

IN GOLF, DON'T "BOUNCE BACK"...."CHALLENGE" YOURSELF!

The PGA Tour has a statistic known as "Bounce Back," which tracks how often a player follows an over-par hole with an under-par hole. The following are the top 5 players on the PGA Tour in "bouncing back" with their corresponding percentage and current world ranking:

<u>Player:</u>	<u>"Bounce Back %"</u>	<u>World Ranking (Feb '07)</u>
Jonathan Byrd	42.11	102
Mike Weir	38.46	51
Mark Wilson	37.93	255
Mark Calcavecchia	35.29	117
Lee Janzen	34.21	250

Clearly, there does not seem to be any correlation between bouncing back and world ranking. It is my contention that most good golfers, even those on the PGA Tour, try too hard to "get back" a shot they just lost by making bogey or double, and end up getting themselves into more trouble than they bargained for. In looking at the Qualifying School (Q-School) scores in 2005, where the top 30 players, after 6 rounds qualify for their PGA Tour card, an interesting observation was found. For those who finished in the top 30, thereby receiving their tour card for 2006, it was found that they had an average score of par or better for all of those holes following a bogie or worse.

In other words, getting a par, or at least averaging a score of par, following a "bad" hole in lieu of trying to "get one back" with a birdie was good enough to qualify for the PGA Tour. The 31st player, the one who did not gain his tour exemption, finished with a one-over-par for all of his "bounce-back holes." I believe that the "Bounce Back" statistic encourages a player to make birdie on the next hole and "pick one up quickly", instead of being patient, making par, and recapturing some momentum to get oneself back into the game.

This is where my concept of the "Challenge Hole" can be utilized. The Challenge Hole is defined as the hole following a hole where one is disappointed with their score. While most often that score is a bogey, double, or worse, it can also be a par after hitting a par 5 in two and three putting. After completing the hole, the player is instructed to take out a yellow highlighter and highlight the "challenge hole" (the next hole following a disappointing hole). The act of highlighting can also serve as a refocusing technique, in order to help the player get their attention on the task at hand, or the "next shot."

The goal of challenge hole should be par (this of course is for single digit handicap players only), and can be 1, 2, 3 or more over par for higher handicappers. At the end of the round, the player should add up the score for all of his or her challenge holes, again with the goal of being no worse than par in total. For handicaps between 10-20, the goal of averaging bogey on these holes would be appropriate, but ultimately the player should set the goal for himself.

My theory of the challenge hole simply suggests that if you don't panic and try to do too much of the hole following a bad hole, remain patient, refocus, and remain satisfied with just "getting back on track" by making par, you will stay off the "bogey train," and your overall scores will improve.

Dr. Jeffrey A. Fishbein
Championship Performance
Toll free 1-877-GOLF421
Email: info@championshipperform.com