

The Recovery Shot - Play the Percentages

by Bob Menzies, PGA Professional

How many times, after a round of golf, do we think back to the various shots we've played, and say to ourselves, *"That was such a stupid mistake - I can't believe I even tried to hit that shot!"* Often?!

If so, one way to play "smarter" golf - especially when in trouble -- is to be able to play shots that allow for the highest percentage of success. It would be foolish to try to hit a "once in a life-time/miracle" type of shot - especially if we've never even practiced that shot before! The chances of pulling off that "miracle" shot are very slim. Unless we have practiced a certain type of recovery shot, don't try to "force" it to happen when you are out there on the course! "Play the percentages" is a phrase we often hear, but unfortunately it's often easier said, than done. Simply put, play the shot that you feel will give you the **best** chance to make the **best** possible score. However, for example, we all know how difficult it can be to accept the fact that "punching out" from the trees - instead of "going for it" -- can be. Keep this commonly used statement in mind the next time you try a big, heroic, low-percentage type of shot: "Less is more".

Additionally, when you are planning your recovery shot, think ahead to your **next** shot, as well. Proper planning and visualization will make golf a much more pleasing game! Before playing your recovery shot, try to determine the best spot to play your **next** shot from. Remember, it's one thing to simply punch-out -- back into play -- but it's another thing to punch out **smartly**, back into play! Studying the lie of your ball, choosing the correct club, etc., are all factors involved in planning your shot - especially a recovery shot.

Lastly, when trying to recover from the trees or a similar unfortunate place, make sure that you do just that - **RECOVER!** We've all had situations where we've tried to hit some sort of recovery shot, and then ended up leaving the ball in a spot that's really no better than where it just was!