



In search of Par

with PGA professional Carl Watts

Nick's Diary: Despite the inclement weather, my determination to take my game up a level has seen me brave the sub-zero conditions at my local driving range in the quest to work through all the training regimes that Carl set me. I've also managed a couple of outings on the golf course, which has allowed me to put what I've learned into practice under competitive pressure.

The rotation move that Carl and I worked on in the first few sessions is really starting to take hold now, and I've virtually grooved the concept of swinging around my body, and rotating the arms through impact. It's far from the finished article, but my hands-led, over-the-top move has been all but eradicated, the result being that the fade has gone and a noticeable draw has been introduced to my iron play. Not only is my shot shape better, but the strike through the ball has improved considerably, and I'm hitting it a good 10-15 yards further with my irons, and even more with my woods, just because I'm doing things in the right order now.

I now need to work on fine-tuning the key positions, while introducing more speed into the downswing, which is what we're working on here.

Carl's assessment:

When I first saw Nick, he was aiming well left, with an over-the-top swing, a ball position that was too far forward and had an open clubface at impact, hence I named him 'Mr Average', as this sequence describes the vast majority of players. Over the last six weeks he has really taken on board the importance of a much more rotational move in the swing, and his ball flight, now a draw, is telling us he is now squaring up the clubface. His swing speed, which has gone from 85 to 91 mph, shows that the upper and lower body timing has dramatically improved, which is why we are seeing an increase of 10-15 yards on his iron shots and 20-plus yards on his driving.

Key to his improvement is that he is starting to understand his swing faults and believe in the changes we are making through the results he is seeing. Now that the clubface is squaring up consistently we can now introduce other key drills to allow Nick to swing with more commitment. This month, I have introduced two key drills to enhance speed, timing and arm connection through the swing, further encouraging a more rotational move at speed.



1

In the **second part** of Nick Bayly's quest to hit more fairways and greens, Carl Watts assesses his progress and moves on to the next stage of his swing development

Drill 1: Connection Drill: Impact Ball

The aim of this drill is to make sure the connection of the arms and elbows stays consistent throughout the swing. The dreaded 'flying elbow' applies not only on the backswing, but on the through swing as well. It's a move that prevents the clubface from squaring up at impact.

Instructions: Place the balloon in between the forearms at address, now start with half swings back and through, keeping the balloon in place. Then build up to three-quarter swings, then full shots. You will notice the right elbow on the backswing stays the same distance from the left arm and then the left elbow on the through swing stays the same distance to the right arm. The elbow positions are key to the rotation of the clubface. As an added sensation, you should feel as though the body is taking much more of a lead in the swing.



2

Drill 2: Resistance Fan

The aim here is to increase speed through the impact zone. When Nick started he had slowed down his flawed swing in an attempt to reduce the shot dispersion; now his technique is improving, commitment and speed is now a real possibility.

Instructions: You can buy this fan or a similar style that clicks onto your club, and I really recommend getting one, as not only is it great for speed and technique, but it's also a great golf workout. Start with half swings at speed, building up to three-quarter, then full swings. After six swings with the fan, hit a full shot with your choice of club. Repeat the sequence with a variety of clubs. The difference will highlight how slowly you normally swing the club, and improve the timing between your body and arms.

Take your game to the next level

Carl Watts is the resident PGA Professional at The Exclusive Golf Academy at Mannings Heath Golf Club in Sussex. He is available for lessons from an hour lesson to a two-day residential tuition break. Carl is also hosting a week-long tuition break at the five-star Lykia World Golf Resort in Turkey from Jan 25- Feb 1. For details email carl@carlwattsgolf.co.uk or call 07930 365866.

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