

/ HIT MORE FAIRWAYS! /
THE STORY BEHIND TIGER'S KNEE / TIPS FROM OUR STARS
STOP MAKING THE SAME MISTAKES / BREAKING 100 90 80

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ZING THOSE EUROS?

SEPTEMBER 08

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DOWNHILL HOLES CHANGE THE TARGET IN YOUR MIND'S EYE

I teach and play most of my golf at Pebble Beach, so I've come to realize that the par-3 seventh hole is a great example of why downhill holes give players problems. Elevation changes can throw you off balance. And when you take your address on a downhill hole, instead of tilting your head, you tend to look down and to the left (for right-handers), which subconsciously makes you guide the ball in that direction. You might even find that your shoulders open slightly because you're looking left, and that tends to make you pull the ball. To beat this problem, the final thing you should do before swinging is look a little to the right of your target and swing as if that's where you want the ball to go.





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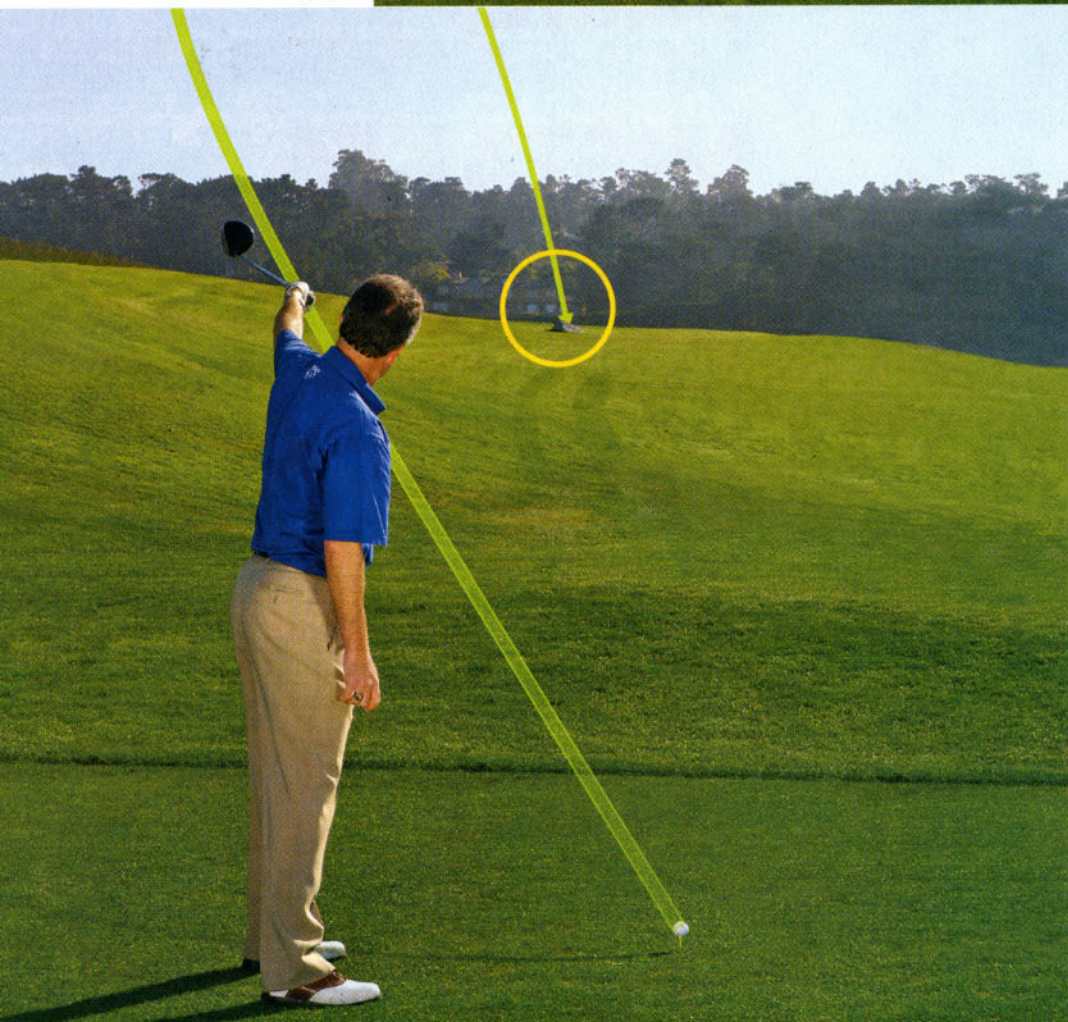
BY LAIRD SMALL WITH RON KASPRISKE / PHOTOGRAPHS BY J.D. CUBAN

Wherever you play most of your golf, I bet there's that one hole that brings out the worst in your game. You've triple-bogeyed it so many times, you find yourself thinking about it in the middle of the night before your next round. / You're not alone. Even the best in the world have a blowup hole. My advice: Next time you play the hole, try a different strategy. If you're still having problems, then ask a teaching pro for a playing lesson, and go out and confront that situation. You have to face your fears. Still stuck? Here are some tips on five common situations where amateurs run into trouble again and again.

DOGLEG HOLES

DON'T BITE OFF TOO MUCH FROM THE TEE

The water and woods are full of golf balls from players who tried to be heroes on doglegs. Your goal should be to put the ball in play off the tee and have a decent second shot—that's it. Here on Pebble's par-5 18th, aiming left of the trees in the fairway is a risky play, even though it might give you a chance to reach the green in two. Hit the ball in the water, and you're probably going to have to re-tee. Instead, take a club that will put your ball in play right of the trees. If you miss the shot to the right, there's room to recover. And if you pull it, you'll likely still be dry.



BLIND SHOTS

ADJUST FOR YOUR NORMAL SHOT

The mistake most people make with blind shots—such as the drive here on the eighth hole at Pebble—is that they don't allow for their normal shot shape when aiming.

Someone might tell you to aim at the rock from this tee, and your drive will end up in good position. But if you play a fade or slice, aiming at the rock will actually put you in jeopardy of hitting your ball over a cliff. What you should be thinking is, you want your drive to *end up* in line with the rock. For a fader, that means aiming well left of it.

LONG PAR 3S

GIVE YOURSELF A REAL CHANCE AT PAR

Most amateurs rarely hit the green on a long, tough par 3, like the 17th at Pebble. They shoot for the flag and end up in some nasty lies. Instead, aim for the safest, fattest landing area near the green that gives you a chance to chip on and one-putt. The bigger target will also give you more confidence. Here on 17, there's a wide area short and right of the green. Hit to here and, to play the chip-and-run, grab a short iron, set the ball back in your stance and your weight forward, and make a few rehearsal swings, brushing the turf. Then stroke it like a putt.



SCARY SHOTS

GET READY FOR THE UNNERVING ONES

You have to play a scary shot tension free—like this one over the cliff on No. 8 at Pebble. The best way to overcome your tension is to practice the shot until you expect success, not failure. On a slow day, go to that spot on the course, drop several balls and hit them as if they really count. Focus on deep breathing and a relaxed grip pressure instead of the shot itself. Then give yourself a positive thought. For me, it might be, *I know I can do this*. The best players preview their success, then make it happen. ■