



Zen and Golf

Since there is so much emphasis placed on developing a mental toughness around your golf game, many golfers in California, and around the world for that matter, are constantly looking for ways to improve their mindset and get one up on their competitors.

Personally, I have always been on the lookout for new ways to improve my golf game. And, recently I found a great way to improve my mental focus. It is the art of Zen. I actually discovered Zen through basketball. Famous NBA coach of the Chicago Bull and Los Angeles Lakers, Phil Jackson has used Zen in his approach to coaching basketball for more than a decade.

The term Zen actually has a number of different meanings. Zen means meditation and many people associate it with Buddhism. It also has other connotations relating to enlightenment and awareness.

Jackson used these principles along with visualization to mentally prepare his players for games. He believed that if you practiced being aware and visualization what you wanted to do before you actually go out and do it, you will have better results.

Therefore, rather than thinking about what to do while playing a game, his players would simply react to the situation and achieve the desired result they have previously envisioned.

While this may sound a little obscure, Jackson's philosophy has yielded great results. He is the most successful coach in the history of the NBA, winning 12 championships.

How will Zen help my golf game?

Zen will help golfers get into the right frame of mind. Since golf is a very mentally taxing game, it will prepare players for the pressure and stress filled situations they will face.

The problem with most golfers is that their mind is running a mile a minute. They are thinking about their last shot, their next shot, the hole that is coming up next, and about the comment someone made 5 holes ago.

Zen allows players to focus on being aware and drowning out all of the other distractions on the course. Having a sharp focus will put a golfer's mind at ease and allow them to focus on the shot at hand.

In Zen, being aware is more important than being smart. If you are aware of your current surroundings, then you can rely on being in the moment rather than racking your brain for information.

This is why visualization is a key aspect of Zen. Meditation and visualization help golfers get in the correct mindset by visually playing a shot, hole, or round in their mind. It helps them mentally prepare by running various situations on the golf course through their mind before it occurs.



Therefore, when the situation occurs, golfers will not have to think about what they are going to do. They just have to go with their instincts, trust their decision, and focus on being aware.

Many golf writers, such as Ryan Smithson, are now beginning to write about alternative ways to approach golf from a mental perspective. Give Zen a try, it worked for Phil Jackson, and he won 12 championships.