


GOLFER'S EDITION



**THE
NEW
RULES
OF** Golf
Instruction.

A QUANTUM SHIFT IN INSTRUCTION IDEAS
THAT PUTS THE POWER IN **YOUR** HANDS

by Charlie King

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chapter 1

THE NEW RULES MANIFESTO

I don't know if I'm a very good writer, but I know I am one of the world's most passionate golf instructors. I can't stand by and see golf taught the way it is most commonly taught, anymore. Please, if I get a little boring or don't say it quite right, look past that to my overall message and, if you agree, become part of my movement. The New Rules movement introduces a set of ideas and standards that will benefit you by giving you a chance to become the kind of golfer you have dreamed of becoming.

Golf is such a great game. It's a shame it has been so hard to get better at the game. In this book I'm going to contrast the common practices of the past, the Old Rules of golf instruction that have been ineffective in helping you play your best golf, with the New Rules of golf instruction, the rules that will help you find an effective instructor and improve your game.

The desire to be a professional player got me into golf, and I knew to get better I had to find a teacher. When I set out to find a teacher, I found it to be far more difficult than it should have been. I'm going to tell you my personal story because it speaks to what has been common in golf instruction—the old, ineffective rules.

In this book I'm going to outline for you the standards you should demand from your golf teacher and the New Rules for improving your golf game. If you put these New Rules into practice, they will guarantee your success as a golfer. But let me tell you up front, there is some work involved. You won't be told to do one easy thing and gain 20 yards on your drive. But I hope you're as sick of those empty promises as I am. This book will give you the inside scoop on how to improve at golf, including how to choose the right golf instructor.

The New Rules movement introduces a set of ideas and standards that will benefit you by giving you a chance to become the kind of golfer you have dreamed of becoming.

I've gone back 20 years and, taking everything I've learned, compiled this set of best practices, the New Rules of Golf Instruction. Let me tell you my story and show how it is relevant to you.

I took up golf late, at age 19. In 1987 while in my last year of college at Tennessee Tech, I took an elective class that changed my life. Our textbooks were *Think and Grow Rich* and *How to Win Friends and Influence People*. We listened to motivational audios and watched inspiring videos. I had never been exposed to this type of information. Our professor came in one day and asked us a question: "If you could choose any career and there was no limit to what you could choose, what would you choose to do?" I was obsessed with golf at the time and had been fortunate enough to go to the 1987 Masters and watch Larry Mize chip in to beat Greg Norman. So I answered to myself, *I would win the Masters*.

Ignorance is certainly bliss. I went to my apartment after class and wrote my new goal on a piece of paper. This may have been a far-fetched goal for a person who didn't play golf until he was 19 years old and had a two handicap, but that was my goal. The first steps of my new plan were to go to Central Florida after graduation to play the Space Coast Mini-Tour, get a job to support myself, have a place to practice and find a teacher who could fast forward my progress. The "find a teacher" part was the most important step because I had to make up for the time I lost starting so late.

I found a highly-recommended teacher the summer before I graduated from college and scheduled a lesson. My first lesson was odd at best and, at worst, a disaster. I was given the "one size fits all" method. My stance was widened and my legs were straightened to an exaggerated level. When I would ask for clarification of these seemingly bizarre positions, I was asked the question, "Do you want to be a great player?" Of course I did, and I didn't have enough experience to discern that I was being given bad information. I was then told to make a one-piece takeaway.

I decided to make it my career goal to devise a clear roadmap for success for golfers who want to get better.

This sounded reasonable until he explained his version. “A one-piece takeaway is where the upper spine, the lower spine, the triangle and the club all move to the right post, which is the right leg,” he bellowed.

He might as well have been speaking Greek! According to this instructor, the above moves were followed by a turn to the top, the club dropping parallel to the ground on the downswing and turning to a complete finish. I was given all of this information in a matter of minutes.

I attempted this series of moves and proceeded to hit the worst 30 shots of my life. “You’re exaggerating, right?” I inquired. He said, “No. This is what all the great players do.” (This was his answer to everything.)

This pattern continued for the remainder of the lesson with everything feeling so exaggerated I felt as though I were a twisted pretzel. I protested, but all my protests were explained away by him, saying, “All the great players do this.” Three weeks later our relationship ended with an embarrassing confrontation on the range as he got me to try yet another move that would mold me into his system.

As I arrived in Florida to try my hand at playing the mini-tours, I encountered an equally damaging teaching style: a series of tips from various golf instructors who showed no real commitment to my game—demonstrated by constant interruptions and habitual glances at their watches. These teachers’ philosophies would change seemingly monthly in conjunction with the new *Golf Digest* coming out. My game floundered, though I worked extremely hard. As often happens in life, these negative experiences put me on a different path. I changed my focus from trying to make it on Tour to a mission to find better ways to teach golf, so that golfers could get the results they deserved for their efforts. I decided to make it my career goal to devise a clear roadmap for success for golfers who want to get better.

I've made a 20-year study of why some people get better and some don't. So what have I discovered determines whether golfers get better? First and foremost, it is the concepts and ideas you've picked up that have shaped your game. This book is written to get you to consider a set of concepts that will make sure you don't have the type of experiences I had.

The Old Rules failed me. I wasn't given the information that would have helped me improve to my fullest. Until now, there has not been a clear vision that defines the best process to help you reach your full potential. I asked completely different questions as I built my teaching career: How do people best learn a motor skill? What is an individual characteristic and what is truly fundamental? What examples in other sports and activities are models for what we should be doing in golf? How do mental fitness, physical fitness and equipment apply to these questions and answers?

The answers to these questions have formed the New Rules of Golf Instruction. I am writing this for the golfers who want to enjoy this crazy game. **When people play golf poorly enough, long enough, they quit.** I want this discussion to help you understand the process and system that will lead to your playing your best golf. As I draw analogies to other sports and activities, please consider how the same principles of learning a motor skill apply to golf.

The title New Rules of Golf Instruction refers to a set of ideas and thoughts that will become the paradigm for teaching golf. How did we get to the Old Rules practices that we commonly see today? I believe the answer is simple: because golf instruction developed through a trial and error process among professionals. A golf professional had success as a player and then taught his "feel" to others. This led to a lot of different theories, because there were a lot of different "feelings." I'll talk more in-depth about this in Chapter 2.

The Old Rules **FAILED** me.

In the Old Rules of golf instruction a teacher develops an exact model. He picks a favorite player (or players) such as Ben Hogan, Jack Nicklaus or Tiger Woods and studies their swing in depth. That swing then becomes the model for **all** the students who come to this instructor. So we end up with instruction that makes a golfer **look** a certain way. It requires students to hit certain positions no matter what individual characteristics they possess. This is “Style” or “Method” teaching for swinging a club. These methods come and go. One method teaches all its players to tilt the body to the left at the top of the swing; another method teaches all players to shift weight to the right. In certain methods all players are changed to have the same distinct angle on the backswing, even though if we took a ride to the Golf Hall of Fame in St. Augustine we would see it is full of unique backswings. Ultimately each champion golfer has a way to hit a golf ball, not **the** way. The problem with introducing new methods every year or so is the confusion it brings to you and your golf game.

In the New Rules of Golf Instruction, we have identified the essential skills a golfer needs, not unlike the essential skills needed by a freestyle swimmer, who must learn to kick, move his arms, float, hold his breath under water, turn his head and breathe, then put it all together to create a freestyle stroke. These Essential Golf Skills™ are evaluated and prioritized. New Rules instructors are able to have a higher degree of success because they focus on the **skills** that create a repeating ball flight. (Giving people perfect backswings does not affect the ball directly.)

So we end up with instruction
that makes a golfer **LOOK** a certain way.

In the Old Rules of golf instruction, teachers preach to people how important the short game is, though they very rarely give a short game lesson. In the New Rules of Golf Instruction, we motivate golfers to practice their short game through a test score that is converted into a handicap. This gives us objective data; we then create an eight- to 12-week program, including rewards, and test again at the end to see the improvement. This contest or tournament-type atmosphere motivates golfers to work on their short game instead of being preached at to do so.

In the Old Rules, a person is told the surface, quick-fix mental keys like “be your own best friend,” “be nice to yourself,” “smile more” and “pick the smallest possible target.” Not terrible advice, but it works on the effect and not the cause. In the New Rules of Golf Instruction, the mental game starts with getting to the **core** by understanding **why** you play the game. It is about understanding the six needs a human being has and how those needs are being met through golf. This understanding progresses to a set of rules that lead to practical mental toughness.

In the Old Rules, you were told to practice, but you weren’t given clear directions on how to practice. In the New Rules, we are specific, and there is a contrast between technique practice and competitive practice.

We will also contrast the Old Rules way and the New Rules way of taking fitness into account, the use of video feedback, custom club-fitting and a long-term program for improvement.



Let me be clear that the term *Old Rules* does not refer to the age of the instructor. It refers to a set of beliefs and standards that are outdated and need to be replaced. I know many older teachers who are New Rules instructors.

There are plenty of people in the golf business that I've run into in the last 20 years who are setting a higher standard, but they haven't been recognized for that higher standard. On top of that, it hasn't been easy for you to find out about these teachers and their way of teaching.

The New Rules will give you a solid roadmap for your improvement.

	OLD RULES	NEW RULES
FULL SWING	Method/Model-based	Essential Golf Skills™
SHORT GAME	Teach Sparingly	Measure and Challenge
MENTAL TOUGHNESS	Surface, Quick Fixes	Core Mental Toughness
PRACTICE	You're on Your Own	Integral to Instruction
PHYSICAL FITNESS	Not Factored In	Checked in Initial Meeting
VIDEO	Not Used or Used to Pick Too Many "Faults"	Great Feedback Tool, Used to Prioritize
EQUIPMENT	Off the Rack	Custom Fit
INSTRUCTIONAL APPROACH	Single Lessons	Program for Improvement
COMMUNICATION SKILLS	Ineffective, Little or No Training	Educated and Effective

Chapter 2

FULL SWING

THE NEW RULES IDENTIFY AND TEACH ESSENTIAL GOLF SKILLS™

How Did the Old Rules Develop?

In the first chapter I explained the differences between Old Rules instruction and New Rules instruction. In this chapter, we're going to talk about how those rules apply to the full swing. This is important because the full swing is where we see so much of the confusion when golfers attempt to get better. Let me briefly tell you what I believe caused this.

When I was trying to improve my game, why did I run into the “method” teacher and then the “tip of the month” teacher? The reason: my profession developed from what might be called a trial and error system. The people who started to teach for a living were good players who also had to give lessons at times to make a living. We didn't have a motor learning expert who looked at golf from a scientific or systematic perspective. We didn't have an expert to give us information on how to best teach the game. The top players were put on a pedestal and somehow this was deemed enough in our profession; no one questioned whether these individuals were qualified to teach. Their “feel” of how they hit the golf ball became the instruction standard. There was no definitive set of guidelines; teaching simply evolved out of the “feel” of good players.

Golf teachers looked around for information, and because there wasn't anything definitive, they had to rely on what amounted to theories by talented players and the teaching gurus of each era.

Another factor in the development of the Old Rules methods and models is the desire to be unique and different. In teachers' attempts to differentiate themselves, our industry ended up with an array of teaching methods and models that have created confusion among golfers.

Without a clear-cut set of standards and because of the desire to differentiate, golf instruction became a confusing hodgepodge of different theories and thoughts—what I call the Old Rules. The New Rules will create for you a logical set of standards that will clarify what to do to get better and differentiate between what is fact and what is feel.

Let's picture for a second what a model/method (Old Rules) teacher sees when you come to him for a lesson. Because of his belief system, his eyes see your swing as it compares to his model. Every move that deviates from the model is called a "fault." These faults are identified, and there tends to be a lot of them. Let's think about the list of unique back swings in the history of golf: Ray Floyd, Jim Furyk, Nancy Lopez and Julie Inkster to name a few. Their backswings do not fit a model and would be identified as faults, followed by instructions to "correct" them. The ball doesn't know what your back swing looks like. That's where the Essential Golf Skills™ come in. The student is not hitting the ball well or poorly because of the look of his swing. The ball is being hit well or poorly because of the high, medium or low skill level of the golfer.

**What I am proposing creates success rates in the
80% to 95% range.**

I'm not saying the Old Rules teachers have not helped a certain number of golfers. In my estimation, they have helped 25% to 50% of the golfers who have come to them for lessons. This is not a high enough percentage to justify teaching a method/model instead of Essential Skills. What I am proposing creates success rates in the 80% to 95% range.

How many idiosyncrasies in golfers' swings have teachers changed that weren't necessary to change? Is your individuality being taken away because the teacher has a rigid model in his mind that everybody has to fall under? That's teaching style, not skill.

Your success is a given the day we start teaching the way other sports are taught. Basketball, swimming, martial arts and gymnastics are all taught by identifying the essential skills of the sport. The New Rules instructor teaches Essential Golf Skills™.

The Genesis of the New Rules

Two experiences influenced my thinking on this point. The first was a conversation with Harry Obitz. Harry was the founder of "Swings the Thing" Golf Schools. By the time I started teaching for "Swings the Thing" Golf Schools, Harry had retired. He would come to Orange Lake Country Club in Kissimmee, Florida, for the month of January. During that month, he would hold court, hit golf balls and go to the PGA Merchandise Show. I wanted to learn as much as I could about teaching golf and about playing better, so when he was in town I would spend time with Harry, bend his ear and ask him questions. One day Harry and I were at the back end of the Orange Lake practice range and Harry said to me, "**I don't want to ever hear that you're a method teacher.**" I asked what he meant. He said, "**Methods work, but they work only for a small percentage of people.** For everyone else, it doesn't do much for them or it hurts their game and they move on to another teacher. Let me show you the latest methods."

**"Methods work, but they work only
for a small percentage of people."**

This was 1989, and there were three methods that were the most popular. Harry said, **“All a method is, is a glorified pitch shot.”** So he grabbed a wedge and set up to the ball. Looking face on, he got his spine straight up and down, took a wide stance, and when he took the club back the wrist hinge was late; he kicked in his right knee on the downswing, hit the ball, folded his left elbow and, when he hit the ball, it was solid and straight. He said, “Did you see that?” I said, “Yeah. The ball was hit solid and went pretty straight.”

“Okay. Now let me show you the next method.” Harry set up with a more pronounced knee flex. There were multiple positions that characterized this theory and Harry hit them during his pitch shot. On his backswing, he had the club on-plane halfway back. On the downswing, Harry’s club was parallel to the target line when it was parallel to the ground. He hit the ball solid with a firm impact position; past impact the handle went to the left (which at the time was innovative because a lot of people were still trying to take the club down the line after impact). So Harry hit it again—solid and straight. He said, “Did you see that?” I said, “Yes.”

Then he said, “This is the third method.” He stood in a normal posture, and as he took the club back he stood the club up vertical. As he got to the top of a half swing, the club dropped, the left knee moved separately from the right knee to create a bowed leg look, the club came down into impact and the handle went left through impact. Again, he hit it solid and straight. Then he said, “See that?” I said, “Yes.”



Harry explained, **“Charlie, all a swing can do is produce a ball flight, and if it has reasonably good mechanics or fundamentals it will produce a ball flight that either fades, draws or goes straight. Show your players a repeating ball flight and coach it into them until it’s second nature. Don’t be a method teacher, be a person who understands the correct principles, teaches those principles and gets golfers to have repeating ball flights, not swings that all look alike.”** It was a profound piece of information for a 25-year-old teacher to receive early in his career.

“Show your players a repeating ball flight and coach it into them until it’s second nature.”

The second conversation that influenced me was with Dr Rick Jensen, whom I had met at a seminar he conducted for golf professionals in 1990. When I started teaching at the Golf Academy of the South in 1992, I wasn’t happy with the “Old Rules” way we were giving instruction—single lessons based on a posted sign-up sheet. Academy Director Brad Turner and I decided to create an instruction program but there was a catch. We didn’t know where to begin. My first call went to Dr. Jensen, who has a doctorate in psychology with a specialization in exercise science and sport psychology. I told him we were creating an instruction program and asked him what we should do or what books we should read. He told me the key to any sports instructional program was determining a hierarchy of skills. “Hierarchy! That’s the \$10 Ph.D. word of the day,” I said jokingly.

“All it means is that you need to decide what is the most important skill, and the next most important skill, and the next most important skill, and so on,” Rick explained. “As you go through the list of golf skills and start to create that hierarchy, you begin to see something completely different.”

These two experiences led me to look at golf differently than the Old Rules way. I went through the process Rick had suggested, and this created a template for teaching golf that I am recommending to you as the New Rules for teaching the full swing.

THE SEVEN ESSENTIAL GOLF SKILLS™ FOR THE FULL SWING I HAVE IDENTIFIED BY GOING THROUGH RICK'S HIERARCHY PROCESS ARE:

Pre-Swing

Face Control

Striking vs. Scooping

Swing Plane

Efficient Pivot

Effortless Clubhead Speed

Width

[Click on this link to get more details about the *Seven Essential Golf Skills*.](#)

A New Rules instructor evaluates three things for you in the full swing: the ability to hit the ball solidly, the ability to control the direction of the ball and the ability to efficiently generate clubhead speed. Once the skills that need the most improvement are identified, a teacher's job is to give you the drills to work on, propose practice regimens and explain how to best practice. You can then take that information and start to put it into practice, turning drills into habits. As these changes occur, your skill level will improve.

By prioritizing based on skills, New Rules instructors are making golfers better at a very high percentage rate. You may not look like someone else's so-called perfect, but the only perfect I know is what the ball feels from your golf club at the moment of impact. As a golfer you need to be looking for someone who teaches Essential Golf Skills™. Don't go to an Old Rules teacher who tries to make you **look** like a golfer; instead find a New Rules instructor who will turn you into a golfer.

[Click on this link to get more details about the *Seven Essential Golf Skills* Videos.](#)



Chapter 3

SHORT GAME

A NEW RULES INSTRUCTOR MEASURES YOUR SHORT GAME SKILLS AND CHALLENGES YOU

With Rob Akins

My first experiences with getting lessons had little to do with the short game. It was all about hitting the ball farther, straighter and more solid. Getting golfers to work on their short game has been a bit of a struggle because of the nature of the short game itself. It is somewhat boring. It is more exciting to hit the ball a mile with a driver. So golfers tend to gravitate to their full swing, and instructors tend to gravitate toward teaching the full swing. To a degree teachers are giving golf students what they want and not what they need. I was guilty of this early in my teaching career.

Why don't people practice their short game when they know how important it is?

There are lots of reasons:

1. The full swing is more exciting at first. Being able to hit a golf ball farther than Hank Aaron could hit a home run is addictive.
2. You start a hole with a tee shot, and although the stats show there are more short-game shots than tee shots, the tee shot sets the tone for the hole. You are either in great position ready to attack the hole, or you are in trouble looking to salvage the hole.
3. The golfer says, "I don't care about getting up and down when I'm laying eight. Get me to the green in two or three, and I will start to care more about my short game."

These factors have led to the Old Rules tendency: full swing instruction far and away is dominant, and short game instruction tends to be an afterthought.

As I was trying to figure out how to counteract this tendency, I found a variety of influential information. At the 1990 PGA Teaching Summit I heard about Jerry Tucker at Bellerive Country Club in St. Louis who was doing a short game skills test and turning the results into a handicap that would motivate golfers. That planted a seed. When I went to work at the Golf Academy of the South in 1992, I met another key influencer, Coach Conrad Rehling. He had coached at the University of Florida and the University of Alabama, working with such prominent players as Frank Beard, Bob Murphy and Jerry Pate. His competitive background led him to emphasize short game testing. He impressed this upon the staff at the Golf Academy. When the Director, Brad Turner, and I sat down to develop what became the Skills Development program for the Academy, we developed our own short game skills test and handicapping system. The last piece of the puzzle came in 2001 when I first heard of Bill Phillips. Bill ran EAS and *Muscle Media Magazine*. Because of an epiphany he had at a trade show as out-of-shape people thanked him for “helpful” articles and advice, he decided to create a fitness challenge that came to be known as the Body-for-Life Challenge. The first year, when he gave away his \$200,000 red Lamborghini as the grand prize, 57,000 people entered and participated in the 12-week challenge. Twelve years later the contest has had an impact on more than two million people and counting. He motivated and inspired, and that is what I am proposing as a New Rules fundamental.

In the New Rules, we measure the short game. We give a skills test and turn it into a handicap. Now both you and the instructor have an objective starting point so that we are not prioritizing based on a “model,” which we talked about in the last chapter. We are basing our priorities on a goal or a task of getting the golfer to a certain skill level. So once we have this measurement in place, how do we get you to want to take part?

He motivated and inspired, and that is what I am proposing as a New Rules fundamental.

Rob Akins and I wrote the book *Golf's Red Zone Challenge* in 2005. The word challenge is there for a reason. We want to give short game practice a tournament feel. And we let that tournament feel, that challenge, create focus. The tournament creates a goal, and there is a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. With the Red Zone Challenge, our goal is to have a national contest similar to Body-For-Life. Our hope is that the prizes, recognition and improvement will capture your imagination and lead to your working on your short game. New Rules instructors will create local and regional contests for you as well.

Let's talk about the test. The test we have developed has six categories. Those six categories are long putting, short putting, chipping, pitching, bunker and distance control with wedges. There are 10 shots hit in each of the six categories. We have done enough of these tests over the years to know there is validity in the results we get, and it gives you, the student, a way to measure your improvement. It gives teachers a way to measure the improvement too.

Once we get the raw scores, we take the arbitrary numbers and turn them into a handicap. We developed a table that tells us, for example, what three points in a bunker means relative to a handicap. Let's say it's a 30 handicap; now you know your starting point. This tends to motivate. We then set goals for you. This leads to the lesson portion, in which we show you **what** to work on and **how** to work on it.

Rather than having an exact model, we have a set of Essential Golf Skills™ for the short game we have identified. The Essential skills are similar to the full swing. For example, putter face angle at impact and speed control are my two priorities in putting.

At a certain point in the process we test again so we can see the improvement. When you start to see improvement, which is so much easier to measure in the short game, you will get even more motivated. **And through pitching practice you will become really good at the skills that lead to full-swing success as well.** This skill-development approach leads to measurable improvement and helps you get better.

To give you more detail on the Red Zone Challenge, click on the following link to [Click on this link to Chapter 1 of Golf's Red Zone Challenge.](#)

Make sure you find an instructor who will put you through a skills test, turn it into a handicap, create a plan and reward system that puts you on track to your best golf.

[Click on this link to order a copy of Golf's Red Zone Challenge.](#)

[Click on this link to learn more about Red Zone Short Game Schools.](#)



Chapter 4

MENTAL TOUGHNESS

THE NEW RULES GET TO THE “CORE” OF
MENTAL TOUGHNESS, NOT SURFACE, QUICK FIXES.

With Dr. Rick Jensen

I’m not formally educated as a sports psychologist and don’t have a Ph.D., but my experiences as a coach and teacher and the extensive study I have put into this topic have made me a “practical” sports psychologist. The advice on the mental side I got early on, and the books and articles I read tried to fix a surface issue. If I were frustrated and angry, the article said to “smile” more. A certain number of waggles and breaths would calm me down. Focusing solely on the target would somehow make the ball magically go there. When this didn’t work I came to the conclusion that I must be mentally scarred and weak.

These on-the-surface, Band-aid fixes temporarily help the golfer but don’t get to the root issues. An Old Rules sports psychologist or teacher, in these cases, is working on the effects, not the causes. Giving golfers the advice to look at the smallest possible target when their skill level doesn’t give them the ability to hit it there is not only bad advice, it is harmful advice. Telling a person to simply think positive is also trying to fix what shows up on the outside when there are internal elements that would make a fundamental difference. I tried these mental “tips” when I was trying to compete at a high level, and they didn’t work very well. I sought out and found more concrete answers. Dr. Rick Jensen is one of the influences I found, and he has agreed to partner with me on this chapter. This chapter is written to give you an overview of how we believe Mental Toughness and Essential Skills are interdependent.

Below you will find an outline of the New Rules of “Core” Mental Toughness. I will give you some key ideas that relate to overall mental and emotional skills and Rick will give his ideas that relate specifically to performing on the golf course. We will be making a DVD with the details of this program form in the near future. Go to the link at the end of the chapter to see all our updates.

THE NEW RULES OF “CORE” MENTAL TOUGHNESS

PART 1

AN OWNER’S MANUAL FOR THE GOLFER’S BRAIN

- 1. The “Why” Question**
- 2. How Do You See Yourself?**
- 3. What Are the Needs That Drive Your Behavior?**
- 4. It’s All About Emotions**
 - a. Physiology**
 - b. Focus**
 - c. Beliefs/Internal Dialogue**
- 5. Have You Chosen Your Golfing B.S.?**

PART 2

DR. RICK JENSEN’S GOLF SUCCESS FORMULA

- 1. Skill**
- 2. Minus Interference**
- 3. + or – Luck**

PART 1

THE “WHY” QUESTION

After four years of trying to become a successful professional golfer, it was time to make a decision about what to do and how to do it. I set up a session with Dr. Rick Jensen. He had a written test he gave that had ten areas of improvement, which he would then talk through with you. We talked about these and assessed what I needed to do to reach my goals as a player. As we were going through the results of the test, the area in which I had the worst score was “anxiety management.” Rick said the score indicated there was likely a source of anxiety that was not being addressed. He asked if it was money, material things or family pressure? I said it was really none of those things. Rick then asked me a key question, “**Why** do you want to play competitive golf?” As we looked at it a bit deeper, the answer was because I wanted to prove something to others. My emotions as they related to golf were based on what other people thought of as my success or failure. I asked him how successful players answer the same question as to why they play golf. He said there are two main answers: they love the game and they are good at it. At the time I thought, *Wow. I fail on both counts. I am currently not good at it and, because I’m not playing well, I don’t love playing golf anymore.*

We continued through the process, and we estimated a time frame for how long it would take to reach the goals. (I was 27 years old at the time.) Rick did not set out to talk me out of playing golf for a living, but that session led me to realize that playing was not going to be my career.

Now, let’s have you answer the question. Why do you play golf? Or Why do you want to play competitive golf? [Click on the link for Charlie’s further thoughts on the “Why” question.](#)

“Why do you want to play competitive golf?”

Tony Robbins' Influence

Earlier that same year, I was so frustrated with my game I couldn't sleep. I was up at one or two o'clock in the morning after another mediocre score in a tournament. As I was despondently flipping channels, I came across a big guy with a big head and big teeth named Tony Robbins. He had a 30-minute infomercial pushing his "Personal Power" program. For \$199 I could buy his program and understand the secrets to personal power. Though, like most people, I was skeptical, I figured this could be money well spent compared to wasting another \$300 tournament entry fee.

The program was fantastic, and I learned core principles that I use to this day. I have attended Tony's seminars over the years and find his information to be profound. I will give you some of his principles as they apply to golf. These principles don't just scratch the surface like the Old Rules of the mental game. They get to core principles and skills that are a bedrock for both golf success and success in life.

How Do You See Yourself?

When you fill in the blank "I am _____," this is how you see yourself. Whether that answer is "I am male," "I am from Tennessee" or "I am a daughter," how we see ourselves can either serve us or hurt us. Your "golf identity" can function in the same way. If part of your personal belief is "I am a bad putter" or "I am a great driver" or "I am pretty good around the greens," these are examples of statements of identity that will affect you each time you play a round of golf. Your identity works like a thermostat. If your belief is "I'm an average putter," that puts your internal thermostat at a comfortable 72 degrees. If you were to start to putt really well, that thermostat gets too hot and you start to find ways to cool it down. So even though you putted well for three or four holes, as you start to miss a few putts, you say, "I'm an average putter." This thermostat works the converse way too. If you putt worse than what you're used to on a few holes, you will "heat back up" to reach your identity belief.

Your identity works like a **thermostat**.

What are the NEEDS that Drive Your Behavior?

Tony Robbins calls the six needs identified below as “Human Needs Psychology.” I have found his theory particularly helpful in both my golf game and my life. I’d like to share with you how the six needs affect your golf game. The six human needs are:

1. **CERTAINTY**
2. **VARIETY**
3. **SIGNIFICANCE**
4. **LOVE/CONNECTION**
5. **GROWTH**
6. **CONTRIBUTION TO OTHERS**

LET ME GIVE YOU A BRIEF EXPLANATION OF HOW THESE NEEDS RELATE TO YOUR GOLF GAME.

1. Certainty in golf comes with correct practice. Every time you practice and become more skillful, you gain more confidence.
2. Variety is playing different golf courses, not doing things that lead to boredom or redundancy.
3. Significance is especially important for competitive golfers. If your feelings of significance are secure in your life, you're going to have a healthy outlook on your golf game. If your significance hinges on your scores or shots, each shot starts to matter too much. In a competition in which skill of the golfers is equal, you'll never beat the golfer whose sense of significance is secure.
4. Connection relates to the social aspects of golf: friends, competitors and the enjoyment that comes from playing with and against them.
5. Growth in golf comes from a sense of improvement. As your handicap goes down, as your skill level improves, there is a feeling of accomplishment and growth.
6. Contribution to others happens when you pass along your love of the game of golf to your kids. It also occurs when you're involved in a program that uses golf to affect people in a positive way.

Whether you realize it or not, these six needs are operating below the surface, and you are finding a way to fulfill them. By becoming aware of this, we can create a plan that sets you up to succeed.

DO YOU CONTROL YOUR EMOTIONAL STATE?

Your emotional state is the emotion you are feeling at any given moment. Some emotions are appropriate for your best golf and some are not. Out-of-control anger, frustration, depression, and resignation are emotions that hurt your performance. You know that, but have you learned what to do about it?

HOW DO YOU CONTROL YOUR EMOTIONAL STATE WHILE PLAYING GOLF?

There are three primary factors:

1. **Your physiology**
2. **What you are focused on**
3. **The language you are using internally and externally**

When we break it down to its core, everything we do in life is done for the emotion it gives us. We are fans of a team because it makes us feel like winners. If we drink alcohol, it's because of the feeling it gives us. When we buy a car—yes, it's transportation, but we don't choose the car we buy for transportation—we choose it because of its status symbol and the way it makes us feel. A lot of us could live in smaller houses, but it feels better to have that big, beautiful house. We do things because of the way it makes us feel.

Playing golf leads to positive, neutral or negative emotions. As I said earlier, if it is negative long enough, we quit.

[Click on this link to hear an excerpt from our upcoming DVD on how your emotional state affects your golf game.](#)

Have You Chosen Your Golfing B.S.?

Your belief system (B.S.) is a set of ideas that, by definition, is true to you. We're not going to determine if these beliefs are true or false. We're going to determine if they are helpful or harmful. If your results say you're not a very good putter, does it help or hurt to have a belief that you're not a very good putter? It hurts. Since you don't have the results to back up the claim that "I'm a great putter," we shouldn't create a false belief. But we can have an intermediate belief, one that says something like, "Because of how and what I'm practicing, I'm becoming a great putter." Soon you will be able to transition to the belief, "I'm a great putter."

For another example, Charlie explains Golfing B.S. in the [following clip](#).



PART 2

THE NEW RULES—SKILL AND MENTAL TOUGHNESS ARE INTERDEPENDENT

by Dr. Rick Jensen

I am not your typical sports psychologist. I believe mental toughness is dependent on the level of your **golf skills**. If you lack skill, you will be more mentally challenged on the course. One of my favorite sayings is, “**If you’re not good, you’ll soon be ‘mental.’**” Mental toughness and skill are interdependent in the game of golf. So much of my ability to help you succeed hinges on your possessing the Essential Golf Skills™ Charlie has been talking about in previous chapters.

Dr. Rick Jensen’s Golf Success Formula

Have you ever wondered why players’ golf scores can vary so much from one round to another? Some days they shoot 68, other days they shoot 76. These fluctuations in performance from day-to-day are normal, and no matter how much one tries, they will never be eliminated. Most golfers attempt to explain away these expected day-to-day fluctuations in their performance. Just sit around the 19th hole for a while and you will hear golfers attempting to explain away their scores. “I didn’t putt very well today.” Or, “I had two bad holes, otherwise I would have shot 72.”

While daily performance may be uncontrollable, you can and should attempt to control the variables that will influence your average performance over time. I refer to these variables as the three “critical success factors”:

1. **SKILL**
2. **INTERFERENCE**
3. **LUCK.**

The following formula shows how the three critical success factors will influence your performance on any given day:

ON-COURSE PERFORMANCE = Skill – Interference +/- Luck

Skill, in the sense I'm using it here, is the sum total of your physical, strategic, cognitive and technical efforts. Fortunately, your skill is something you have control over. Players should pursue golf instruction and practice with a passion. In addition, players should work with fitness professionals to develop and implement an individualized fitness program that will further enhance their skill capabilities. (More on this in Chapter 6.)

Interference means anything that detracts from your efforts while you are performing. Interference can come from external sources, such as environmental conditions. Or its source can be inside you, as in the case of fatigue, anxiety or fear. Whether the interference you face is external or internal, the best way to overcome it is by embracing the mindset of a champion and not letting the interference get the upper hand. Click on the following link to hear a couple of keys to eliminating interference.

Luck refers to the fluctuations in your performance that are simply due to chance. In the game of golf, balls land in divots in the middle of a fairway, they bounce off marker stakes and stay in bounds, and they even miraculously skip across water hazards and come to rest back on land. Nevertheless, bad luck and good luck are shared by all and tend to balance out over the long haul.

In sum, understanding the influence that skill, interference and luck have on your on-course performance is vital to maintaining a healthy mental perspective in golf. First and foremost, people who want to succeed must attain a high level of skill by making commitments of time and effort, and by building the Essential Golf Skills™ outlined by Charlie in the preceding chapters. Then, interference must be monitored and managed during competition. Individuals must take the time to identify the sources of interference that most affect their performance and embrace the mindset of a champion to deal with them. We will have detailed exercises for you in our upcoming DVD “The New Rules of Core Mental Toughness.”

New Rules instructors and sports psychologists can help you get to the “core” of mental toughness, and you will see the results in your golf game and, possibly, your life.



Chapter 5

PRACTICE

NEW RULES INSTRUCTORS TEACH THEIR STUDENTS HOW TO PRACTICE AND INTEGRATE IN A SUPERVISED PRACTICE PROGRAM LIKE ALL OTHER SPORTS

With Dr. Rick Jensen

Dr. Rick Jensen told me in a conversation one day that any teacher without a supervised practice program is either not serious about making golfers better or doesn't know any better. In other sports, practices are supervised. Can you imagine an NFL team running plays in practice without its coaching staff on hand? Do you think Michael Phelps won eight gold medals at the Beijing Olympics by swimming laps on his own every day? No. Athletes improve with prescribed programming and feedback. As you work to improve your golf game, you should expect no less. Let me turn the rest of this discussion over to Dr. Rick.

Building Skills

Practice essentials are a required, irreplaceable necessity in the development of motor skills. Obviously, the first key to performing well on the course involves the extent to which you have developed golf skills that are repeatable, predictable and reliable under pressure. Your on-course performance is directly related to your skill level.

A well-trained, repeatable golf swing is formed by way of practice. In order for your golf swing to become a habit, you must understand and embrace four New Rules Practice Essentials:

1. FOCUS ON WHAT'S ESSENTIAL.

- a. Identify one set of essential skills (preferably with a New Rules instructor) and commit to it for the long term; strive to master this over the long term as opposed to switching from teacher to teacher, from one set of ideas to another, and from one set of clubs to another in search of a short-cut to successful golf.
- b. Recognize that this is the first of the two types of practice: Technique and Competition. This is technique practice, with which you build the skills through repetitions.

2. PUT IN THE WORK (in as little as 10 minutes a day).

- a. Be willing to hit the number of balls (or practice related motor movements) needed to engrain a new motor skill. Focused, deliberate practice is essential for building new skills in golf. As we've done throughout this book, we've created three levels of time commitment to meet your current job and family situation.
- b. Make mastery your goal.
- c. Strive to control the flight of the golf ball while developing the mechanics of your swing. Having a good-looking swing that doesn't control the ball is useless.

3. SEEK REGULAR FEEDBACK.

- a. Pursue information and feedback that confirms that the intended movement of the body and/or the intended ball flight did in fact happen.
- b. See that feedback is on-going throughout a practice period, whether delivered by an instructor, a training aid, a video camera or the flight of the ball.

4. TRANSFER YOUR SKILLS TO THE GOLF COURSE (This is the FUN part).

- a. Engaging Targets
- b. Competitive Practice
- c. Games

Old Rules: You're on Your Own

Reflect for a moment on your last golf lesson. What did you do? What did your pro do? What was the purpose of the lesson? More than likely you and your pro were trying to improve a particular aspect of your golf swing. Whether it was to cure a slice, to eliminate a hook, or to stop from coming over the top, players consult their golf pros in an attempt to eliminate unwanted errors in their swing.

Today's golf instructors come armed with video equipment, assessment aids, computer programs and biomechanical models to confirm their swing flaw diagnoses. With so much attention given to assessing, identifying and exposing the flaws in a student's swing, could it be that the primary reason for players' lack of improvement gets lost in the hoop-la?

Let's face it, in today's hectic times with too much to do and not enough time to do it, who has the time to adequately work at their golf game? People are busy— busy raising kids, succeeding at work, paying bills, running errands—all while trying to maintain relationships with spouses, friends and family. Fitting in a round or two of golf per week is a challenge in and of itself. Never mind trying to find a few hours a week to hit balls and develop your skills. Not having enough time (or possibly, not making time) to practice one's golf skills is probably the most likely and most valid excuse for lack of improvement in the game. Unfortunately, getting better in the game of golf requires a certain amount of practice. Finding and making time for practice, however, is a real dilemma for most golfers. We have a link at the end of the chapter that offers some suggestions for the time-strapped golfer.

New Rules: Supervised Practice

So, how might the realization of the importance of practice affect the future of golf training? By being more specific and creating a situation in which you can follow up your lesson with one supervised practice session a week. Supervised practice involves a player's attempt to master a technique during a group coaching session, hitting numerous balls with the new technique while under supervision. It is the ideal and expected follow-up to a New Rules golf lesson.

You should take one golf lesson followed by a series of supervised practice sessions. Such an improvement process would give you time to work on your new technique while under the supervision of your New Rules instructor or an assistant teacher who acts as the coach. The concept of supervised practice systematically incorporates practice time and professional feedback into your lesson program. Be willing to break the existing paradigm of getting a lesson every time you see your pro. The supervised practice session will typically be a group session of up to six people.

In the 21st century, teachers and students who get results will not only recognize the importance of practice, but will include supervised practice as an integral part of their golf training program. Shift your golf lessons into the next generation. Speak with your New Rules instructor about booking your supervised practice sessions as a follow-up to your next lesson. They may be the best "lessons" you ever had.

Link to our practice webpage where we will explain:

1. [A sample supervised practice program](#)
2. [Engaging targets, games](#)
3. [Three levels of time commitment](#)

Chapter 6

FITNESS

NEW RULES INSTRUCTORS EVALUATE FITNESS AND PHYSICAL LIMITATIONS

With Mike Malaska

The Old Rules instructor pays virtually no attention to a golfer's physical limitations or fitness level. Characteristics of the student, such as rotation in certain joints, flexibility and strength, affect what an instructor can and can't suggest to a golfer without injuring him. I have studied with various fitness experts over the years to figure out how to integrate this into my teaching.

I've enlisted the help of Mike Malaska, asking him to share his story, because he has studied fitness as it relates to golf as much as any teacher I know. Because he has studied with the viewpoint of his own game and students' games in mind, he is uniquely qualified to give you balanced information, either for the person looking to maximize his fitness with cutting-edge programs or for the person who has limited time and is willing to follow a shorter, yet effective, program. Mike is a top teacher (*Golf Digest Top 50*, *GOLF Magazine Top 100*) and, as I said, he has studied fitness more than any golf instructor I know. Let me turn this chapter over to him.

Trying to get better had injured me.

I was a very good player as a kid. Golf came easy to me. I had success in junior tournaments, and that experience gave me the desire to take my game to the next level. I got to a certain point and then realized, to get better, I needed formal lessons. My instructors noticed one particular flaw in my swing and told me how to fix it. Working on the fix by hitting thousands of golf balls led to severe stress in my neck and lower back. I couldn't believe it. Trying to get better had injured me.

As I searched for a way to eliminate my pain, I found Pete Egoscue, a functional fitness specialist. He evaluated me and was able to tell me what my problems were without ever seeing my swing. He opened my eyes to the cause of my physical problems and created a workout program for me. As I diligently carried out his workout program, I found my swing improving. Not only did my physical fitness progress get better, so did my golf game. I improved more (with no pain) than I had by hitting thousands of golf balls.

This created an awareness of how physical evaluation is an integral part of the game. And that got me upset—upset with the (Old Rules) golf instructors who hadn't factored this into my lessons. But, to be fair, they were probably never taught the importance of physical evaluation and, unfortunately, we all teach only what we know or have experienced. There is a direct correlation between a golfer's physical limitations and his ability to swing the golf club. That is why New Rules instructors will evaluate for physical limitations in the first lesson and work with you based on your time and commitment level for a suggested physical program.

After my success with my workout program, I became very gung ho about the importance of fitness for golfers. I started rigidly adding fitness to all of my golf lessons. I soon found I was teaching fewer lessons! People quit coming back. In my over-zealousness, what I didn't realize was that as a golf instructor, people were coming to me solely to improve their golf. They weren't coming to me to be world-class when it came to fitness. I had to adjust my approach to find a balance between knowing what's best for people and respecting their time. I wasn't taking into account how busy people are, and at that point I wasn't finding a way to work fitness into their daily routine.

New Rules instructors will evaluate for physical limitations in the first lesson and work with you based on your time and commitment level for a suggested physical program.

I am now suggesting that there are three levels of commitment when it comes to golf fitness. One of these will work into just about everyone's schedule.

- 1. AWARENESS** (Basic: 10 to 15 minutes a day)
This is simply creating an awareness of what movements you need to be able to make for a golf swing. We want to make sure you can bend and twist in the ways you'll need to swing a golf club.
- 2. MAINTENANCE** (Intermediate: 30 minutes to an hour a day)
These are exercises you might do as a warm-up to a round of golf or on the practice range. We want you to minimize injury, create balance and build the strength it takes to support rotation during a golf swing.
- 3. CONDITIONING** (Advanced: 1 to 2 hours of training a day)
This level is for golfers willing to spend time on an exercise program. Let me emphasize that this program should not be golf-specific. Your workout should not be about playing golf; it should be about movement. For example, do exercises on both sides of your body. If you swing right-handed, strengthen both the right and left sides of your body. This will prevent you from creating an imbalance and help protect your body from injury.

No matter what level you fall under, we know this to be true:

The better your body moves in general, the better it will be able to swing a golf club.

Since the Tiger Woods era began, I have been seeing a trend I think is also a mistake, similar to the mistake I talked about making, in which instructors prescribe Tour professionals' fitness routines for everybody. You don't need to know everything that is supposedly wrong with you physically. This can be discouraging and defeats the purpose. Charlie discussed in an earlier chapter that New Rules instructors prioritize in the full swing; the same is true for prioritizing your physical level.

As New Rules instructors, we need to understand and appreciate your individual movement range, your time constraints, your physical abilities and your skill set and use these criteria to develop your golf game. In regard to fitness, that means creating awareness about physical abilities and limitations, giving fitness guidelines and creating an individual fitness roadmap based on which of the three levels mentioned above best fits you.

In conclusion, you should be given a basic physical evaluation as part of your opening evaluation with a New Rules instructor. These tests will give the instructor an idea of where you are currently and what things you can and possibly cannot do when it comes to such skills as getting the club on plane and impact. Then there will be a goal-setting session to find out how dedicated you are to getting better at golf and how much time you have to spend on fitness. We are going to build that into the program. If you say you have ten minutes a day to dedicate to golf, we'll create a 10-minute program that will allow you to improve. If you do the right things in those ten minutes, you can certainly get better. If you have ten minutes to a half hour that you can dedicate, that's the basic level. If you can dedicate a half hour to an hour-and-a-half, we have our intermediate recommendations. Then we have our full-blown program for those who can dedicate an hour and a half or more, which we recommend for the Tour hopeful, college player, serious amateur and high school junior player. We want to find the level that can help you be the best you can be. A New Rules instructor tests for your fitness level, has a variety of fitness programs and then helps you to implement your individualized program. We will have a DVD with more specific programs for you in the near future.

[Click on this link for the *New Rules Fitness* webpage](#)

A New Rules instructor tests for your fitness level, has a variety of fitness programs and then helps you to implement your individualized program.

Chapter 7

VIDEO

NEW RULES INSTRUCTORS USE VIDEO TO PRIORITIZE AND GIVE USEFUL FEEDBACK

Old Rules teaching has done one of two things when it comes to video analysis. Some teachers tell you video analysis is detrimental, so they don't use it. Others use video analysis and tell you everything they see that doesn't fit their model. The teachers who don't believe in using video will point to the numerous cases of "paralysis by analysis" caused by the misuse of video. They point to the awareness and extra thoughts the player has. Used incorrectly, high-tech tools and video **are** negative. Being aware of too many things doesn't mesh with how the human mind works and with how sports, athletics and activities are played.

When used correctly, however, because of the variety of moving parts and the lack of ability to see yourself while swinging, video bridges a gap for many golfers. For most golfers, video is a positive. There are occasions when an instructor needs to use his judgment and decide if video is necessary. A teacher making a case not to use video at all is dismissing a valuable tool that can help you get better.

The New Rules instructor uses video because you can't see yourself swing. The golf swing is a complex action, and video bridges the gap between fact and feel. Because of this feedback, you are able to trust the improvement even though it feels incorrect or wrong. Also, when used correctly, video can be used to pinpoint the skill that needs the most work.

The golf swing is a complex action, and video bridges the gap between fact and feel.

Let me tell you a story about a friend of mine who is a head golf professional at a fine private club. He went to take a lesson with a prominent teacher. They videotaped his swing, and this teacher identified 13 faults—13 things that were supposedly wrong with the player's swing! This was discouraging and unnecessary. The teacher then informed the golf pro that in that particular lesson, they would be able to get to only one of those faults. This golf professional is a good player who shoots between 70 and 75. A teacher's pointing out 13 supposed faults is just plain wrong. That is what I call an ego lesson. Teachers like this are not attempting to help the student. They are attempting to show how smart they are. Let's not accept Old Rules teaching anymore.

That lesson should have been different. A New Rules instructor would have looked at the video and identified for that golfer the priority—the single most important thing that is keeping him from playing his best golf. The teacher should say, "Let's work on this, and I'll show you the drill to practice to build the Essential Skill™ into your game. Let's do it for an extended period of time so it builds a skill and a habit. You'll soon be making fewer mistakes and miss-hit shots. Later we'll revisit the video to determine whether there is something else we need to do." That is prioritizing a lesson.



Old Rules model/style teachers are going to point out multiple faults. They're going to see what is different from their model, and they are going to look at you and tell you the things that would make you look like their model. Picture what is going on in these instructors' minds. They have learned the way our industry has done it for decades. Most of these teachers are very conscientious and are doing the best they can with what they know. The New Rules now give them an opportunity to rethink their belief system so they can have the maximum impact on their students. A New Rules teacher looks at the video and sees a skill level. He rates your seven (or whatever number he has identified) essential skills on a scale of 1 to 10. He then prioritizes based on first getting you to hit the ball solidly and, second, to have control of the direction of the ball.

The Old Rules say don't use video because an instructor thinks it's detrimental or, using it, picks too many faults to show how smart the instructor is. The New Rules say use video appropriately: use it as a feedback tool, and use it to prioritize in lessons.

[Click on this link to: *Correct Video Analysis* demonstrated and explained on our website](#)

Chapter 8

EQUIPMENT

NEW RULES INSTRUCTORS CUSTOM FIT THEIR STUDENTS FOR EQUIPMENT

with Charles McLendon

When I was trying to become a Tour player the summer before I graduated from college, I was working in golf course maintenance in Chattanooga. There I met a member who was using Ping Eyes irons, and he told me I needed to find a set of these irons. I went to a golf and music store in Georgia—yes, pianos and guitars on one side and golf on the other—what a combo! In a consignment barrel, I found a set of Ping Eyes with black dots, which meant they had a standard lie angle. I had no idea what I needed, but I assumed these were right for me. I bought them and played with them for the next year. I headed to Florida after graduation, and I was still hitting my irons well. But I was hitting a big hook with my driver, and I mean big. That’s when one of the mini-tour players asked me if I realized my club was so “toe down,” that the heel of my club was off the ground at address. He then scratched off the black dots on my irons, and we found gold dots underneath. The gold dots meant the clubs were actually ladies 5-degree flat clubs. I’m 6’2” so logic would say those clubs were between four and seven degrees too flat for me. I was compensating to make my irons go straight; in turn when I performed this same swing with my driver, I hooked the ball. Obviously, I could have used an instructor who looked at the fit of my clubs. Buying off the rack is a chancy proposition.

A New Rules instructor includes club-fitting in his evaluation program.

Would you buy a pair of shoes that don't fit? The obvious answer is of course you wouldn't. The same thing is true with golf equipment. There are golfers who are seven feet tall. There are golfers who are three and a half feet tall. It is impossible that these golfers would need the same length of shaft, the same grip size and the same lie angle. How do we fix this? In our New Rules program club-fitting is important. A New Rules instructor includes club-fitting in his evaluation program. His tools include a lie board, lie tape and an evaluation sheet for checking, at a minimum, lie angle, shaft length, shaft flex and grip size. Many teachers are doing this already. If you are not getting this basic equipment check from your instructor, you certainly need to ask for it.

[Click on this link for more details on basic club fit, launch monitors, and wedge-fitting](#)



Chapter 9

INSTRUCTIONAL APPROACH

NEW RULES INSTRUCTORS CREATE IMPROVEMENT WITH WELL-DESIGNED PROGRAMS

With Henry Brunton

We just didn't know any better. A lesson with an Old Rules Instructor went something like this: you showed up for a lesson, he told you what was wrong, showed you how to **fix it**, and you tried to fix it. When students felt like coming again, they signed up for another lesson and the instructor tried to fix them again. This is a Band-Aid, quick fix mentality that doesn't lead to the development of habits or the development of skill. Because single lessons are the accepted norm, teachers set up their lesson menus for one-hour lessons and half-hour lessons, but we should strive to sign you up for a series of lessons. There is no way to "fix" you in an hour.

New Rules instruction develops programs that are built to help you succeed. These programs factor in measurement that motivates improvement in the elements of the previous chapters such as short game and physical evaluation. When done correctly, the exercises are fun and satisfying. These programs, which include a series of lessons and supervised practices, are certainly a staple of New Rules golf instruction.

Henry Brunton, who is the National Golf Coach for Canada, has developed a program called Strive for Excellence. I am going to let Henry tell you about the elements of the Strive for Excellence program as an example of the kind of program you should be looking for. Here's Henry.

In 2002, the junior golfers whom I was teaching taught me a few things about the “New Rules” of golf instruction. To my surprise, they didn’t want traditional golf instruction anymore. They wanted something different and something more. At the time, I was giving traditional golf lessons (one-hour private lessons) like virtually every other PGA Professional. At the end of the golf season, I asked these young golfers for feedback on my performance. I was thankful they were pleased with me; more important, however, when I asked them for ideas and guidance on how they could be better served in the future, they had excellent suggestions. I’m glad I asked them what they wanted and even more glad I listened and followed through on designing and executing a program to meet their needs and wants. Since then I have transformed from being an Old Rules golf instructor—giving traditional golf lessons—to being a New Rules instructor, a golf **coach**.

I created a program called “Strive for Excellence,” a nine-month, structured player-development program for aspiring competitive junior golfers. This New Rules program is extremely successful. It works! The participants and their parents are “raving fans.” As well, it has been successfully modeled by other PGA Professionals. Now I have more fun teaching, and I influence people much more powerfully than I did in the past.

So what is this New Rules program called “Strive for Excellence”? It’s a professional coaching and training program that is adapted to meet golfers’ specific needs. It is based on honest and open two-way communication and feedback. It is structured coaching, supervised practice and training with a focus on core fundamentals: swing technique, fitness, nutrition, short game proficiency, course management and mental skills.

“Strive For Excellence” golfers receive regularly scheduled coaching and supervised practice training sessions. The training is designed to facilitate their improved performance as golfers. Instructors assess the true skill levels of the golfer and then devise a written “Performance Plan” that clearly outlines goals and planned actions for golf improvement.

Look for programs that are well thought out and have the elements we have listed in this chapter and in this book. A program will hold you accountable, motivate you and make at least some or most of the learning fun.

[Click on this link to get some more details about New Rules-style programs.](#)



Chapter 10

COMMUNICATION SKILLS

NEW RULES INSTRUCTORS ARE EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATORS

When I started teaching golf, I had very little idea what a good communicator was. In my early teaching career, I was given an assignment to give a chipping clinic. I was very nervous. It's hard to judge how I did—good, bad or indifferent—because I didn't know the elements of good communication.

Within a year, I decided to educate myself. I bought the book *You Are the Message*, by Roger Ailes. In this book the author asserts, "You've got to be yourself at your best. People who try to be too polished come off as phony and not authentic. Show your passion for the topic and be natural and you will be on your way to being a good communicator." He also encouraged video taping yourself to look for fillers and distracters. Do you say "ah" or "um" too many times? Do you have hand gestures or body language that distract people from your message? Within a month of reading and following the recommendations in this book, I received a huge compliment. Some businessmen out of Los Angeles were at one of my clinics in Palm Springs. I didn't realize they were using my opening clinic as a test. They were either going to stay at the golf school or leave based on my clinic. They stayed for the entire day. That night at dinner one of the members of the group told me, "You were great today. We came here not really committed to staying for your school. We have condos here and were going to go play golf if your opening talk didn't grab our attention. We obviously stayed. I wish I had your opening talk on tape so I could sell it. It was awesome." I had learned to be myself at my best. No distracters. This gave me confidence that I was on the right track when it came to communication.

I became an instructor at the Golf Academy of the South and volunteered to teach the class called Verbal Communication. As my textbook I used a book by Bert Decker titled *You've Got to Be Believed to Be Heard*. It taught that great communicators get through to the listeners' emotions in the first few seconds of a conversation, sales pitch or speech. This is why looks matter, the tone of your voice matters and the emotions of what you say matter. I had the students give impromptu talks on familiar subjects in front of the class to get over their fear of speaking.

The next step for me was to take an acting class. I had no desire to be an actor, but I thought this would help me get to another level as a communicator so I could reach my goals as a golf instructor. Speaking lines is second nature for actors, and they become their character to reach the emotions of the audience.

This was way out of my comfort zone, but I learned so much, including camera work. In each class we worked on a monologue. Our teacher had us work on focus on several occasions. The teacher first told us to talk to a spot on the wall. After I finished in what felt completely awkward to me, my fellow students commented on my improvement. I was a better communicator because I wasn't distracted. I was truly in character. Our teacher also taught us how to focus when in front of a camera. He had us imagine we were talking to a friend, golf student, or whomever was appropriate, to get our point across.

This prepared me to meet one of my goals—to appear on The Golf Channel. During my appearance in 2000, I was able to focus on the camera as if it were the appropriate person (the student who needed my help). I wouldn't have thought of that on my own. When it comes to communication, I still strive to get better. I watch myself on tape to see what I need to do to get better, and I constantly strive to improve.

GOLFERS:

- 1. Look for an instructor who uses regular words whenever possible. Don't be impressed by the person who "talks above your head." This is not a sign of intelligence, but simply poor communication. If unusual terminology is introduced, it needs to be immediately defined for you.**
If you cannot understand your instructor, ask for clarification.
- 2. Arrogance is not a sign of a good teacher. Look for someone who is confident, not arrogant.**

Chapter 11

CONCLUSION

THE NEW RULES VISION FOR THE PRESENT AND THE FUTURE

As you can tell from my stories and the stories of my guest experts, we have made plenty of mistakes in our journey to teach golf better. This book takes the mistakes we learned from, our research when we didn't like what we saw, and our solutions to problems, thus creating a roadmap for the future. This book is written to give you clear direction so you can hold teachers to a higher standard. I wrote this book to hold myself to a higher standard as well. I believe most of my colleagues are like me in that if presented with a better pattern for teaching, they will adopt it. Until now, we have had very scattered information.

I think the ideas in this book can change the mindset in teaching. Golfers, I have put the power in your hands. If you will distribute this e-book to all your golfing partners by forwarding it in an e-mail and hold teachers accountable to this standard, everybody wins. You win because golf instruction just became less confusing and you have a pattern to follow that will work. Teachers win because we need to be held to a higher standard. The game of golf wins because we will now have a better chance to grow this game through improved golfers. The one skill of solid contact, when focused on first, would get more golfers to do the part of golf that is a positive addiction: the feeling of solid contact and watching the ball fly so far.

Golfers, I have put the **POWER** in your hands.

I have been told by some people that what I am trying to do will not work. I am told that golfers want only quick fixes and will not spend the time and effort to get better. I don't believe this. I believe when presented with a better way, you will adopt the New Rules philosophy and start playing the best golf of your life. The problem is that there has not been a clear path for golfers to take. When this happens we do the best we can with the information in front of us. I am saying you will take the New Rules and, with the clear path it sets out, put in the steady work it takes to build a habit. I am betting you will prove me right.



HERE ARE THE ACTION STEPS FOR BECOMING A NEW RULES GOLFER:

1. Read the New Rules.
2. Spread the book virally by forwarding the link to as many golfers and friends as you can.
3. Click on this [link](#) and print out the document titled *New Rules Instructor Checklist*.
4. Seek out a New Rules Instructor and hold him or her accountable to the standards in the checklist.
5. Start an improvement program like the ones we have outlined, and watch your game improve.
6. Above all other skills, learn to hit the ball solid. Focus on this like a laser beam. Tell your instructor how important this is to you. This is the ultimate antidote if you are extremely frustrated with golf.
7. Come back to the website frequently and be part of our community of golfers and teachers who follow the New Rules.

Thank you for taking the time to read the ideas in this e-book and consider whether they will be beneficial to you. The Internet has created the most democratic forum there is for spreading ideas that make a difference and letting ideas die that don't. I will know very soon which one it is for the *New Rules of Golf Instruction*. As I said earlier, the power is in your hands, and in golf that is where it should be. Adopt the New Rules.

Join us by visiting www.NewRulesGolf.com or www.ReynoldsGolfAcademy.com.

I look forward to hearing your feedback and knowing about your successes.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Charlie King

Highly acclaimed teaching professional and innovative author Charlie King serves as director of instruction for Reynolds Plantation and oversees the Reynolds Golf Academy for the award-winning destination community on Lake Oconee, Georgia.

King, ranked among the top golf instructors in the country by *GOLF Magazine*, provides a wealth of knowledge and insight to Linger Longer Communities, home to a collection of six golf courses. Founder and CEO of UnCommon Golf, King has authored two books: “*You’re NOT Lifting Your Head*,” a golf novel, and the more recently released “*Red Zone Challenge*,” an engaging instructional guide that focuses on golf shots from 100 yards or less.

OTHER BOOKS BY CHARLIE

Golf’s Red Zone Challenge [The Short Game Book That Challenges You To Get Better](#)

You’re Not Lifting Your Head [The ‘Story’ Of How To Get Better At Golf. Golf’s Most Important Lesson.](#)

Contact Charlie to be your next keynote speaker. He has several topics including:

“The New Rules Of Golf And Business” and “The New Rules Of Core Mental Toughness”.



EXPERT CONTRIBUTORS



Rob Akins of Germantown, Tenn., has been channeling his passion for golf into teaching since he was age 16. His pupils include childhood friend and 2001 PGA Champion David Toms, and eight-time PGA Tour winner Loren Roberts, who is also a three-time major champion on the Champions Tour. Akins, who is a member of both *Golf Magazine's* Top 100 and *Golf Digest's* Top 50 Teachers, also counts basketball legend Jerry West among his students. Akins is Director of Instruction at Spring Creek Ranch in Collierville, Tenn. www.robakinsgolf.com

Henry Brunton is one of the most recognizable names in Canadian golf and is one of the world's leading golf coaches and educators. He is the Royal Canadian Golf Association's National Golf Coach, the creator of the Canadian PGA's Teaching and Coaching Certification program, a CPGA Master Professional and U.S. Kids Golf Top 50 Kids Teacher. A resident of Stouffville, Ontario, Brunton has been a member of the Canadian PGA since 1984. In 2008, the Canadian PGA honored him with its highest standing – Master Professional. He was also named as the fourth Most Influential Person in Canadian Golf in rankings by *Canada's National Post*.

In 2009, Brunton's first book *The New Competitive Golfer* will be published in the United States and Canada. <http://www.henrybrunton.com/>



Rick Jensen, Ph.D., is the founder of Dr. Rick Jensen's Performance Center and a nationally recognized performance consultant and sport psychologist. Dr. Jensen is the author of *Drive to the Top: 5 Timeless Business Lessons Learned from Golf's Greatest Champions*. In golf, his clients include more than 50 touring pros on the PGA, LPGA and Champions Tours. Dr. Jensen's clients have won a total of more than \$65 million in career earnings and 199 tour victories. Fourteen of his clients have won at least one major championship and have combined to win a total of 33 majors.

Dr. Jensen has served as a performance consultant to the PGA of America, the Women's Tennis Association, the Canadian PGA and the United States Olympic Training Center. In the world of business, he consults with winners such as Merrill Lynch, Morgan Stanley, Smith Barney, UBS, Wells Fargo, Old Mutual, Grubb and Ellis, Colliers International, ADP, Hewlett Packard, AIG, American Express and NIKE Corporation.

Dr. Jensen served as a staff psychologist at the University of Florida where he received his Doctorate in Psychology with a specialization in Sport Psychology and Exercise Science. He has been featured on ABC, ESPN, CNN, and the Golf Channel, and is also a contributing writer for the *Majors of Golf Magazine*, *Golf Digest* and *GOLF Magazine*.

<http://www.drrickjensen.com/>



Mike Malaska's knowledge of the golf swing, as well as his philosophy and expertise at incorporating physical fitness and nutrition into his instruction programs, has made him one of the most sought after instructors in the game today.

He is currently listed among the Top 30 Greatest Teachers in America by *Golf Digest* and has been among *GOLF Magazine's* Top 100 Teachers since 1996. As Director of Instruction for the Jack Nicklaus Golf Center in Japan from 1992-1995, Malaska was nominated for Japan's "1993 Teacher of the Year". In 2000, *Golf World Business Magazine* also named Malaska in a national poll of "Who's Who of the Future in Golf Instruction."

Malaska has been a guest lecturer for corporate functions throughout the U.S. as well as for the PGA's National Teaching and Coaching Summit and at PGA Section events around the country. He has appeared a number of times on The Golf Channel as a guest instructor and is featured with Jim Flick on the Golf Channel Academy home video *Vision, Feel, Rhythm*. In 2004, Mike completed a year-long production effort and produced his own DVD, *You Are Your Own Swing*, featuring 2½ hours of golf and fitness instruction.

www.malaskagolf.com



Charles McLendon is Manager & Master Fitting Professional at the TaylorMade Performance Lab at Reynolds Plantation. McLendon has worked as a certified professional club fitter and consultant to several golf equipment companies. He started the "Golf Club Fitting Center" concept business at Reynolds Plantation. As a result of the success of his students and business, McLendon has been nominated by his peers for the Golf Clubmakers Association's Clubfitter of the Year award three times. He presents a wealth of club related knowledge with useable and understandable ease. He has worked with numerous tour players along with celebrities and the general public. McLendon has been featured on the Fox News Network as well as the Golf Channel. He attended the Golf Academy of the South and finished his Master Clubmaker Accreditation through the Golf Clubmakers Association in 2002.

www.tmplabs.com/reynolds

THE
NEW
RULES

Golf School.

GOLF INSTRUCTION WITHOUT THE NEGATIVE SIDE EFFECTS

We cordially invite you to come to [Reynolds Plantation](#) to attend a New Rules Golf School. We have two 3-day Schools you can choose from.

THE ESSENTIALS OF GOLF™ 3-DAY SCHOOL. This is a comprehensive look at your golf swing, short game, fitness level, equipment and mental approach to the game. We have a low 4 to 1 student to teacher ratio and the majority of our Essentials schools are taught by New Rules author Charlie King. Where most other schools attempt to make you LOOK like a golfer, we teach you the SKILLS of a golfer. [For more details click here](#) or call toll free 866-443-6742.

“I really liked the approach taken by Charlie King to teach the game of golf. He takes away the pressure of having to fit into a “model swing” and helps you improve and develop the skills needed in a good golf swing.

It was the best golf experience I have ever had!!”

THE RED ZONE SHORT GAME SCHOOL. We follow the principles laid out by King and Akins’ book *“Golf’s Red Zone Challenge”*. We give an opening skills test which allows us to customize our program based on your strengths and weaknesses. Coming to a school automatically enters you in our 2009 Red Zone Challenge where the prizes total over \$10,000. A short game school that trains, motivates and inspires. [For more details click here](#) or call toll free 866-443-6742.

“Excellent instruction in all portions of the curriculum. My overall evaluation of the Academy: SUPERIOR!!”

“98% Satisfaction rating in 2008, one of the highest in the Golf School Industry.”

NEW RULES CORPORATE OUTINGS AT REYNOLDS PLANTATION. The same New Rules principles you just read about are the cornerstone of the instruction part of the program. Our partnership with TaylorMade allows us to make you feel like a Tour Player for a day (or two). Getting better at golf and building relationships plus our unique set of business building options make a corporate experience with us lead to bottom-line results. Call 706.818.3910 or [click here for more details](#) or call toll free 866-443-6742.



APPENDIX

THE NEW RULES BILL OF RIGHTS

1. My New Rules instructor will teach me Essential Golf Skills™.
2. My New Rules instructor will measure my Short Game and create challenges for improvement.
3. My New Rules instructor will teach me Core Mental Toughness.
4. My New Rules instructor will integrate supervised practice into my instruction.
5. My New Rules instructor will evaluate my physical fitness and create a program tailored to me and my time commitment.
6. My New Rules instructor will use video as a tool for simple feedback prioritization.
7. My New Rules instructor will evaluate my clubs and recommend the right custom fit.
8. My New Rules instructor will create a program for improvement that includes a series of lessons.
9. My New Rules instructor will be an effective communicator.