

Len Kennett passed away in the summer of 2025 at the age of 98. He managed the pro shops at Los Verdes, and later, Lakewood, and was a leader in engaging juniors in participating in tournament golf.

41. For your tee shot select a target that makes the next shot easy. Remember this target may not be in the center of the fairway and it could be shorter than your regular drive. Avoid shots that call for perfect execution. You can plan this strategy. For better golf now, do it now.

42. Practice on the driving range can be very helpful as most golfers know. Actually very few players have ever become champions without a great deal of practice tee time. I stress to my students that quality of practice means far more than quantity. Just to claim that you have struck 500 shots before breakfast means nothing. All golfers should try to find practice time but be determined that each shot will be planned and not hit off machine gun style.

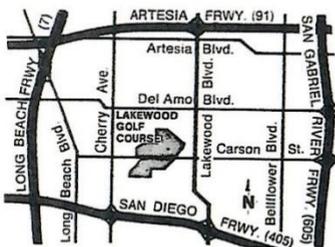
43. Slow play is a problem that most modern golfers are familiar with. Never mind that the game wasn't intended to be played in this fashion. It's a fact of life that some waiting will occur on even the most private of courses. You can avoid the tension that this waiting produces by staying away from your ball. Only walk to your ball when you are actually ready to strike it. The anxiety and frustration of standing over your ball too long should be avoided.

44. The mind is truly where we can accomplish so much for our golf game. Let's never again say, "Well, I finally got lucky and hit a good shot." As a teacher, I'm a lot more comfortable with, "Hey, that's a darn good shot. I can hit lots more of those." Let's savor our good shots. Think about the poor ones only long enough to discover our error and then refocus on all of our successes. Our golf game is what we think it is. Let's at least give it the credit it deserves.

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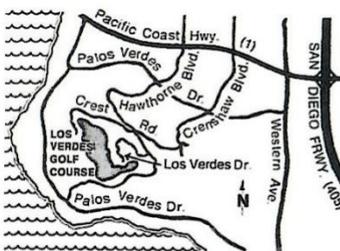
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44 Secrets of a Teaching Golf Pro

by Len Kennett, PGA

As requested by many listeners, we've compiled selected golf tips offered by Len Kennett on Sportstalk, on KABC radio 790. Len is professional and president of Len Kennett's Golf Shops and has 32 years of teaching experience. Len is also a golf club design consultant and coach of the United States People-to-People international amateur golf team.

1. The National Golf Foundation did a revealing survey charting the number of shots the average golfer makes with each club. The breakdown was wood clubs 25%, irons 14%, trouble shots 5%, chips 13%, and putting 43%. It's obvious that putting and chipping make up 56% of the game. I strongly encourage my students to keep these figures in mind and practice accordingly. I'll promise any player improvement if he'll spend 56% of practice time on putting and chipping.



2. A golfer's #1 mistake is misalignment. That means failure to aim not only yourself along the target line but, just as important, your clubhead. Because this is such a simple sounding assignment, most golfers fail to give this fundamental the diligent attention it deserves. Failure to align properly forces the swing into errors that needn't exist if the golfer stands properly when addressing the ball. I'll promise better performance for any golfer who works as hard on alignment, blade and body as Jack Nicklaus.

3. Should a golfer wear a full-fingered glove? Well, bear in mind that most touring professionals who play golf for a living do. Some golfing greats do not, of course. Ben Hogan and Byron Nelson, from another golf generation, wouldn't have dreamed of wearing a glove. My advice is that wearing a glove can be helpful, but make sure it fits snugly, and is stored carefully (away from sun and heat). Above all, don't allow the use of a glove to become a crutch that prevents you from gripping the club properly.

4. "Take your time." I'm often asked for a single piece of advice that can help a player before starting an important round of golf. I've been repeating this bit of advice for years, and many golfers have been helped by the prescription: "Take your time." Not in studying the ground. Not in walking to your shot. Certainly not in standing over the ball. I mean take your time swinging the club. Concentrate on smooth, steady application of power. Save tinkering with your swing until you're on the driving range and don't have to play your mistakes from behind a tree or from a bunker.

5. Great putters have had some individualistic habits. Arnold Palmer did wonderfully well with a rather knock-kneed position. Some fine young golfers have even experimented with cross-handed putting. But one golfing fundamental guides every successful putter. Keep the head absolutely still until after the ball is struck. As the old golfing Scots used to say, "Hit and Hark", though they made it sound like "it and ark." Keep that head still. Listen for the ball to drop. Don't look up.

6. A few little gems of wisdom from the champions are often thrown my way at golf tournaments. Some of the recent best I've heard are: "Remember your good shots rather than your bad." This builds your confidence. "The game consists of the next shot not the others that have gone before." "Often intensive practice does not pay immediately, but rewards as muscle memory in the next few weeks." "Always play the shot that makes the next one easy."

35. Those who play golf know the game is one of the most challenging and frustrating games devised. Unfortunately, these frustrations and emotions affect performance. We are deceiving ourselves if we believe that we can hit every shot well. If after missing a shot we lose control of our emotions and become either angry or disorganized, we are ready to miss our next shot. Work hard on understanding that the only shot that matters in golf is the next one.



36. Chipping and pitch shots are elements of the golf game that separate the champions from the losers. Not everyone can have a perfect swing, or hit the ball enormous distances, but all of us should be able to master the shots that make up the short game. I strongly encourage my students to devote much of their practice time to this vital area of golf and to understand that their ability to make par and sub par rounds is controlled by their ability to chip and pitch.

37. Nothing upsets the golfer more than fluffing a short chip shot. You can avoid this mistake if you, as a right-handed golfer, keep most of your weight on your left side. Also work hard to see that your hands are ahead of the ball at impact. I find this less difficult to accomplish if I minimize wrist action and unnecessary motion in the swing. This formula works very well for all chips including tight lies and shots off bare ground.

38. Golf clubs specifications are a subject that must not be overlooked by any golfer. Please never believe that your clubs don't affect your performance. If you play, you're certain to enjoy your game more with clubs suited to you. Proper consideration must be given to shaft flex. Five different flexes are available, also there are various grip sizes, club weights and lengths. Proper club lie is the last and possibly most important factor. Don't believe that just because a club is endorsed by a champion it is suited for you.

39. As we leave our adolescent years, learning any motor skill sport becomes more difficult. This is certainly true of the sport that I teach—golf. One point that I stress with all of my students is that immediate results can't be expected. Poor playing often occurs when a new style of play is attempted even if that method could provide long-term benefits. Golf students should know that often things get worse before they get better, but that a make-sense method can provide lasting pleasure from this great game.

40. Golf course strategy is an area that deserves more attention. Unfortunately I see high-handicap players attempt shots, repeatedly, that even Arnold Palmer wouldn't have taken on. This ability to think and plan carefully, while playing the game, can be learned. A place to start is to plan shots that allow sufficient tolerance for safety. For example, always shoot for the middle of the green, regardless of flag stick location, when the flag is farther than 100 yards. This strategy can help you.

28. A round of golf is much like life a golfer friend of mine, very bright, once told me. We must learn to accept what can't be altered and we must keep doing our best even when prospects aren't so rosy. It's helped me, and my students, to remember that matches aren't won by giving up when you're down or becoming too happy during periods of prosperity. The only shot that matters in golf is the one you're about to play.

29. There are as many theories or secrets as there are players, as any golfer who has been around the game for even a few weeks knows. For me, common sense says that good golf requires a good grip, a proper position at address that includes careful body and blade alignment, and a rhythmic swinging movement of the club from the start of the backswing to the end of the follow through. And, of course, lots of practice.

30. Anger or disappointment certainly isn't a new emotion for a golfer who's played any length of time. I believe it's better to let out some steam, provided you don't disturb the concentration of your fellow players, than to bottle it. It's better yet to remember that there is no such thing as a bad golf shot unless it has an adverse mental effect on the next shot that you are about to play. The others are history

31. Balance in your golf swing is essential for consistent results. You can lose balance in the swing in many different ways. By having the legs too stiff, or by playing the shot too flat-footed, or by attempting more power than is practical. To avoid any of these errors, use an exercise that I praise often. Put your feet together, heels touching, and swing the club. This drill forces tempo and the resulting balance. I consider it one of the best exercises in golf.

32. Golf judgment is a must for golfers at all levels of skill. Usually we fail in this department when we are more ambitious than our capabilities allow. Examples are getting in a deep fairway bunker and thinking distance rather than getting out; or taking a wood out of the rough when an iron would do it better. We shouldn't attempt to make up for past errors with a glory shot. The round will almost always finish better if we play the percentage shot and do our star stuff from the fairway.

33. Selecting the proper length of your golf club can be tricky. Don't fall into the trap of thinking that because you're tall, long clubs are necessarily correct, or if you're shorter than average, short clubs are required. Length of arms is an important consideration. More important in my judgment is the player's strength. A tall, slender player, not so strong, will do far better with standard length clubs, but adjusted to an upright lie. We do this work in our shops. It's important.

34. Compression for golf balls is a subject that is often misunderstood. For years it was preached that high compression balls, 90 or 100, couldn't be used by anyone except the fine player. But recently science has become involved in many aspects of golf and has disproved this old-fashioned idea. Today we know that 100 compression balls go farther for all of us. Don't use the high compression ball if you're bothered with the hard feel but do be aware that science proves that high compression balls go farther for all levels of player.

7. Many golfers worry about the length of their backswing. An ideal visual effect is when the club reaches the horizontal. After 30 years on the lesson tee I do not attach much importance to this sort of detail as experience has taught me that champions succeed very nicely with swings other than what is accepted as just right. Look for a good, free swinging motion and let the backswing find its own length.

8. There are all sorts of exaggerated body actions in golf. I believe students of the game often forget that individual physical differences account for these actions. There have never been two champions whose swings looked alike. All that happens is the player maneuvers his body so (a) it doesn't interfere with his swing; (b) the clubhead stays on the chosen path and (c) the clubhead is square at impact.

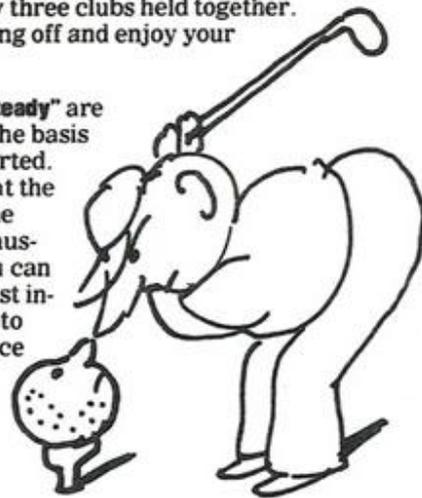
9. When a golfer is faced with a ball in deep rough the most important factor to consider is that the ball must rise as quickly as possible. The longer the ball stays in contact with the heavy grass the shorter the distance it will travel. Actually, a more lofted iron will often produce more distance than a lower numbered club. When in deep rough, take ample loft and don't force the swing for unrealistic results.

10. Once the great Ben Hogan was asked by an aspiring young professional the secret of Hogan's tournament successes. Hogan answered by asking, "You have a practice bag don't you? Use it." End of Hogan's secrets. My secrets are: (a) a good grip, (b) good rhythm from start to finish and, (c) as Ben Hogan says, use that practice bag.

11. Putter selection is important for successful putting. I believe it's generally agreed that to make good scores, above-average putting is a must. I recommend at least experimenting with a center shaft putter. It will be a fraction easier to use. Another point, own a putter that has a little loft. This loft helps start the ball straight. And, without going too heavy, a putter with a little weight is easier to control than a light one.

12. No athlete will begin his sport from a cold start. Whether he is a runner, tennis player or baseball star, he does some muscle-warming movements. Top golfers almost always hit balls before a round that means anything. If your schedule won't permit this, then the next best warm-up is back and forth swings with say three clubs held together. Rest a few minutes before teeing off and enjoy your improved game.

13. "Look at the ball" and "head steady" are sound golf tips. This has been the basis of good golf since the game started. But do not block the head still at the cost of cramping the swing. The flexibility and length of neck muscles will decide how steady you can keep your head. Despite the best intentions even the best players, to accomplish freedom, experience some head movement. Don't give up your free motion for a steady head.



14. Most par three holes require an iron shot off the tee and many new golfers make the shot harder than it need be. Rather than dropping the ball down on bare ground, or even using a tuft of grass, I encourage my students to use a wood tee that has been pushed into the ground as far as it will go. I'm sure this improves performance because it places the ball at ground level and leaves the ball on a firm, level surface.

15. Always play away from trouble is one of the basic rules of shrewd golf. For example, if you have trouble on the right, such as water or out of bounds, you should tee on the right side of the tee box and then hit toward the opposite side of the fairway, away from trouble. With this procedure I approach the fairway from the widest angle and allow myself a margin of error for either a slice or a push.

16. For most golfers putting is largely a mental experience. One cannot putt well without confidence. It's been said by psychologists that the mother of confidence is success and the father of success is smaller prior success. Build your success pattern by sinking consecutive putts of two and three feet. Practice sinking these short putts until your confidence is high.

17. Muscle memory is what all golf teachers are trying to help our students develop. We want the golf moves practiced often enough that they become repetitive and buried in the subconscious. When you no longer have to think about a movement, you have that movement under control. What we worry about is a student who practices a different swing each day and never gives muscle memory a chance. Attempt to conquer one mistake before taking on another.

18. Inconsistent is the player who is always changing his swing. Obviously he is seeking consistency and in his search will tinker with stance, grip and different thought each time out. The way to consistency is correct teaching, followed by dedicated, intelligent practice until the new swing has replaced old bad habits. Have no illusions about these changes. They will take time.

19. Judging distance is a very important skill in becoming a better golf player. You can learn your capabilities by merely pacing your shots as the touring professionals do. Hit ten balls, all with the same club, and learn what your average length with that club is. Golfers should learn this skill early in their careers. You're missing some of the real pleasure of the game if you can't select your own clubs and can't play without a caddie or a helper.

20. Wind is a condition that most golfers must learn to deal with. While the expert may not always use this method, I'm sure the average player does his best when he attempts to harness the wind, to make it work for him. When there is a cross wind, accept it and compensate either right or left allowing the wind to carry your ball. When playing into a head wind, regard the wind as so many yards added to the hole and work only for solid ball contact. Avoid slugging.

21. Perfect shots are what all golfers strive for. But certainly none of us should be discouraged or surprised when each shot doesn't finish by the flag. You'll hit a better percentage of good shots and make a lot of pars after your poor ones if you make up your mind that you're going to have to do some good chipping and putting. Scrambling is what many players call it, and don't be discouraged if the amount seems to be more than your normal.

22. Uphill and downhill shots frequently frighten the new golfer. I can understand this but it really needn't be. No one needs to take instruction on walking up or down a hill. The human body sets up balance and posture automatically. You lean to maintain balance. These same principles apply for playing up and downhill shots. Your natural sense of balance should guide posture. Don't get involved in theories that make the shot more difficult than it is.



23. Teeing the golf ball is a subject that deserves more attention than the average golfer gives it. On a par three hole, when using an iron, do tee the ball, but not so high that you run the risk of hitting the ball from the top of the blade. For the driver, I believe that at least half of the ball should be above the club at the address position. This will encourage a sweep that follows a backswing that is low and slow.

24. First tee jitters are something that almost every golfer knows something about. They can be controlled, to varying degrees, by attitude and reminding yourself how often you have successfully played this first shot. Refuse to contemplate uncertainty. And remember, those watching are not out to ridicule the player. Fellow golfers are more likely to sympathize than gloat, for they know the first tee feeling also.

25. Concentration in golf terms is the ability to think only about the coming shot, and shut out the world and its problems completely. There can be many distractions. Chatter, aircraft overhead, wind or rain. Different champions apply different solutions to these problems. Some enjoy small talk between shots to ease the tension. No matter what your solution, it's essential that when it's your turn to play you are able to give the shot your full attention.

26. Recently the British Golf Society did a study, at a major golf championship, which involved charting results for over 5,000 putts. Results indicated that over 85% of the breaking putts that were missed finished below the hole. Since this study I strongly advise all of my students to learn to adjust their aim and touch so that they keep the ball above the cup and always strive to have the ball dying as it reaches the cup.

27. Scramblers are in almost every golf club. They have the reputation of making a poor game go a long way. Actually this type of player is often a winner for he simply uses his head and is familiar with his limitations. Really, this is just golfing judgment and it should be easier to use good judgment than it is to swing like Jack Nicklaus or Tom Watson. For best improvement, try it.

Print Instructions

- Relax
- Print pages 1-4, both sides, rotate long edge
- Fold in half lengthwise, staple it in the middle, and you have the 44 secrets brochure
- Practice and improve your game
- Thanks are given to Len Kennett for his “secrets”
- Don’t forget to clean the grooves on your clubs