



EXCLUSIVE
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TAKING IT TO THE COURSE



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 and show *Golf Australia* readers it is a possible leap in ability.

After nearly five months of technical work, Marcos' game is approaching a stage where I can see most of the improvement in technique is complete. Next it becomes

important to spend some time on course with Marcos, to see what – and how – he scores.

This is the “make or break” factor he will need to accomplish if he is going to reach his handicap goal after putting in the hard work on the range. Importantly, Marcos now swings the club on plane back and through, and has a good arm and body relationship that helps him square the face of the club at impact.

But to make improvements to his score, Marcos must follow some basic steps: first, I led Marcos through

the correct process that he should take prior to every shot. This begins pre-shot, where choices – the *right* choices – have to be made in relation to risk and reward. This came very easy to Marcos, as his job is all about making the right decision quickly as a matter of life or death! With golf, it's just a lost ball, or OOB.

Marcos really grasped the concept of evaluating a shot's associated risk and reward factors, then selecting the smartest shot option. The basis here is to thoroughly examine each shot (**pic 1**) prior to making a final choice (**inset**), assessing each option and evaluating its worth. And, avoid risks that introduce no benefit, and you're halfway home.

A good example is to aim for the centre of a green when you are faced with a shot of more than 100 metres, avoiding risky pin positions. This was a lot easier to implement after Marcos' putting improved and long putts no longer scared him.

Once the shot was selected, it was time to develop a routine of approaching each shot in a similar pattern, at the same tempo, with correct visualisation (**pic 2**).

Then Marcos had to put his trust in the improved swing and

This was easy for Marcos because he is methodical and patient ... to a point. (Success is *now* or *sooner* with Marcos!) But he could see the associated benefits in every aspect of the tuition and followed my instructions to the letter.

Post-shot, and what happens then, is very important in the long-term development of every player.

I taught Marcos to enjoy his increasing number of good shots and forget the poor ones as quickly as possible. After each shot, you need to watch the outcome ... it helps when looking for your ball! This is also important to lock in the associated

feeling of good swings and good shots (**pic 3**) and to lose the feeling after poor ones. By making the good shots more memorable than the poor ones, we help the body to recall the positive process much easier.

Last, enjoy the time between shots – it really helps to relax.

I know we all have played someone who plays down the good shots and really gives themselves a hard time for ages after a bad shot. I know I don't enjoy it and I am sure they are not as well.

Apply this process as I did with Marcos and you will be well on your way to stroke-saving every round you play. Marcos did!



PHOTOS: MICHAELA ELPHICK/TRES BIEN PHOTOGRAPHICS X 5



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