

# 'On your marks' – Aligning the clubface to the target



This month's host Pro is Philip Joubert who is a fully qualified member of the PGA of South Africa. Philip has worked at several of the Gauteng region's top Clubs starting at Centurion where he provided coaching services to the juniors and higher handicap members, then on to Pebble Rock where he coached all levels of player from juniors, beginners, scratch golfers and provincial players. Philip currently has his own golf academy at Pecanwood Country Club which provides coaching programmes for all levels of players from beginners and juniors through to elite provincial players.

The average amateur golfer often seems to have more need for a qualified optician than help from a coaching Professional! The reason for this is that some of the better amateur swings, on a technical level, are unable to get the ball to the target, due to the owner's inability to align the clubface to the target correctly.

To be fair alignment is one of the more difficult aspects in which to achieve any real consistency, largely because it is impossible for any player to 'see' where they are aiming from the perspective of their own clubface and body's alignment. Because of this, Tournament players are especially vigilant in pursuit of the correct target line.

The three key elements required to ensure correct alignment are:

1. Find the target line.
2. Set the clubface square to it.
3. 'Build' the stance and set up parallel to the selected target line.

A favourite Tournament player should provide a model routine, which is an essential foundation to all the set up elements, as it will help ensure that an obvious requirement is not missed. You may not have the prettiest swing at your Club, but with this routine you will be able to set up like a Pro every time. Routines vary from player to player, but the following will help you to cover all of the key points.

- Always approach every shot from the

behind the ball, keeping the ball between you and the target.

- It is only from behind the ball that you can get a clear view of all the factors which will affect the shot you want to play.



- Create a clear mental image of the target line i.e. by visualising a line that links the ball to the selected target. Imagine that the line is a large 'stripe', painted by an oversize whitewash brush, which runs from the front of the ball along the ground to the target.



- In this same context look around to see if there are other existing 'lines' parallel to your chosen target line i.e. the edge of the tee box or the mower lines on the turf.
- Select a mark that is on or adjacent to your target line and which is not more than 2 or 3 feet in front of the ball. Selecting a mark 100 metres away will destroy the essential purpose of the exercise, which is to provide your eyes with a target or reference point that is close to you.
- Place the golf club face behind the ball and keep the leading edge pointing to the selected mark and the clubface at right angles to the target line.



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- You will now have the clubface 'squared' to the target and can 'build' your stance and position the rest of your body parallel to the direction (the target line) in which the clubface is pointing.
- Correct alignment plays a vital role in virtually every sporting activity. The example given here would be that the golfers' target line mark is representative of the sight on the end of a rifle barrel, as it helps bring the target towards the marksman (the golfer in this case) and therefore makes a distant target easier to line up to. ■



**ABOUT THE AUTHOR:** John Cockayne is the author of 'How to Practise Less More Often'. He is a founder member of the PGA of South Africa and he has spent over 30 years coaching this frustrating game! A key current focus for John is as the Programme Director at Corporate Golf Academy and The Green Pages Golf School. The Golf Academy provides innovative tailor made clinics and golf academies for companies and The Green Pages provides coaching for individuals.