



EXCLUSIVE
by Mark Gibson
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Teaching Editor



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 that it is possible!



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Persistence pays off

In recent months, the V8 Supercars series had us travelling from the cold and wet conditions in New Zealand to the extreme heat and humidity of Darwin's Hidden Valley circuit.

The rain in Auckland had me confined to a few putts on the hotel carpet. But some well-earned downtime in between races has seen me regularly off to the practice range, working on the set-up drills Mark gave me.

I am happy with the improved ball-striking that resulted from my changed set-up. The new set-up had me bent over a little more from the waist. The feeling of falling



by 2003 V8
Supercars
Champion
Marcos Ambrose

forward was a little off-putting at the start but I have persisted with the change and it now feels OK.

My 18 holes scores have varied since implementing the set-up changes. I have been able to score well for seven or eight holes but then lose my way and shoot in the 90s. (The Pines at Sanctuary Cove and The Grand golf courses aren't easy tracks though!)

After the second lesson Mark and I played a few holes; I think Mark was checking to see just how much work he has ahead of him.



Staying IN FRONT

instruction

Our second session started with a video assessment of the new set-up positions Marcos learned in Lesson One.

It was a quick start off the line by Marcos. He had practised, and it was noticeable how easy he was getting himself into the correct set-up position. However, he was still encountering the "it feels different" sensation about the correct balance at address, which is normal.

The resulting move to his right side from the correct set-up when swinging the club back was encouraging for both coach and pupil. Marcos' through swing was a lot smoother and he was better balanced as well.

Marcos' body now shows all the signs of a correct motion and weight transfer, and we could see a strong swing from minimal effort expended.

Previously, Marcos' body created little power in the swing, with his arms seemingly doing all the work. Now, with a better body power source, he could start work on getting his arms in sync with his body.

We are working towards having Marcos' arms set in front of his body throughout the swing. The principle behind this is that good players have their arms in front of their body at both

set-up and impact (pic 1 & inset).

So it is simple logic to have the arms in front of the body at the top of the backswing as well. After all, it takes just 0.2 of a second for an average player to swing from the top of the backswing to impact, so the less catch-up required in that time, the more accurate and consistent the swing can be.

When I assessed Marcos' backswing in video we could see the club moving more around behind his body from very early in his backswing.

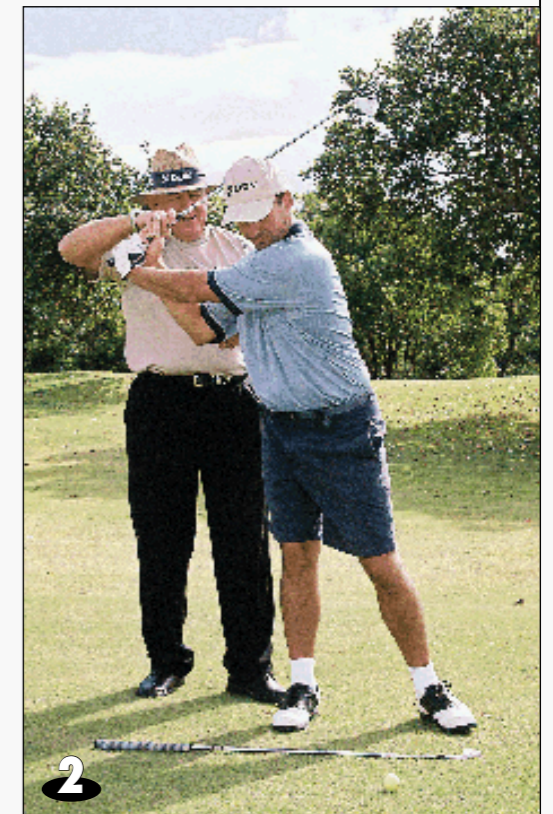
I had Marcos work on getting the clubshaft parallel with his shot line when the club reached horizontal during the backswing, and then "feel" the club was making an upward swing to the top from there. The feel needed for this is an upward hinging of the right elbow (for right-handers).

This encouraged Marcos to have his arms positioned much more in front of his body at the completion of his backswing (pic 2).

We ended Lesson Two with nine holes, so I

could assess how the new swing components were working in an on-course situation, whilst observing how Marcos played the game of golf.

In brief ... we will be starting on short game tuition in the very near future.



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