

The Bishop Blueprint with Donna Smith

Welcome Oaks Golf School followers. The 2016 Bishop Blueprint Sweepstakes winner, Donna Smith of Dover NH and I have had a beautiful golf season to enjoy our time together. Our first lesson was Saturday June 25th. In total Donna and I spent roughly 16 hours either on the lesson tee or on-course playing. During this time lots of pre-swing & in-swing adjustments were made both that eventually added up to GAME IMPROVEMENT!!!

The first chapter deals specifically with Donna's Pre-swing set up. I hope you enjoy our story... oh and the 2017 Bishop Blueprint tickets are on sale, click on the link on the bottom of the page.

Here's a brief summary of Donna's golf game **before** we started our Blueprint:

- 9 Hole scoring average at The Oaks? 62
- Prior PGA golf instruction? No
- Years played? 2 years
- Do you have a pre-shot routine? No
- How often do you play per week? once or twice
- How often do you work on your putting? I only putt before I go out and play
- How often do you practice on the range per week? seldom
- Strong suit? Hitting my driver
- Weaknesses? Irons off the fairway & rough
- Normal miss with a 7-iron? Top or thin low shot
- Normal miss with a Driver? low pull hook

Here's a brief summary of Donna's golf game **after** the Bishop Blueprint adjustments:

- 9 Hole scoring average at The Oaks? 58 (4 shots lower!)
- Prior PGA golf instruction? Yes
- Years played? 3 years
- Do you have a pre-shot routine? Yes
- How often do you play per week? two to three
- How often do you work on your putting? Before my range session & before I play
- How often do you practice on the range per week: at least once a week and before playing. I now know how to practice!
- Strong suit? Driving
- Weaknesses? Irons still, but much better getting airborne
- Normal miss with a 7-iron? slight pull left (Donna plays golf righty)
- Normal miss with a Driver? slight pull

For someone like Donna's who's fairly new to the game and has never taken PGA golf instruction, coming to the driving range for the purpose of improving your game is next to impossible without some professional guidance. That said, we spent our first full hour golf lesson working on pre-swing elements such as the Grip, Aim & Posture. Those who've been following the Bishop Blueprint or taken a lesson with me know how much of a stickler I am of the pre-shot *stuff*. **Setting up for the pre-swing doesn't take any talent... so do it like the Pros!**

First was Donna's grip. I moved Donna's grip into a "neutral position" as she (like many golfers) grip the top hand into a weak position (holing too much in the palm of the top hand). For you at home, compare your current grip to the picture below. The grip directly influences the club face during the swing... this is very important and a poor grip could be why your slicing or hooking the ball.



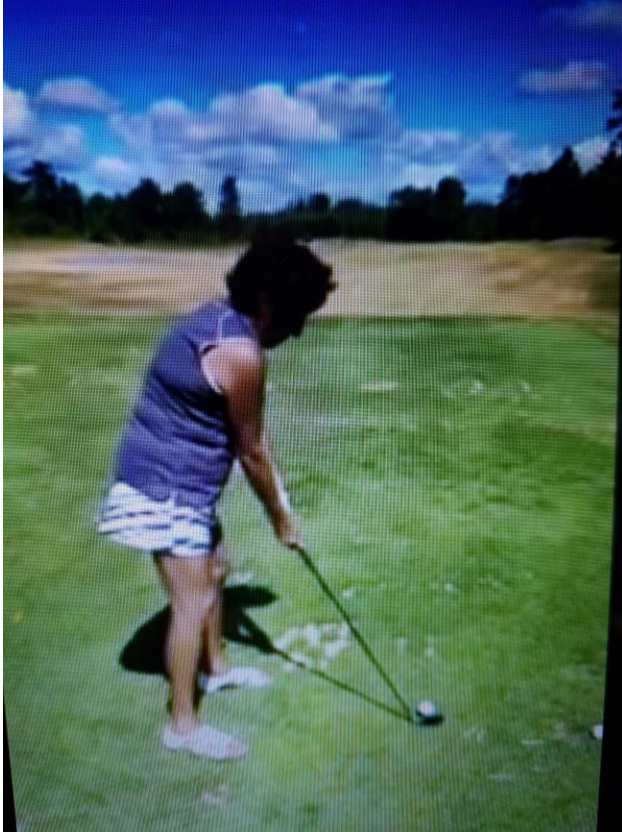
Next was Donna's body and clubface alignment to the target... this was and still is her biggest challenge with the pre-swing set up. Understanding that Donna did not have a pre-shot / pre-swing routine, I knew just teaching her a pre-swing routine would help eliminate a number of issues, especially alignment issues.

Donna's natural alignment process made her constantly aim her body too far right of the target. In my experience the best way for any golfer (pro's to beginners) is to spot align to your target. I've outlined a step-by-step process below:

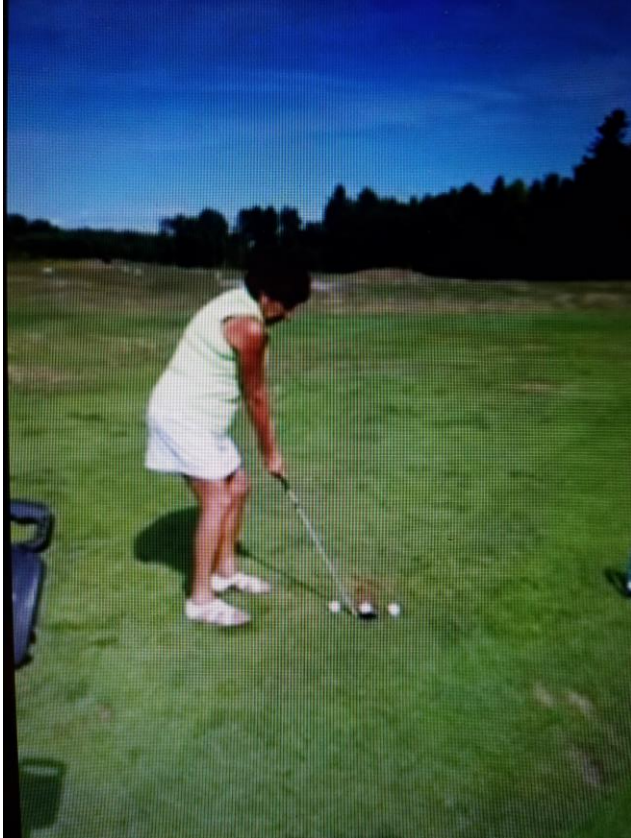
1. Select your club of choice and stand directly behind your golf ball (about 2 to 3 yards)
2. Look at the desired target in the distance
3. Draw an imaginary line from this target to the front of your golf ball
 - a. This line is your "target line"
4. Pick a spot on this line no more than a foot in front of your ball
 - a. This is your "spot alignment"
5. Walk up next to the ball (don't place your feet yet)
6. Place the clubface behind the ball
7. Sole your club behind the ball making sure the clubface is square to the spot
8. Take your stance (this establishes your body line) making sure the stance is parallel to the target line
9. Give the spot, your clubface and stance one final look before you draw the club back
10. Swing with confidence!

This description may seem like a long process but given the right advice from a PGA pro is quite easy and doesn't take long at all. Before I introduced Donna to this concept she was aiming her 50 yard shots about 10 yards to the right and her 150 yard shots 25+ yards right. Now she's aiming within +/- 5 yards with each club... a huge improvement.

The final Pre-swing exercise is the Posture. This is pretty cool... the pictures below tell the story. The first picture was taken during our first lesson & the second picture was taken just prior to her last lesson.



Above, hitting 7 iron, standing too upright, not enough arm-hang / spine angle. For Donna this made hitting her irons very difficult.



Above, a sportier look. Better bend from the waist and proper spine angle. Changing Donna's posture immediately made it easier to get those irons airborne!

That's all for now, the weather's still nice. Please come out to the driving range and try a few of these adjustments. Changing your grip, alignment or posture will feel awkward and may take a few sessions but, if the adjustment is needed it will help you lower your scores!

Chapter two will include full swing drills, putting exercises and cool videos of Donna driving the ball far & straight... Stay tuned, thanks for readying!

Enter the 2017 Bishop Blueprint Sweepstakes for \$30 a ticket and receive a 30-minute lesson(s) with me and a sweepstakes ticket! It's a win-win... – [Click Here](#)

Your PGA Pro,

Shaun Bishop, PGA
Director of Golf
The Oaks Golf Links
Somersworth NH 03032