

# How to Break 100 – A Beginners Golf Guide to Lowering Scores

## **-Introduction**

Every golfer has the same goal, to shoot lower scores. Whether you are a junior golfer looking to improve, or an adult who is just picking up the game, this article will give you tips and tricks to utilize on course to help you reach the goal of shooting below 100.

When I first started playing golf, I was just like every other beginner, stringing together a few good holes and then finding myself in the trees making a triple bogey. This typically led to more big numbers on the scorecard and before I knew it, I was shooting over 100. How did I overcome this?

Other than the golf instruction on my swing, I tried to focus on what I could do on the course to lower my scores. It is not all about how well you can hit the ball, in fact, a huge part of lowering your scores is how you manage the course, make good decisions, and execute them.

## **-Look at golf from a different perspective**

For golfers struggling to break 100, look at it from a different perspective. Breaking 100 is all about eliminating the big numbers on your scorecard. Instead of a double bogey we need to make a bogey, instead of a triple bogey, we need to make a double bogey. When we start playing smarter golf and achieve these goals, it will get better and eventually the bogeys turn into pars.

Now, how do you manage to lower your score from triples to doubles, and doubles to bogeys? There is a lot you can do to manage this. I will tell you the same way I tell my students when I am giving private lessons. Play boring golf. What I mean by that is stop trying to make the hero shot between the two trees where you have small gaps, but instead, get your ball back into the fairway to allow for an open shot to the green. Sure, this adds a stroke to the hole, but when you try and make the hero shot, often you find yourself in the trees for 1, or even 2 more shots before getting back in the fairway or near the green. This goes back to playing smarter golf. It may seem more fun to try to fly a ball high in the air and over the trees or curve a ball around the trees and have it roll up on the green, but our goal to break 100 is about limiting the damage. We limit damage by keeping our ball in the middle, as often as possible, without risking hitting it in the tree's multiple times on the same hole.

## **-Club selection and aim**

We can also lower our scores with other aspects of course management. I like to look at club selection, and direction of aiming. If you are hitting your ball from the fairway onto a green, take a second to see where the "trouble" is. Trouble could be water, hazards, or sand traps. We want to avoid these at all costs as these are one of the main causes of big numbers. If a shot requires you to fly your ball over water that is just before the green, we look at club selection. Make sure you give yourself enough club to ensure that your ball is

going to get over the water. We don't want to record penalty strokes on our score. This goes for hazards and sand traps as well. If there is trouble behind the green, make a club selection that ensures your ball won't go too far over the green into these areas. Direction comes into play on these shots as well. If your goal is to break 100, direction is simple to explain. Aim for the middle of the green, every shot. This goes back limiting damage. If we aim for the middle of the green regardless of where the pin is, we give ourselves some room to the left and right in case that's where our shot goes, and still have a good chance to be putting. If the pin is on the far-right hand side of the green and you aim right at it and hit your ball right, chances are you will miss the green because you didn't give yourself any room to miss the ball to the right. Avoiding big numbers is all about getting the ball on the green as soon as possible.

When you have a better understanding on making smarter decisions, and making the right club selection we can look at other solutions to lowering your score. Let's look at what to do when we are on and around the green.

### **-Chipping and Putting**

Every golfer, even PGA Tour players, miss the green. In fact, the average PGA Tour player misses the green around 7 times per round. If PGA Tour players are missing 60% of the time, we can't expect to hit every green. So, what do we do when we miss a green?

The first and most important rule on chipping is to only chip once. This sounds obvious and while it is, it is very true. What I mean by this is if you find yourself just off the green and chipping, we need to ensure that our first chip shot gets on the green. I see a lot of people 2 or 3 chipping when they get around the green, this will create big numbers fast. By the time you get near the green, you are already on your 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> shot, if you chip it two times, you could be putting for double bogey. If we use a goal of 2 putting every green (which should be your goal), you will then record a triple bogey for that hole. If you can get to where you are only chipping it once to get on the green, that triple turns into a bogey, or double bogey at worst. What I teach in my private instruction at this level is don't worry about chipping it to 3 feet, or even 5-7 feet. Worry about getting on the green so you can putt. Yes, it would be great to hit it to 3 feet, but at this point in your game, that shouldn't be your goal. Club selection and direction as stated before are two important factors to think about when chipping as well. Take a club that you know you can get on the green and aim in a safe spot that ensures you will give yourself a putt.

Putting is just as important and can be the main cause of big numbers if not done correctly. Don't look at every putt as if you have to make it, instead look at each putt with the goal of hitting it inside a 3-foot circle of the hole. If we can do this more often, we will 2 putt greens most of the time and save ourselves from the dreaded triple bogeys. You will also find yourself making some of those longer putts when all you are trying to do is get it inside your 3-foot circle. This is just a bonus.

I like to look at stats when it comes to putting and sharing those stats with my students. The reason behind this is that a 15-foot putt may look short, and you have it your head that you should make that putt a decent amount of time, but in reality you shouldn't. PGA Tour players average 23% of putts made from 15 feet, and 40% from 10 feet. If a PGA Tour player has 10, 10-foot putts, and makes less than 5 of them on average, we can't expect to make that many either. We can look at these stats to help us create realistic goals ourselves. Minimizing 3 putts and viewing your longer putts as "lag putts" (getting it close to the hole), instead of telling yourself you need to make it will help your putting game tremendously.

### **-Conclusion**

Setting realistic goals, making smart decisions on club selection and direction, and understanding course management will get you one step closer to breaking 100.



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