

# How To Have A *Bogey Free Round*

By Andy Brown



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## Introduction

Whether your problem be bogies or double bogies — or both — the situation can be relieved by a common-sense review of your golfing habits. The purpose of this report is to help you make such an analysis.

There are certain times during a round of golf when players are especially susceptible to bad holes. These include (1) early in the round, (2) after a break between nines, (3) near the end of a round and (4) after a string of good holes or (5) after an especially bad hole or bad break.

### EARLY IN THE ROUND

In golf more than in any other sport, players are likely to start without proper warm-up. This often results in several bogies before the player has a proper feel of his game.

Mr. Bob Harris, a long standing friend is a wonderful example of how to properly prepare for a round of golf.

It has always been his custom to arrive at the club at least an hour before his game for a leisurely warm-up of about 30 to 45 minutes. As a result he spoils fewer rounds with an early string of bogies than any other amateur golfer I can name. Of course, today's fine professionals are sticklers for a proper warm-up.

I feel that the order in which a warm-up is carried out is important. Chipping and putting have a tendency to constrict the muscles of the back, shoulders, neck and arms and, therefore, should be practiced before one hits his or her short, medium, and long irons and woods in that order. Drives should be the last shots practiced before going to the first tee.

### THE NINE HOLE BREAK

Frequently a break between nines will produce a string of bogies soon thereafter.

I can remember in my youth, often shooting a fine front nine, hastily gulping down two ice cold soft drinks and then wondering why I could not sustain a string of pars and birdies beyond the ninth hole.

It is vital to keep the muscles warm and supple for the entire round. Once muscles cool and stiffen during a pause for lunch or a visit to the 19th hole between nines, they are more difficult to re-warm than before the round initially began.

So avoid those bogies early on the second nine by leisurely completing your round without a between-nine interruption.

## **LATE IN THE ROUND**

Often late-round bogies stem from a player being tired, both mentally and physically. Golfers should anticipate this condition and get proper rest the night before and eat a good breakfast or lunch prior to the game.

I also think that golfers should carry a plastic vial of honey in their bags, and take a few sips from it on the last nine.

Honey can work miracles in warding off fatigue and the jangled nerves that go with being tired.

Of course, one of the finest ways to avoid bogies at any time is to keep in top physical condition.

I feel that this is the principal reason why Tiger Woods can come back so quickly from occasional slumps. Keeping in good shape seems to be a way of life for Tiger. Thus he suffers no nerve irritation due to training as incurred by some golfing athletes.

## **AFTER GOOD HOLES**

It has been said militarily that a strong offense is a powerful defense. I feel this maxim applies most assuredly in golf.

I have often seen a fine player amass a string of pars and birdies and then blow his chances for a record score by starting to play safe.

Developing a negative attitude is the surest way to produce bad holes. The very best way to protect a lead or a good partial score is to play each hole as a separate entity and to attack it as if you were behind and trying to make up ground.

In short, think about making some birdies — or pars if you are a higher handicap player — and the bogies will most likely disappear.

## **AFTER A BAD HOLE**

Too often an extremely bad hole or a bad break will produce a string of bogies.

Ideally, after a bad hole the player should forget his past mistakes. This is good advice, but often difficult to carry out unless the player can focus his attention on something other than the past errors.

To erase unpleasant memories the player should immediately adopt a positive attitude by planning his strategy on the next hole.

His first action upon reaching the next tee should be to note the pin position on the green.

Then he should decide where his tee shot should finish to provide the best opening to the green.

Such positive thinking should continue on the second shot. The player should decide where on the green his ball should finish to leave him an easy putt.

Such planning should be a habit on all holes, but it is especially important after a bad one when the golfer needs a crutch to banish negative thoughts.

I once read that before playing each stroke during a round of golf one should plan it and determine how to execute it. This is good advice as sometimes my execution becomes questionable. However, by planning the shot so that if I should miss the green I would still be in position to easily recover is a great way to avoid bogies and even pick up some birdies.

When it comes to avoiding bogies through careful planning, Ben Hogan gets my nod as the king of them all. Of course he had the shots to back up his planning; but if anything contributed to Hogan's success — it was his highly developed ability to pre-plan each round, every hole and all shots.

## **ANALYZING YOUR GAME**

It may be that a golfer's bogies do not follow a pattern of occurring at specific periods during a round. If this is the case, if bad holes creep in without apparent rhyme or reason, the player should take counsel with himself — and preferably some good instruction like <http://www.golfswingsecretsrevealed.com> — to discover the cause of the inconsistencies.

When such a search is made, it may be discovered that the bogies occur when the player misses more greens than normal.

In such cases it may be that the golfer's tee shots are so wild that he leaves himself little or no chance to reach the green in regulation figures.

If this is the case, obviously some driving instruction would be warranted.

If bad driving is not the culprit, the player should determine to what extent his approach shots miss the greens. If they are far off-line, it would seem that practice and instruction on the irons would be required. If the player's approach shots just barely miss the greens, and he still takes three or more shots to hole out, it would seem time to work on the chipping and pitching or short putting.

Now let's take the case of the player who hits a goodly number of the greens but still has more bogies than is reasonable. This player needs to acquire some additional skill in the art of approach putting because it is evident that he is taking too many three-putt greens.

For the player who is weak on sand shots a ball in a trap will most likely result in a bogey unless this player works on this phase of his game.

I feel that a player who understands the sand shot, has a good sand club and is willing to devote a few minutes each day to practice from the sand to acquire a feeling for distance should, in a short time, be able to lay the ball up for one putt twice out of four from a normal lie

### **SHORT PUTT TROUBLE?**

If a player finds that his recovery shots are suitable, but that bogies still occur in an over-abundance, he obviously should work on his short putts.

Let's consider the player who does not play certain types of shots well. One such example is my good friend Chris Williams, who can make a shot bend to the right without any difficulty.

However, Chris did not have a flair for making shots "draw" to the left. When he encountered a course with several holes that doglegged to the left or one on which many pins were placed on the left side of the greens, Chris would likely come up with too high a percentage of bogies to obtain a satisfactory score.

The opposite could be said of another friend Tom Hopkins, who possesses a most consistent draw game, but who encountered bogie trouble when he faced doglegs to the right and pin placements on that side of greens.

These examples underline the fact that golf is certainly a highly specialized game — so specialized that even the good scratch players fall prey to bogies. However, I do feel that any golfer who is willing to work and take instruction can ease his bogey problems by a careful analysis of his game as I have outlined.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

ANDY BROWN is a golf writer that quite literally couldn't believe his luck when he found a long-lost manuscript that contained the secrets to playing better golf for any level of player. His mission is to educate today's golfers, so as they know the four magic moves. Living in St Andrews, Fife, Scotland, Brown continues to alert golfers of all abilities to the keys of a great golf swing from the home of golf.

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