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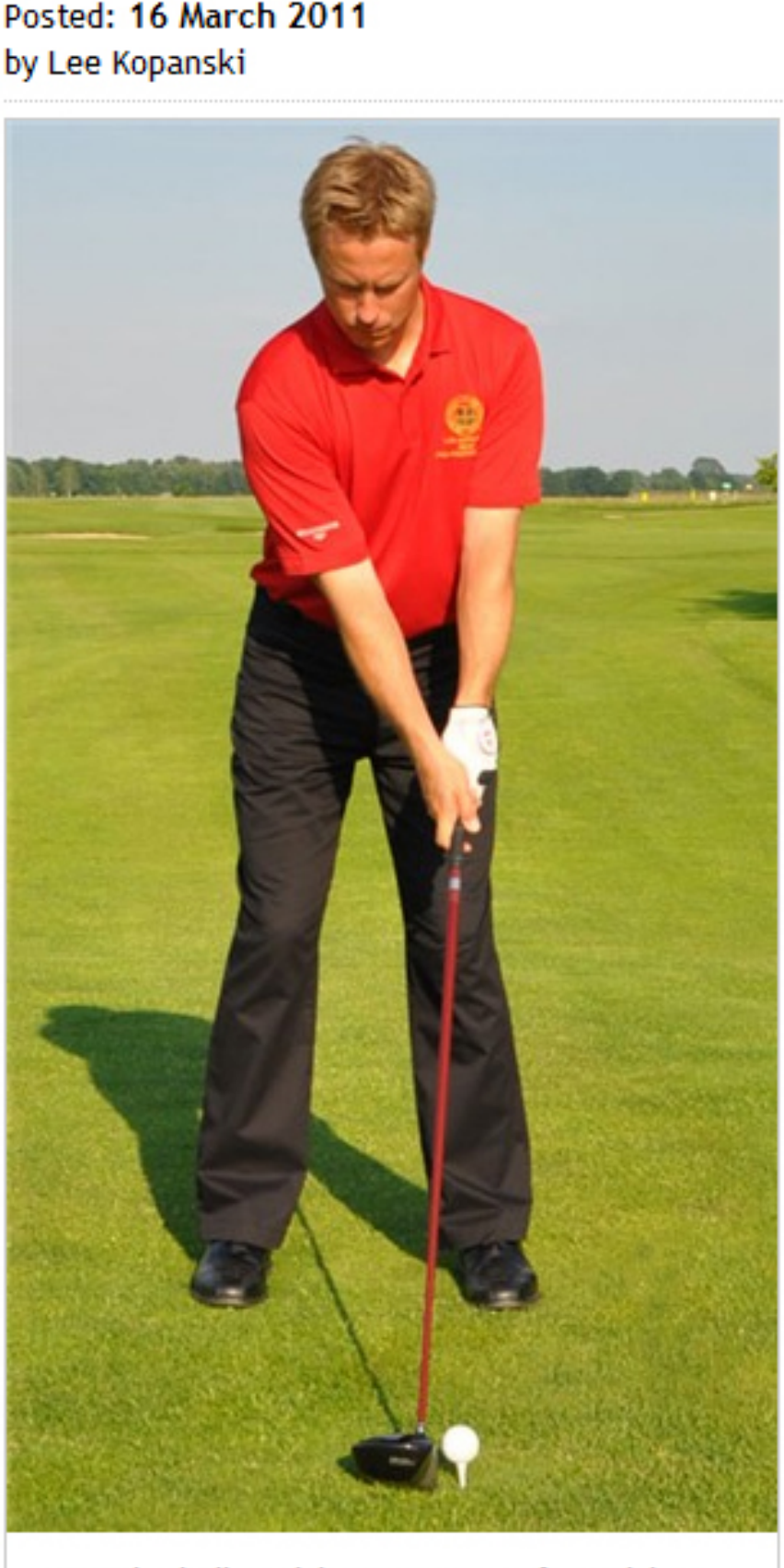
Instruction articles

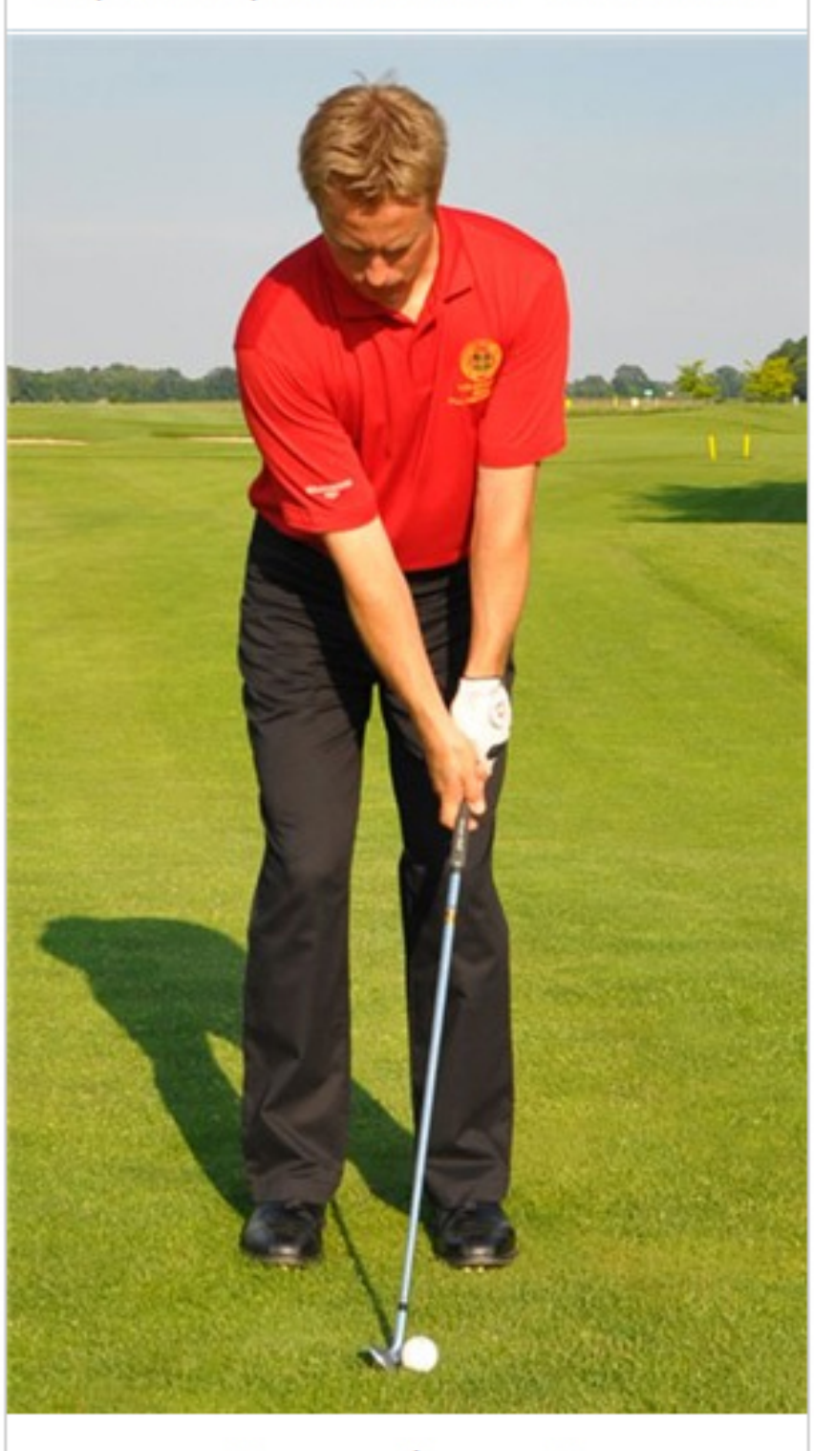
SFTW 21: Fix your ball position

Inside your left heel for ALL shots!

Posted: **16 March 2011**
by Lee Kopanski



Keep the ball position constant - from driver...



...to your wedge, says Lee

Lee Kopanski is the British-born head PGA pro at his own golf academy Loipersdorf Golf Club, a 27-hole course in Styria, Austria. He has worked with some opf the best coaches in Europe and offers free online golf lessons at www.golfswingzone.com . In this first of a new, short series, Lee gives hints and tips on how to improve your game.

The best way to propel your golf ball forward is to keep it simple and that's exactly what this tip achieves. Retaining the ball in the same position a couple of inches inside your left heel (for the right-hander) for every shot, rather than moving it around within your stance.

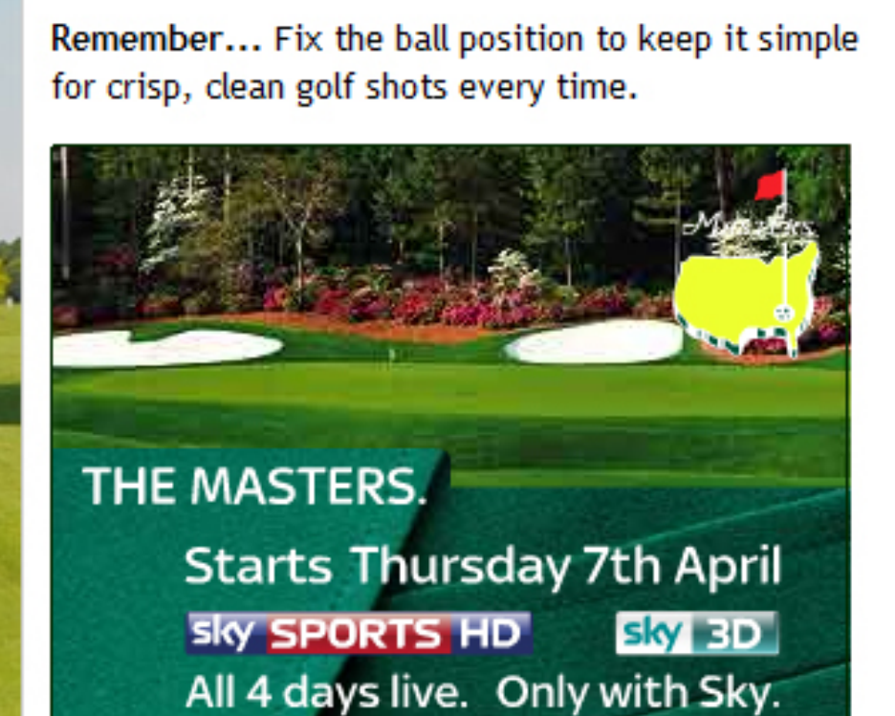
Having a fixed position means you can always count on more solid and consistent strikes, regardless of the playing conditions.

With the driver a wider stance is needed to support the greater swing arc and it's merely an optical illusion that the ball inside the left heel looks further forward than with a shorter club.

For the longest club in your bag, keep the stance shoulder-width; with a mid-iron narrow the stance slightly (but with the ball still two inches inside the left heel) and with a wedge retain the ball position but have the feet a little closer together.

It's also important to emphasise that at address your hands should be slightly ahead of the ball with the left arm as an extension of the club, setting the correct angles for hands, arms and body, ready for the backswing.

Remember… Fix the ball position to keep it simple for crisp, clean golf shots every time.



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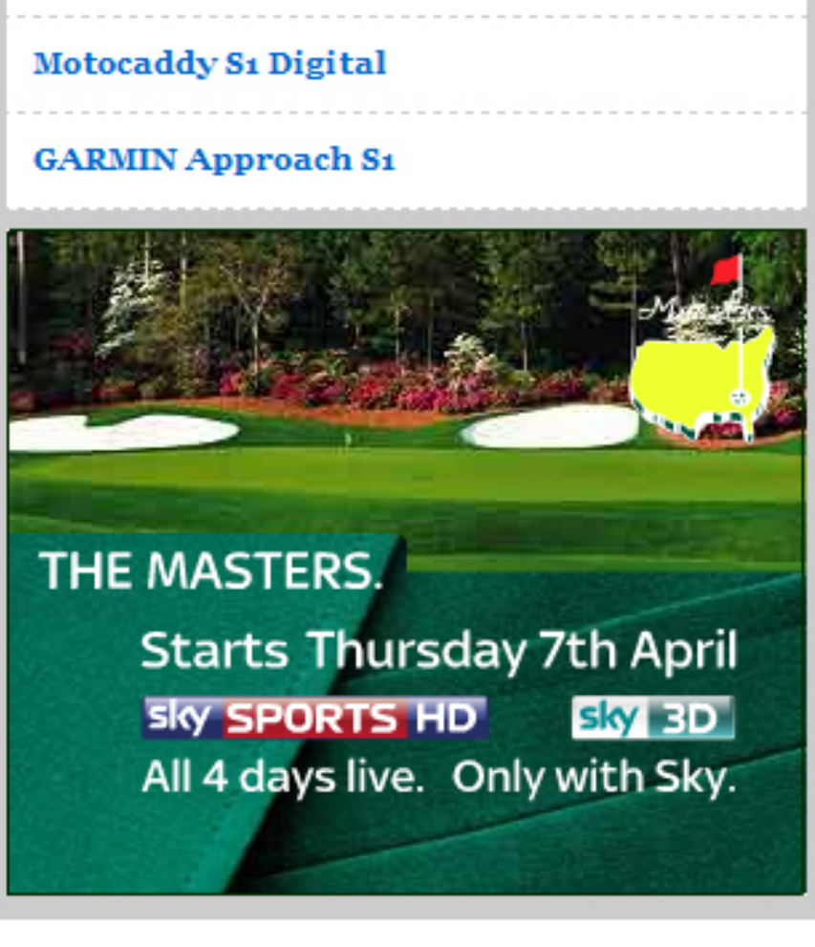

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Bob Warters

I'm definitely going to try this, next time I play. Spent a lifetime fiddling about moving ball position back and forth trying to get the perfect strike and all I needed to do is narrow or widen my stance a little, depending on the club in my hand!

Not so sure about the hand position at address, however. May take some convincing, having had a lesson from a PGA pro last week that to hit the ball higher and longer with the driver I have to keep the hands behind the ball and load up my right side a little. That seemed to work for me immediately and improved the chances of a novel (for me) high draw.

Would appreciate your feedback on Lee's ideas. ED
Posted: 16/03/2011 at 15:34

Reply

Jahmoo 16.5

Will give this a try on the range, B4 going out on the course, but does look very interesting and would make life easier having one ball position.

Feedback after weekend.
Posted: 16/03/2011 at 16:43

Reply

Mindthepond

Sandy Lyle advocated this in the 80s, I tried but fell out with it after a while, I notice that Mr Lyle now has a moving ball position!! You have to watch out for an opening stance as you come down the clubs!!
Posted: 16/03/2011 at 17:07

Reply

Spartacus (9.9)

Not sure I'd like playing my 8 iron from a ball position so far forward.

3 iron yes.

I thought the bottom of the swing arc was just past centre with irons so the ball was better played from centre stance ensuring a downward strike?

I've found what works for me and it aint 2 inches off my left foot with irons, not unless I'm playing for a top that is!

Posted: 16/03/2011 at 22:30

Reply

Crazyface

He's obviously been watching Jack Nicklaus's video from years ago. zzzzzzzzzzzzzzzz. That's how I play all my shots. Hell, if it's good enough for Jack then it's good enough for me. The ball don't half go high tho'.

Posted: 17/03/2011 at 12:08

Reply

Joroni

The further forward the ball is the less it has to travel to the hole............
Posted: 17/03/2011 at 12:09

Reply

BT@Home (9.2)

watch out for those thinned wedges !!
Posted: 17/03/2011 at 13:16

Reply

Lee Kopanski

Bob,

For your clubface to be square at the top of your backswing the left wrist must be straight with both the back of the left hand and the clubface parallel to the left forearm. If your hands are positioned behind the ball at address this will naturally cup the left wrist, which if you take it to the top of the backswing this way will result in an open clubface and cupped left wrist!

To finish at the top of your back swing with a square clubface you will have to arch your left wrist to close the clubface at some stage during your backswing to compensate. Clubface alignment issues in your backswing will inevitably run into your downswing requiring split second adjustments to square everything up through impact. Pretty scary stuff and not for the faint hearted especially when faced with a tight fairway or island green for a bob or two...

In my opinion it is far more effective to start with a straight left wrist at address with the left arm as an extension of the club shaft. Take it all the way up this way to finish with a straight left wrist and square clubface at the top of the backswing.

Cheers, Lee
Posted: 18/03/2011 at 12:24

Reply

Lee Kopanski

Mindthepond,

Moving the ball position around in your stance often leads to inconsistency through the hitting area and is one of the major causes of body alignment issues at address. The moment that you move your ball position back in your stance, your shoulder alignment will naturally close (aim right) in relation to the ball to target line. Position your ball too far forward and your shoulder alignment will naturally open. A poorly aligned body at address leads to and magnifies numerous swing faults!

Unless you are trying to shape a shot high, low or around a tree I would highly recommend that you fix your ball position and adjust your stance accordingly at address.

In the 80's Sandy Lyle won the British Open, played in 5 Ryder Cup teams and was the first Brit to wear the Green Jacket all with the fixed ball position, there must be something in it!

Cheers, Lee
Posted: 18/03/2011 at 12:28

Reply

Yorkie (Disco) Dave

Sounds logical to me. Will give it a try.
Posted: 18/03/2011 at 12:43

Reply

Lee Kopanski

Spartacus,

Address your driver with a shoulder width stance and ball position a couple of inches inside of your left heel. Now gradually bring your right foot in towards your left and narrow the width of your stance. Narrowing your stance automatically changes the position of your upper body in relation to your ball at address. This has a direct impact on the angle of attack in your downswing.

A shoulder width stance with a driver naturally positions your upper body behind the ball to encourage you to sweep the ball cleanly off the tee, slightly on the upswing which is correct. Narrowing your stance using the same ball position (a couple of inches inside of your left heel) draws the centre line of your body back towards the ball. Narrowing your stance accordingly automatically ensures that the base of the swing arc remains the same for each club that you play and changes the angle of attack encouraging a more direct and downward blow.

Changing the width of your stance does the same job as moving the ball around in your stance whilst eliminating many of the body alignment issues (mentioned above) that golfers struggle with at address. This simplifies things by guaranteeing that the impact position is the same for every shot that you play.

If your stance is shoulder width, your ball position is a couple of inches inside of your left heel and you have an eight iron in your hands then you may well Top every shot that you play! Fix your ball position and adjust your stance accordingly for consistently struck golf shots!

Cheers, Lee
Posted: 18/03/2011 at 12:51

Reply

Yorkie (Disco) Dave

Lee. Makes perfect sense to me eg: if your feet were 4" apart (pitching) then the ball would be in the centre of your stance.

My question is.......What adjustments need to be made for uphill/downhill lies?

Posted: 18/03/2011 at 13:07

Reply

Chris Curry

Ben Hogan's Five Lessons book Page 125 (in summary and review section).

Bobby Jones newspaper column article, circa, 1920's: *"In watching both expert and inexpert variety [of golfer], it is possible to say that the one common tendency for all is to creep ahead of the ball - that is, to play it too much off the right foot..."* - right handed golfer - *"...my advice to all is to get the ball in front, where one can swing on it, instead of placing it back, where it can only be chopped at. And watch this one thing carefully, for it is possible to make a mistake here without being aware of it."*

It always tickles me watching folk never gripping the club the same way twice, or placing the ball in the same position twice (even if with the same club) and then stand there scratching their heads as to *"What could possibly be wrong???"* when they miss both ways trying to discern what facet of their swing could be at fault.

If truth be told, even if their swings aren't great, by ensuring that they have a consistent grip on the club and a consistent ball position, they'd be giving themselves a greater chance of success rather than the current randomness of their preparatory work (i.e. the static things done before even swinging a club: grip, alignment, posture, ball position, etc.).

It would seem to have been the same throughout the golfing ages, but hey, what do those *fossils* know, right!?!

New £300 quid driver anyone? Cos that'll really help, as opposed to just standing to the ball in a consistent manner!

Posted: 18/03/2011 at 18:51

Reply

Joroni

Hello Lee, I have been working on this technique for a while now but have a tendancy to hit the ball fat. what could be the main cause of this problem (assuming my ball position is correct). Are there any drills/ warning signs I could use/look out for in order to help myself with this destructive trait. Thanks Joroni
Posted: 20/03/2011 at 20:02

Reply

Pengwyn 7.0 \/

Lee,
Is it just me or does the photo with the driver seem a stupidly narrow stance? I always thought the width of your stance was measured from the inside of your feet. Yours appears to be measured on the outside of your feet.

I can honestly say that if my stance was that narrow with a driver I would fall over.:)

Is the photo right or am I going blind?
Posted: 20/03/2011 at 20:42

Reply

Mindthepond

As I said I had a go at this back in the 80s, but after the haranguing from Lee I thought I would have another go as I am a much better ball striker now Yeh right!!! However I must report that at the first try on the practise ground it seems to improve the striking.. Short irons had a tendency to go left a bit but widened my stance a small bit and that seemed to correct itself long irons I hit the odd one skinny but they were OK, it is in the faiway woods where the difference was most noticeable, my 3 wood went for miles with a slight draw wonderful... didnt have any of the others with me but I hit a couple of good drives on our 18th and the 2x 3 woods I hit were appreciably longer... and off the ground just a pure strike!! Tomorrow I am playing in a mixed am-am and the club dragon is one of my partners lets see how my nerve holds out when I hit my first fairway wood on the 2nd!!! Nice one Lee...
Posted: 21/03/2011 at 15:41

Reply

Chris Curry

Mindthepond wrote (see)

> As I said I had a go at this back in the 80s, but after the haranguing from Lee I thought I would have another go as I am a much better ball striker now Yeh right!!! However I must report that at the first try on the practise ground it seems to improve the striking.. **Short irons had a tendency to go left a bit but widened my stance a small bit and that seemed to correct itself** long irons I hit the odd one skinny but they were OK, it is in the faiway woods where the difference was most noticeable, my 3 wood went for miles with a slight draw wonderful... didnt have any of the others with me but I hit a couple of good drives on our 18th and the 2x 3 woods I hit were appreciably longer... and off the ground just a pure strike!! Tomorrow I am playing in a mixed am-am and the club dragon is one of my partners lets see how my nerve holds out when I hit my first fairway wood on the 2nd!!! Nice one Lee...

Try opening your stance a touch with 8i down to wedges.
Posted: 21/03/2011 at 15:46

Reply

Mindthepond

Chris experience tells me that when I open my stance I hit it left, must be a closed face or something, but I aint changing now!!!
Posted: 21/03/2011 at 17:13

Reply

Lee Kopanski

Yorkie, Joroni & Pengwyn,
I'll post answers to your questions in SFTW, keep an eye out.
Cheers
Lee
Posted: 22/03/2011 at 09:12

Reply

Joroni

Thanks Lee.....
Posted: 22/03/2011 at 12:04

Reply

Chris Curry

Mindthepond wrote (see)

> Chris experience tells me that when I open my stance I hit it left, must be a closed face or something, but I aint changing now!!!

Sorry mate, didn't realise you were coming over the top.
Posted: 22/03/2011 at 12:30

Reply

Yorkie (Disco) Dave

Cheers Lee. Will keep an eye out for the article
Posted: 22/03/2011 at 12:40

Reply

Mindthepond

Was great today hit a couple of sketchy 3 woods but also hit a few bramers!! irons a bit of a mish mash but had 40 points so it cant have been all bad!! and we won the AMAm so that kept the dragon happy!! Think the fixed ball position may be the way forward for me...
Posted: 22/03/2011 at 20:07

Reply

Chris Curry

Bandit!
Posted: 23/03/2011 at 10:05

Reply

Mindthepond

Hey mush, any banditry I may possess I have worked hard for, its been a long apprenticeship!!!
Posted: 23/03/2011 at 10:41

Reply

Nudga

I will be another that tries this, as my irons of late have been very inconsistent (usually my strong point). Fingers crossed, keep up the good articles Lee. Thx
Posted: 24/03/2011 at 14:07

Reply

Phil Watson

I've been struggling with my game for over a year now, but haven't done anything about it, so it's still very poor. Your article caught my eye and I tried the ball position change, which after 27 holes at the weekend seems to be working okay, so will persevere with it.

Also jumped onto golfswingzone site to check it out, but I think it gave my PC a virus - well that's what McFee said anyway. Would still like to go onto the site, but a little hesitant given my experience this weekend. Lee, are you aware of the problem?
Posted: 04/04/2011 at 12:13

Reply

Nudga

And guess what my ball striking with my irons has improved. Managed to hit 5 GIR in a row at the weekend. I shall continue to use
Posted: 04/04/2011 at 12:17

Reply

Lee Kopanski

Great to see that everyone is improving with the fixed ball position.

I'll soon be posting some more lessons that will help you to take your golf to the next level, so keep an eye out!

Hi Phil,

Regarding viruses there is absolutely no problem on www.golfswingzone.com

I immediately contacted my hosting company who have confirmed that the site is completely clean (tested on Firefox/G-Data/Google Safebrowsing/Opera/ParetoLogic/Phishtank)

I do know that there are many issues with antivirus softwares and false positives (where something is incorrectly identified as harmful by the antivirus software when in fact it is not). You should be able to "whitelist" my site with your software to allow you to visit my site without any frightening messages!

To reassure yourself you can visit http://www.virustotal.com/ and scan my site if you wish.

So do check out www.golfswingzone.com

Cheers
Lee
Posted: 06/04/2011 at 20:04

Reply

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