

## The Bishop Blueprint with winner Kay Forte

Welcome Bishop Blueprint Sweepstakes followers! A great golf season is finally coming to an end... The Bishop Blueprint Sweepstakes winner, Kay Forte worked hard and had a lot of fun during our season long golf instruction program.

### About my student

Kay's a resident of South Berwick Maine and Candia Oaks Evergreen Member and has played golf for 3 years. She's taken some instruction in the past and before our lessons her best score was a 58 and her Golf Handicap was 38.2. Kay has a full set of clubs and plays golf right-handed. Kay currently plays and practices Tennis at a high level regularly, she also takes Tennis lessons weekly.

Kay & I wanted to share our time together... we hope you enjoy our golf journey. Below are Kay's answers to our 1<sup>st</sup> Q & A session before we began the blueprint.

- What would you like to work on first: Putting (great answer for anyone!)
- Time playing golf: 3 years
- How often do you play: once a week
- Weaknesses: distance & the mental side of game
- Strong suit: willingness to practice
- 7- Iron carry distance: 60 yards
- Common miss-hit with Driver: topping the ball
- May 1<sup>st</sup> 2015 Handicap Index 38.2
- Best score for 9 holes: 58

Let's go down the bullet points and see how we did... I will include a "focus" point for each bullet. I'll go into some detail, please understand that all swings are different and some example may not apply to you. This piece is meant to outline some of the topics Kay and I used for improvement. To ensure you get the proper blueprint for game improvement, please participate in the 2016 Bishop Blueprint Sweepstakes! (Ticket Info Below)

- **What would you like to work on first: Putting** – Pro's focus, body setup and clubface setup

Our first 1-hour lesson was on putting. Kay mentioned her weakness with putting was distance control. Far too often hitting the ball 4 to 5 feet beyond or short of the hole. After 5 minutes of letting Kay putt on her own, I found her putting eye-line and putter face alignment needed work.

Kay's eye-line was "out-side" the line ([see example](#)). This causes a multitude of problems. This made Kay's putting stroke to cut across the ball. Using this type of stroke creates side spin on the ball. This was one reason for her distance control problem. The other reason for inconsistency with distance was that her putter face was open to the target line (the blade was aiming right). This caused even more side spin and un-solid hits on the ball.

We added these (pre-swing, set up) fixes up then lined up according to my liking and immediately saw better results with speed. In this case it was the setup that cause bad putts, not the stroke. Kay played later this day and had the best putting round she had ever had.

As you continue reading you'll see Kay and I worked mainly on pre-swing fixes.

- **Time playing golf, 3 years** - Pro's focus: Enforcing Pre-Swing Fundamentals, starting with small swings.

Kay was ecstatic when I called to tell her the news that she won the Blueprint Grand Prize. With only 3 years under her belt and not a lot of on-course playing experience this meant starting from the ground up with Pre-Swing Fundamentals.

After observing Kay hit 10 shots with a 9-iron we began talking about the Pre-Swing Fundamentals. **Proper Pre-Swing Fundamentals** are the building blocks to a successful golf swing and score. They're easy to remember (G.A.P.) Grip, Aim & Posture and it's a must to double check your G.A.P. before pulling the trigger. The neat part about experimenting or changing Pre-Swing Fundamentals is that it takes no talent place your hands on the club differently or stand differently (it does take the advice of a PGA/LPGA Member though). The challenging part is trying to swing a club using new Pre-swing fundamentals. Without getting into the specifics of what a good grip is, how to take aim and how to take a posture (*these things you'll have to come see me about*), I'll just highlight what worked best for Kay & I.

I began by moving her left hand (glove hand) to a “stronger” grip position, which made her grip “neutral”. [Click here](#) for grip examples.

Next, we worked on taking aim. Taking aim is an underrated part of the game, especially when hitting balls on the driving range. Like most right handed golfers, Kay was aiming too far to the right. I showed her how to use a spot in front of the ball 10 to 15”, as a way to “spot line”. Picking a spot on your target line is the easiest and most effective way in aiming. I know the best players in the world use this technique, so should you!!!

Lastly, we worked on her posture. Kay crowded the ball, meaning she was standing too close to the ball at address. This change was by far the most challenging. To make this change more natural we worked on developing Kay’s Pre-Shot routine. Once we settled on how she wanted to approach the ball we were able to use this routine before each shot she took on the range. Everyone should have a pre-shot routine. Take a look at this cool video of Ben Hogan’s pre-shot routine: [Click Here](#)

The changes that we made here aren’t difficult to try. Most of the time a change to your grip, aim or posture feel goofy or not right at first, but with enough persistence and proper coaching these changes will start feeling normal. Sometimes it takes days for changes to feel right.

- **Typically play once a week** – Pro’s focus: Let’s get on the course and play!

Knowing Kay’s only played for 3 years or so and is an active player, I felt it was important to get on the course and experiment. Hitting balls is great, and good for your game, *believe me we spend hours on the range*, but learning how to take your game to the course is just as important. A playing lesson is a great way to spend your time with a PGA pro, in fact I have several beginner level golfers that only like taking playing lessons. Kay encouraged me to play along with her as she enjoyed learning visually. This helped Kay’s normal round per week increase by 1 and got your pro out from behind the golf shop counter!

By the end of the season, Kay and I almost exclusively played as part of our lessons. We spend the first part of the lessons warming us / reviewing a swing position or swing thought, then hit the course for a few holes.

- **Weaknesses, distance, & the mental side of game** – Pro’s focus: reinforcing pre-swing fundamentals, use of pre-shot routine and course strategy.

I knew right away that Kay’s old set up (too close to the ball at address) was the key factor of not getting the distance she wanted. Here again we have a pre-swing fundamental causing an in-swing flaw. Standing too close to the ball can cause many issues, with Kay it meant she wasn’t able to get the width and leverage needed to produce proper loft at impact and swing speed.

Kay’s an athlete! She’s plenty strong, I had to tell her this all the time... once we got the set up in place, the swing speed increased and the loft was true at the moment of impact. The moral of the story is that it’s not always how strong you are in golf, it’s how proper pre-swing fundamentals allow for better results.

The mental side... how I loved Kay’s approach to this! To quote Kay, “I’m just going to do the I don’t give a S&# swing and it’ll work... Sometimes taking a lesson can cause more mental frustrations. Don’t let this happen to you! My goal isn’t to cloud a student’s mind with 63 different swing thoughts, my goal is to teach students things like G.A.P., a pre-shot routine or conducting playing lessons to help departmentalize thoughts.

I also think it’s important to set proper expectations for each student, especially beginners. Too often I hear frustrations from students like Kay thinking at each show should feel good coming off the club or fly high and land soft... The fact of the matter is golf’s a game of mishits and how you manage / score with mishits. Sometime “thin to win” or the “chunk & run” shots work out and if they don’t, they should at least add “fun” in trying to recover from them.

My advice to those like Kay just learning the game is to start small... start putting, chipping, and pitching when working on your game. You’ll find as you improve, you’ll want to practice the short shots more often. Most of the swing changes we made during this summer were easily worked on by just chipping and pitching swings. You don’t always have to take full swing with a driver to work on what your instructor gives you.

- **Strong suit willingness to practice** – Pro’s focus: Built a plan and play as much as possible.

Building a plan (or blueprint in this case) is important because without one you’ll find yourself tinkering with your game for no reason. Our plan is to begin with always checking the pre-swing, focusing on 1 or 2 areas of the in-swing and then playing, simple yet, very effective. Changing your swing is one thing, but to use this new swing and score on the course is another. Kay is very committed to getting better. This was a huge key in her overall improvement.

- **7- Iron carry distance 60 yards** – Pro’s focus: hit with proper loft

As is mentioned before, Kay’s distance issue wasn’t caused by lack of Strength. Kay initially swung fast enough to fly her 7-iron 100 yards in air, she couldn’t do more than 60 yards mainly because the ball wasn’t launching high enough (at impact, the 7-iron was de-lofted).

The fix started by standing further from the ball, then we worked on how hand movement can affect the loft at impact. I played several sports growing up, played TONS of golf and was lucky to have PGA golf instruction from my dad (still to this day he’s my instructor). By doing this I developed ways to describe certain feels or actions within a golf swing that relate to different sports (golf analogies).

With Kay being an advanced Tennis player, this meant using tennis as a sport to relate to. Kay’s issue of de-lofting the club at impact was similar to hitting a top-spin shot in tennis. In this case I started with the opposite shot in tennis, the cut shot in tennis. I told Kay to think of the clubhead as the tennis racquet head. With a little demonstration from me and imagination it worked! Kay was able to hit 7-irons with proper loft and carrying it 100 yards right way. A 40 yard gain with just a simple analogy!

- **Common miss-hit with Driver: topping the ball** – Pro’s focus: loft and swing plane

Like the 7-iron the distance from the ball at address and feeling more or a tennis cut shot in golf help this problem immediately. Unfortunately the topped shot with Kay’s woods still was occurring from time to time. So we started to focus on the angle of attack.

Kay's angle of attack too flat or hitting up on the ball, or other words the club swung too much from the inside-out through impact. This was a habit caused by standing too close to the ball over the past 3 seasons. To fix this, we worked on the set up, and worked hard swinging the club more left on the way through impact. Swinging left for Kay steepened her angle of attack. This change made Kay's driver spend more time in the hitting zone of the golf swing. Her bad swing caused the club to ascend too quickly and let to tops.

- **May 1<sup>st</sup> 2015 Handicap Index 38.2 & Best score for 9 holes: 58** – Pro's focus: stick to the Blueprint plan and keep playing

Kay and I had a blast this summer. We worked hard, we hit a lot of balls, tried many things, and in the end... Kay lowered her handicap index by 5.8 shots! That's a lot for one season... her handicap now stands at 32.4 and trending lower and her best 9 hole score now is 52!!!! Great job Kay, you earned it. Kay's now thinking of joining an 18 hole league at The Oaks next year because she's confident she'll fit-in. For me as the Director of Golf at The Oaks Golf Links this is my favorite piece of feedback from Kay because player development / player involvement is a priority of mine.

#### Some of Kay's comments

*"Our first lesson was in putting and it was great to see immediate improvement in my score!"*

*"I would have to say the fact that he really HEARD my words and being patient, positive and your ability to think outside the box are really tied for most helpful"*

*"Every time we met I felt like "oh... I GET it!... After every lesson I felt like my game improved and that kept me motivated"*

*"Next year my second shot needs improving and I'm already thinking about taking weekly lessons with Shaun in 2016"*

The journey has just begun for Kay and me. Next year, our goals include: breaking 100 for 18 holes, continue with a weekly lesson and lower the handicap by 5.8 more. This type of improvement is doable for all who work hard and

commit like Kay has. Come on out next year and make a “Kay” commitment and I promise better results on the course. Thanks for reading!

[Please Click Here For Black Friday Lesson Deals \(Sale Ends 12.2.15\)](#)

Happy Thanksgiving!

Your PGA Pro,

Shaun Bishop, PGA

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*p.s. Thank you, thank you, thank you Kay for being a great students and for being very committed to improving your game!*

Ref: <http://www.naplesgolfguy.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Golf-Tip-Strong-Grip.jpg>

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