

Golf Tip 5: Instead of Trying to Bounce Back After a Bad Hole, Challenge Yourself

Most good golfers, even those on the PGA Tour, try too hard to “get back” a shot they just lost by making bogey or double, and end up getting themselves into more trouble than they bargained for. Statistics from the Q school show that simply getting a par after a bogey, double, or triple helped the golfer recover and go on to a great round.

According to sport psychologist Dr. Jeffrey Fishbein: “I believe that the “Bounce Back” statistic encourages a player to make birdie on the next hole and “pick one up quickly”, instead of being patient, making par, and recapturing some momentum to get oneself back into the game.

This is where my concept of the “Challenge Hole” can be utilized. The Challenge Hole is defined as the hole following a hole where one is disappointed with their score. While most often that score is a bogey, double, or worse, it can also be a par after hitting a par 5 in two and three putting. After completing the hole, the player is instructed to take out a yellow highlighter and highlight the “challenge hole” (the next hole following a disappointing hole). The act of highlighting can also serve as a refocusing technique, in order to help the player get their attention on the task at hand, or the “next shot.”

The goal of the challenge hole should be par (this of course is for low, single digit handicap players only), At the end of the round, the player should add up the score for all of his or her challenge holes, again with the goal of being no worse than par in total.

For handicaps between 7-15, the goal of averaging bogey on these holes would be appropriate, but ultimately the player should set the goal for him or herself. My theory of the challenge hole simply suggests that if you don’t panic and try to do too much on the hole following a bad hole, remain patient, refocus, and remain satisfied with just “getting back on track” by making par, you will stay off the “bogey train,” and your overall scores will improve.”