



## Short Game Secrets

with P.G.A Master Professional Tony Bennett

### Overview:

Let's start with the facts, as they are today,

*Tour Professionals make only 85%-95%  
of their three footers, step back to five feet  
and they hole about 65% and at ten feet  
nobody holes more than 25%*

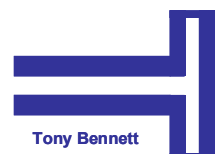
*Dave Peltz*

If you believe the sentiment made in this statement, it is obvious that if you want consistently good scores we must putt from inside three feet (a little less than 1metre). Over the years Professionals and Coaches have taken statistics from their players, driving accuracy and distance, greens hit in regulation, putting average, putts on greens in regulation along with sand saves and total saves. As you can see there is nothing that isolates chipping, pitching, sand and lob shots from putting, the only method currently used is to tie the afore mentioned shots with putting to give the total saves and sand saves categories. Therefore it is my opinion that in order to define a good short game it is necessary to isolate shots from around the green from those taken on the green, meaning that the only reliable guide that we can use is that a shot finishing inside one metre will probably result in a save.



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The three main cornerstones of a strong reliable short game.

- √ A solid repeatable **Technique**.
- √ Good **Touch**.
- √ A vivid **Imagination**.

It is not possible to separate these three cornerstones in my opinion, each has such an important role that it would be useless to advocate that one had a greater importance than another, however it is possible to put them in an order of development.

#### **Technique:**

Until a player develops a solid and repeatable technique it will be difficult to judge the flight or role of any shot meaning of course that they cannot clearly visualise their shots. If a player cannot accurately contact the ball, then their judgement of speed will be badly affected.

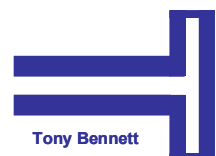
#### **Touch:**

When a player has found and polished a reliable technique, then they must develop their touch, they must have the ability to pitch the ball on the point that they wish to, while maintaining control over the speed at which the ball releases along the ground.



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### **Imagination:**

Before a player can attempt to play any shot they should be able to see the shot in their minds eye, this is called visualisation and it is even more important in the short game than in other areas of the game. Due to the nature of the courses we play it is unlikely that any two shots from around the green will be the same, different situations caused by the lie of the ball, the slope we are standing on, the distance that we are from the green and the hole, the speed and firmness of the green and the pressure of the situation all ensure that we will be tested in a wide variety of ways. Creativity and the ability to see the shot is often the difference between the short game wizard and the competent performer.

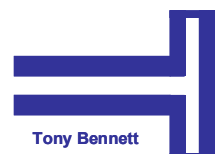
Players will be tested in many ways around the green, even though there is practically an unlimited number of the type of shots that we must play, they tend to fall into one of four broad categories:

1. A shot where the ball can stay close to the ground and runs further than it flies. **(CHIP)**
2. A shot that flies through the air more than it travels along the ground. **(PITCH)**
3. A shot that results in the ball flying at a considerably higher angle than the loft of the club used and drops to the green with little or no roll. **(LOB)**
4. A shot played from the greenside sand bunkers. **(SAND)**



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Course management has a role to play in the ability to get the ball up and down from around the green, factors that are associated with short game success include the position where you play the chip, pitch, lob or sand shot from. It is normally easier to get the ball close to the hole when you have at least a reasonable amount of green to work with.

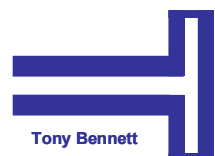


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## The Basic Chip:



There are two options for the execution of this shot. When using the first method we would expect that the ball will land and then release slowly rolling towards the hole.

**Option 1:** If you want to make sure that you collect the ball before touching the ground then it is wise to position the sternum slightly target side of the ball. Set the hands slightly forward to ensure that the grip end of the club is in front of the club face then grip the club as you would the putter. You will probably feel that there is more weight on the front foot and with a ball positioned in the middle or even slightly further back in the stance. The posture should be the same as when using the putter this will result in the club sitting a little on the toe so that the heel of the club is off the ground



The stroke should be initiated with the shoulders, often players only move the hands and arms, which creates the tendency to scoop the ball. As the swing continues the players weight should remain on the front foot.



You can easily see that the weight has remained on the front foot and that the upper body has turned towards the target. You can also notice that the left wrist has remained flat throughout the shot.



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## Option 2

A variation on the first in that when playing this shot you grip the club in the same way that you would for a full shot and the club will sit on the sole rather than on the toe. It is preferable to use this shot when the ball is not lying so well or if the distance between the edge of the green and the ball is greater, however remember that when playing the chip with the conventional grip the ball will release into a roll more quickly.



As with Option 1, the ball should be placed further back in the stance, sternum forward, the hands set a little in front of the ball and more weight over the front foot.



The stroke should be initiated with the shoulders while the weight remains on the front foot and the left wrist should continue to be flat throughout the shot.

**“GOLF” is written by Tony Bennett, PGA Master Professional**



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