

# BROWN BAG GOLF

## Lesson #1

### Driver Center Contact

**Objective:** Hit 7 out of 10 drives making contact in the center of the clubface, with the ball mark at least half inside a circle the size of a quarter.

**Eric Jones:** [00:00:13] Welcome to Brown Bag Golf. I'm PGA teaching professional Eric Jones and we're working on a 35 minute lesson on one of the five most important shots in golf using the four key metrics to help you level up your game and lower your scores.

**Eric Jones:** [00:00:28] Today's focus is going to be on the driver. That's the shot we're working on and the metric we're going to be working on is center contact. We're going to be looking at how well do you hit the ball in the middle of your club face. This is without a doubt one of the most important things you can learn to do with your driver if you want to be consistent and to maximize your distance. For instance, if you miss the center of your club face by a quarter of an inch you're going to lose about 5 percent in distance. But if you missed by three quarters of an inch - about the width of a dime - you're costing yourself 20 to 25 percent of your distance. That means if you're in at 200 yards you're going to cost yourself 25 yards. If you drive it 250 that's 35 yards it's costing you, just by not knowing where you're hitting on the club face.

The other thing is if you hit the ball all over the club face it's going to produce a variety of shot shapes if you hit it on the inside. You could easily pull it to the left with a hook if you hit it out on the toe you could draw it or you could fade it off to the right.

[00:01:27] What we want to know first, before I'm even working with a student and working on their swing, is I want to know how well you can make center contact.

Now just to tell you a story one of my students started and he leveled his first set when he did his baseline at two out of ten. In other words only two times out of ten could he hit it in the middle and he was shooting in the low 90s. Within three weeks of practice he was up to consistently eight or better and he was suddenly hitting 10 fairways a round. Last Sunday he shot his first ever round in the 70s. So that's how important it is.

So I'll put this face down and I'm going to locate the circle at approximately the middle of the club face as best I can to where I know that the sweet spot is. Now we're going to hit some shots. As soon as I make contact, it's going to transfer an impression that'll tell me how well I'm doing. Your goal by the end of this week is to get seven out of 10 wherever you start. Remember wherever you start on your first ten ball set - that's what we call your baseline level. Let's say you hit three out of 10. And I would say the average is probably four to five, even for better players. But let's say you start at 4. The next time you practice and want you to level up to five. And then after that level up to six and then level up to seven. That's the whole idea is to graduate.

[00:02:57] OK let's take a look at my strike. Basically I got about half the ball inside of my quarter mark and half just a little bit out. So just a little bit outside of center. But about the right height up and down. Just a little bit outside of where I'd have for perfect but not bad. Anything that we can get where half the ball or more is inside one of the

circles. We're going to call that a good. So that's going to be your level. So I'd count this as one. So I'm one for one. I'm going to hit 10 balls and see how many I get in the middle of the club face. Now I know it's not always easy for everybody to get some impact tape so I'm going to show you a really easy way to do this with tools and implements that almost everybody carries all the time. All you're going to need is a sharpie and a quarter. Take a quarter. And I want to put it right in the middle of the club face and I'm going to trace an outline. That leaves a nice circle right in the middle of the club face. Now the next part that I'm going to do is I'm going to mark one of the balls. I'm going to put a little dot right in the back and I'm going to position that dot that what we call a six o'clock position. That means right behind the ball. Right behind, right the very back of the ball. The target is always 12 o'clock. Dead center right in the middle. Well slightly up, but it's right in the middle of my mark.

[00:04:32] So that would be a one. You hit ten balls and you see how many you get. However many you get out of ten, that's your level. Now I have another little trick for you. If you have a club that has a black face on it. And these are becoming more and more common. So I'm going to get my quarter out again and I'm going to draw another mark again on the center of my club face because I'm measuring center contact. Center contact is one of the three rules of physics that help you determine how far the ball is going to go. The better you able to make center contact the further your ball is going to go. So I'm going to trace my mark in the middle of my club face. And there is my mark. It's a little hard to see on a black background and what's even harder to see is the mark that gets transferred from the back of the ball. So I have this really special spray powder that I use. It's actually foot powder but it works great. One of my students wrote in and suggested this to me and I've been using it ever since. I love it. It's a great idea. So I'm going to make a quick spray right across the top. Tee up a ball. I don't have to use a mark on the back of my ball. I just tee it up and make my swing. That transfers a nice little mark. Again I'm inside my circle. That will be a one for one. So usually either one of these. Any of these tricks to help you level up.

[00:06:07] You're going to find that the better you're able to make center contact the more fairways you're going to get. As a PGA pro, I'm going to tell you that the number one request I get from students is how can I be more consistent. This is the very first thing I want you to work on to start being more consistent. It's one of the keys. If you're not hitting the ball in the middle of the club face then you're not going to be making consistent shots. So that's key number one. Now if you're not hitting in the middle of the club face let me tell you a couple of very simple adjustments that you can make first before you start doing anything else with your swing. There are four! Four adjustments that you can make to help see if you can improve your center contact. These are really easy to do. The first is to vary your height. If you're hitting the ball way up on the club face well this makes sense. Lower your height a little bit. Or if you're hitting low ball conversely if you're hitting it too low raise the height just a little bit OK. If I'm going to make my swing and I'm going to listen for the sound of impact. And I'm going to show you where my where my where my eyes ought to be when I'm at impact and I'm going to show you what I commonly see is a mistake. So we'll take a look. Let's take a look at the common mistake first. And I see this quite a bit. I'm making my swing I get right

before the impact and something in my rotation causes my whole body to turn.

[00:07:33] So that by the time the club gets to the impact position my head and my eyes are actually anywhere from a foot to three or four feet in front of the ball. It's really subtle and it only happens at the very last minute in the swing. But that little bit of head movement changes the spine angle and changes the club face angle which produces a lot of variability in the flight. So what I want you to do, is I really want you to see and listen where your eyes are at impact. I'm going to make two swings. I'm going to do this correctly and I'm going to do it incorrectly. Let's see what looks like incorrectly as I move forward through impact. I'm watching my 6. So you see right before impact my eyes were actually just a little bit forward. Now I'm going to hit one I'm going to mark my ball put it right at my 6 o'clock position and I'm going to make sure that my eyes are on it and that I see my nice little red mark when I make impact. Again I'm listening for the sound. And right is my driver makes the sound I'm asking myself where are my eyes right at impact. So there we are. Listen for the sound. I know my eyes were right on the ball at impact. One thing I don't want you to do is think mechanically, like oh I need to stay in back of it. Keep it really simple just see the back of the ball. If you can see the back of the ball guaranteeing your spine angles can be exactly where it needs to be, and so is your head. Fantastic.

[00:08:57] You're going to love this and you're going to love what it does for your game. Thanks for joining my brown bag session. I'm teaching pro. Eric Jones and I look forward to seeing you down the fairway.