

The Golfer's Bible

For those who seek success in
the difficult game of golf and the even
more difficult game of life



Ron Holmes

A hacker from wayback

Illustrations by Clive Stevens



Vital Publications

Published 1997
by Vital Publications
The National Literature Department
of Churches of Christ in Australia
PO Box 101
North Essendon 3041

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Illustrations: Clive Stevens
Production: Geoff Alves

National Library of Australia Cataloguing-in-Publication data

Holmes, Ron, 1924- .
The golfer's bible: for those who seek success in the difficult
game of golf and the even more difficult game of life.

ISBN 1 875915 10 9

1. Golf—Anecdotes. 2. Christian life. I. Stevens, Clive. II. Title

248.4

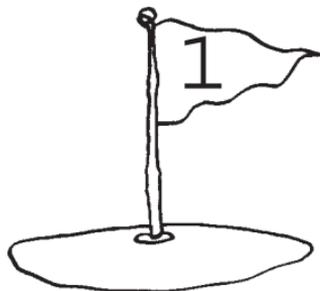
Printed by Erwin's Printing (Vic) Pty Ltd
PO Box 4122, Dandenong South Vic 3164

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The First Hole



Why Is Golf So Difficult?

There is an old story about a country boy who had never seen the game of golf played and knew nothing about it whatever. He came to town to visit his cousin who was a keen golfer.

The cousin took him out to the local course to show how it was done.

At the first hole, a short par four, the cousin teed up, handed the driver to the country boy and said, 'Now see that flag down there? That's where the hole is.'

‘You have to hit the ball as close to the hole as you can.’

The country boy blew on his hands and took a mighty swipe. The ball ended up on the green, fifteen centimetres from the hole. ‘Right,’ he said. ‘What do I do next?’ Unable to believe his eyes, the cousin said weakly, ‘Now you walk down and hit the ball into the hole.’

The country boy stared at him. ‘You mean the ball has to go into the hole! Why didn’t you tell me that in the first place?’



We all know that is a tall, tall story. The average person handling a golf club for the first time is likely to take several swings before actually making contact with the ball. It looks so easy when you see the pros do it on TV but in fact golf is an extremely difficult game.

Why make a game so difficult? Why not have the fairways 100 metres long instead of 400? Why not have the hole 30 cm across instead of 10? Why not remove all the bunkers and instead have the approach to each green a nicely sloping channel ending at the hole? Why not make it easy?

Why? Because it is the difficulty of the game that makes it worth playing. If it were easy there would be no sense of satisfaction with a good round. There would be no endless road of possible improvement to strive after each time you play. You would tire of it after six months and look for something else that had a greater challenge. You would never have before you the ideal of becoming a good golfer, perhaps even the best in the world!

It is significant that the most important golf tournaments are always played on the most difficult courses. Only on a difficult course can you separate the sheep from the goats. It is the difficulty of golf that not only makes the game, but makes the golfer!



Sometimes people ask the question, 'Why is life so difficult?' It is a particular problem for those who believe there is a God and that God is good. If God made us and God loves us, why doesn't he make things easier for us?

Could part of the answer be that life is difficult for the same reason that golf is difficult? Think about it!



The Second Hole



Bending the Rules

A golfing friend sought my opinion on a question of golf etiquette. ‘What is the rule,’ he said, ‘when you are playing on a country course and your opponent has hit his ball into the rough and you are both searching for it. What is the rule when your opponent says, “Here’s my ball,” and you know it can’t be because you’ve just kicked his ball down a rabbit hole?’



Like every game, golf has its rules. Sometimes they are obvious, sometimes fairly complicated. Even the pros need to call in the officials to pronounce the correct rule in certain circumstances. Sometimes particular courses have local rules that need to be considered in addition to the general rules of golf.

Rules may be bent a bit when friends are playing social golf. With a beginner it is fairly common practice to bend the rules a little. They may be allowed a second hit if the first one goes badly astray. A ball in the rough may be kicked out into the fairway. After all, the main thing at this stage is to learn to hit the ball properly. But the time comes when there is no point in allowing such 'freebies'. If beginners are ever to become genuine golfers and have a score that means something they must play by the rules. Like the other difficulties of golf, rules are part of the game.

In an important competition rules are taken very seriously. I remember an occasion when Greg Norman retired voluntarily from a big tournament because he discovered that he had unintentionally broken a rule. Even when the rules may seem rather pointless to us in a particular situation it is still

necessary to abide by them. There may be a reason for that rule, not obvious at the time but which, under certain circumstances, may be vital. Of course, one of the differences between golf and, say, cricket is that each player is not under the eyes of an umpire all the time. The club golfer who wants to bend a rule in a weekend competition can do so much more easily than a club cricketer. The hopefully humorous story at the head of this chapter is not necessarily a ‘tall tale’ like the one in the first chapter. A great deal does depend on the honesty of the player when no one is watching. Most people recognise that golf, like every other sport, cannot operate without rules. They accept the decision of some authority about what those rules are and, generally speaking, try to abide by them even when no one is watching. The point is that unless everyone keeps to the rules the game becomes impossible.



Surely it follows that life has its rules. They are usually called moral laws. Christians are people who accept Jesus Christ as their authority for the rules of life.

