

The Process Of PUTTING



EXCLUSIVE
by Mark Gibson
Golf Australia
Teaching Editor

V 8 Supercars champion Marcos Ambrose dreams of slashing his handicap from 18 to single figures, so he can tee up in the Tasmanian Amateur Championship.

Having worked so hard on getting Marcos' swing more connected, it's time to moved forward in the pursuit of better scores and a lower handicap.

Marcos is now hitting the ball like a five-marker, but not scoring accordingly. As mentioned in previous months, Marcos' short game has its problems but he has been working on the chipping element and it is improving.

Now we need to look at his putting.

My first checkpoint is to determine how much bounce, skip or spin Marcos is putting on the ball when he



makes a stroke. To do this I set up a ball with a horizontal line on it, and video the ball soon after to impact to identify its take-off pattern. (The only way to do this is with a video camera, as you can't see the detail well enough with the naked eye.) Should there be too much bounce or skip just after impact, then technique issues need to be addressed.

Marcos' roll, however, was good (pics 1 & 2). It was early and consistent; consequently there was not much benefit in spending time on technical issues like grip, stance, strike speed or shape.

The way Marcos will make a



significant change in his putting is by developing a process for every putt. This includes green-reading, aiming and weighting the value of each putt. By weighting the value I mean Marcos needs to spend most effort on aim and alignment on shorter putts, then spend more effort on distance judgment and distance control on longer putts.

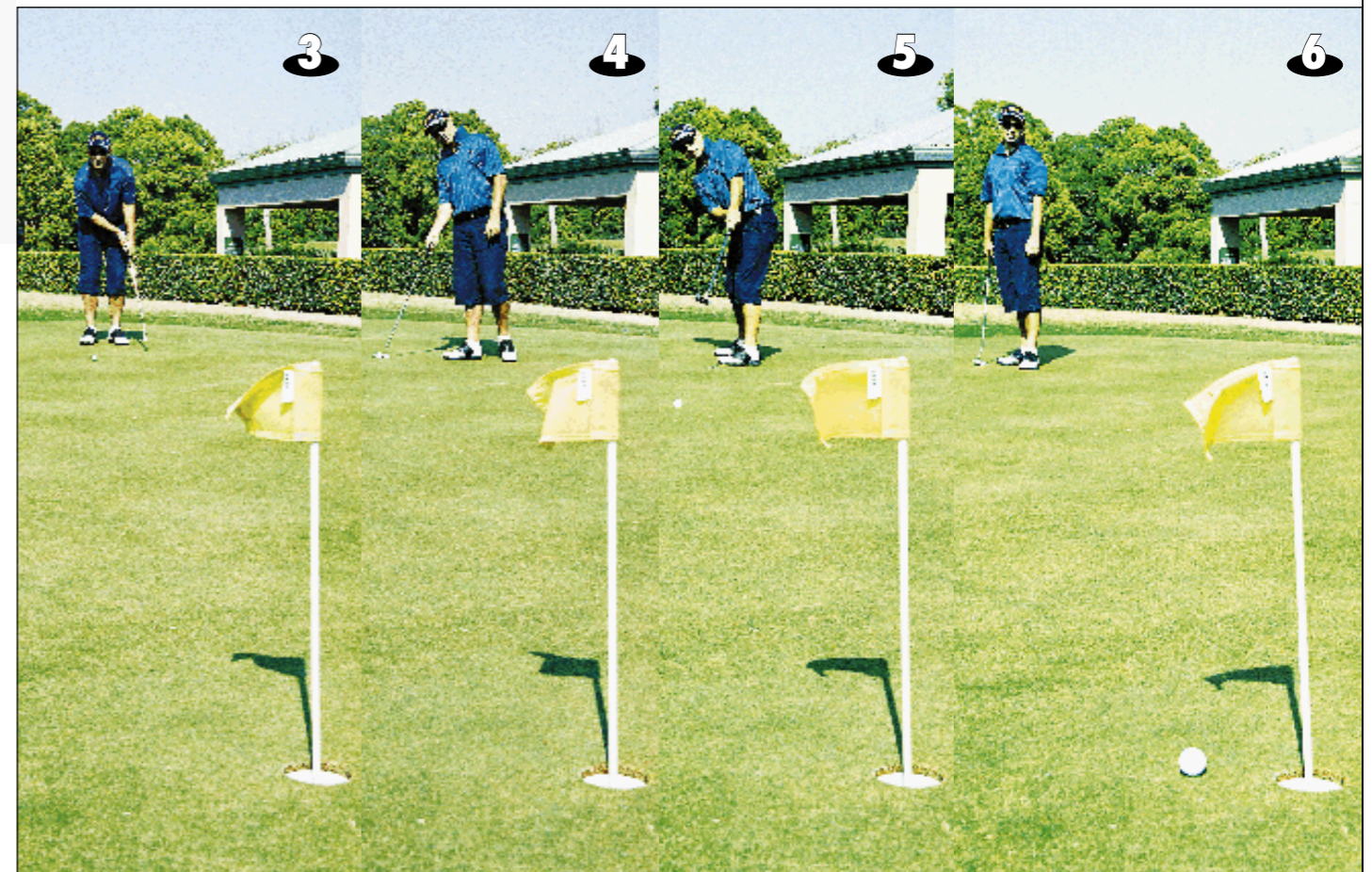
Most three-putts are products of distance-related issues, not direction.

For Marcos to get better results on the greens, he needs to improve his ability to judge the distance of a putt, then hit it the correct distance.

We achieved this by setting a



instruction



routine for Marcos to follow on every putt. For longer putts, I had Marcos looking at the hole and creating the correct stroke in practice from behind the ball (pic 3). This imprints in the short-term memory the correct distance and speed of stroke that is required.

The routine continued with Marcos

approaching each putt from behind, to assist in the read of direction and distance. All he had to do then was set the putter behind the ball (pic 4) and hit the putt (pic 5).

This resulted in Marcos being able to putt from a variety of distances and always hitting the putt to reach level with the hole or to a tap-in

distance (pic 6), which certainly goes a long way to eliminating three-putts from the scorecard.

Imagine if every time you had a long putt you could roll the ball down to a foot from the hole. How many shots would you save per round?

We then set some putts at one-, two- and three-metre distances to

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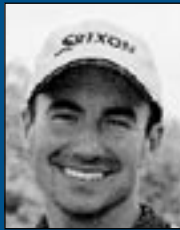
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**By 2003
V8 Supercars Champion
Marcos Ambrose**



Single figures, here I come

Things in V8 Supercars are really busy at the moment. Our team has been especially busy, with both of our cars in the top four and vying for the championship.

I've been busy on the golf course too, practising the short game and putting drills Mark has given me. With all the travel recently, I ventured out to practice at the local courses in the cities where we were racing. I even resorted to practising short game drills in my hotel room.

The other big bonus for me is the fact Mark and I are now playing together after some of the lessons. For those of you who can take criticism well, I would definitely advise a playing lesson from your local pro.

I recently shot 84 on The Pines course at Sanctuary Cove, playing off the medal plates. I have also scored in the low 80s at The Grand and had a 39 around the front nine at Lakelands with "Gibbo".

The 18 handicap I started out with just a few months ago is growing smaller in the rear vision mirror by the day.

practice the routine of making the putts. Note how the balls have been set up on a cut line of the green to assist with alignment (pic 7).

Putts made are putts well read, aimed and rolled at the required and desired pace. Missed putts are just misread, poorly aimed or hit on a great line at the wrong pace. There is no mystery to putting, just logic and good consistent process.



INVITATION TO TWO MAJOR SRIXON AMATEUR GOLF EVENTS

The Fifth Srixon Australian Champion of Champions will now be known as the **Australasian Champion of Champions** with New Zealand Champions and runners up being eligible to participate in the event being held on the Gold Coast next April.

Another change will see the inclusion of the Srixon Australasian XXIO Classic being staged at the same time as the Champion of Champions.

There are no pre-qualifying conditions for this event and it is open to all Australian and New Zealand golfers who have a registered Club Handicap. Played over 95 holes of single stableford on Royal Pines Reef and Palm Meadows golf courses.

There are also two (2) optional golf events you can chose to play in during your stay.

For further information and to obtain your Brochure. Contact :- AST Golf 67 5577 3386 or Email jan@astgolf.com.au Website www.astgolf.com.au



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Australasian XXIO Classic
Australasian Champion of Champions
April 25th - 30th 2005

