will roll from left to right.
- If the ball is to the right of the hole, the putt will roll from right to left.



This is a general guide; undulations, hills, bumps, green levels, and other factors also play a role.

- Drainage

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 (direction in which the grass grows) tends to comb towards where the water flows.

Based on the slope of the drainage:

- If the drainage flows into the hole, the putt is downhill and light.
- If the drainage flows to the opposite side of the hole, the putt is uphill and is heavy.
- If the drainage flows to the left side of the hole, the putt will fall from right to left.
- If the drainage flows to the right side of the hole, the putt will fall from left to right.

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



- The mountains

On 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 erosion of the water tends to comb the grain towards the opposite side of the mountain.

THE GRAIN

The grain is the direction in which the grass grows. In other words, it is the side towards which the grass is combed, similar to the hair of a person who combs sideways. The grass never grows straight up, which means that there is some grain on all greens. The longer, thicker, stronger, and more resistant the grass, such as Bermuda, the more grain will affect the ball. Grain is a factor that affects the direction and speed of a putt.



Based on the direction of the grain, we have to:

- A putt with the grain in favor will roll faster and further. It would help if you shot softer.
- A putt with the grain against the grain will roll slower and less far. It would help if you shot firmly so that the ball reaches the hole.
- A putt with the grain crossed will roll in the direction of the grain. It would help if you shot firmer because the ball would roll a little slower.

Some ways to identify the direction of the grain are:

- The texture and color of the grass. When the grain is combed in favor, the surface of the green looks lighter and has a shine. When the grain is combed against the surface of the green, it appears darker, opaque, and thicker. This difference in brightness is noticeable with the naked eye, and you can see how the brightness changes by looking at the same area on one side and then on the opposite side.



- At the edges of the hole. In the cup of the hole, you can see the direction of the grain because on the one side, the grass moves away (part worn and drier), and on the other, it gets into the hole (the part with more grass). Especially during the day because in the morning when they just put the holes is not yet noticeable.



- Carve the grass. Carving the grass by hand shows where it is combed. According to the Rules in a round, this is not allowed but can be done in practice rounds or practice areas.



TECHNIQUES FOR READING THE GREENS

It's great to have good putting technique and hit the ball solidly, but you won't hole the ball if you're not good at reading the greens. Reading the greens is a matter of practice and experience. Few players spend time practicing reading the greens.

Let's see some guides and ways to read greens:

- The pre-reading

This includes:

- Read the topographic characteristics of the green from the moment you approach it.
- Get a feel for the break when going to mark the ball.
- Locate the drainages, the grain, the lakes, the general slope of the green, and its relationship with the ball and the hole.
- Be clear if the putt is uphill, downhill, and the side of the break, to start thinking about the speed of the putt.
- Observe the relationship of the ball's impact on the green, the flight that brought the ball, and the position in which it was. Based on that determines the tendency in the break.

- If the shot was short: chip, pitch, bunker, etc. Identify how the ball rolled the last few yards before stopping.
- The other players' putts are an excellent source of information, especially if they are on the same line or the opposite side of the hole. Observe the putts and conclude.

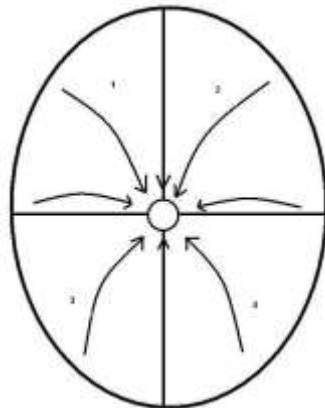


- The gravity

The force of gravity from the center of the ground is one factor that most influences the break as it pulls the ball towards the lowest part of the green. The longer the ball takes to reach the hole on a putt with a break, the more time gravity has to act on it.

- The principle of quadrants

Based on the general design of the greens: bottom higher than the entrance, we can apply the quadrant principle by dividing the green with a horizontal and a vertical line into four quadrants. Depending on the quadrant that the ball is in, it will be the tendency in the break. For example, in quadrant 4 (right-down), the putt will be uphill and tend from right to left. This same principle can be applied to the part of the green where the ball is. The point is to determine the highest point of the hole in the context of where the ball is.



- The putting wheel

It is a way of understanding the reading of the greens. The first stage is to observe the green and find the fall line. The fall line is the direction directly down that the water will flow due to gravity. The fall line is displayed with the image of a clock where the noon position is the highest point of the elevation relative to the hole, and the 6 o'clock position is the lowest point of the elevation relative to the hole. A ball hitting from noon will roll directly into the hole without a break. After finding the fall line, determine where the ball is positioned on the clock.

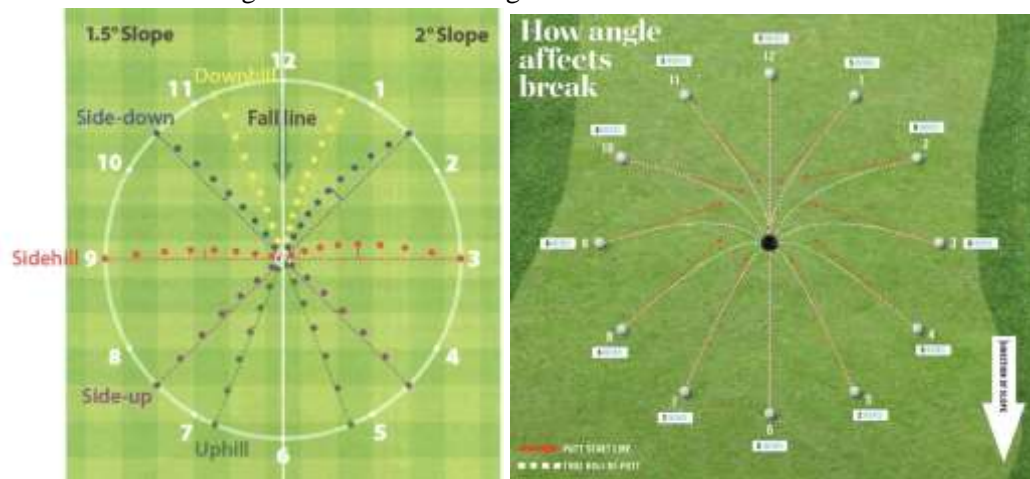
The image of the putting wheel illustrates how the break of a putt depends on the ball's position on the face of the clock. A putt from 9 o'clock has the same break from left to right as a putt from 3 o'clock has from right to left.

Downhill putts break more than uphill putts from comparable positions on the clock. For example, a putt from 1 breaks more than a putt from 5; a putt from 2 o'clock breaks more than a putt from 4 o'clock.

Putts break more on steeper greens than on flatter greens.

Downhill putts break substantially more than uphill putts.

Putts break more on faster greens than on slower greens.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ieiGiY4oCMs&list=PLsYr1uC75ERgr9-eVQB96ruainhvLDSaV&index=1>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l6Hp1_OnLCE&list=PLsYr1uC75ERgr9-eVQB96ruainhvLDSaV&index=3

Improving your greens reading will make you a better player. **FORE.**

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