

THIS MAN WILL CHANGE THE WAY YOU THINK ABOUT YOUR GAME



Golf is a game dominated by numbers. The score you sign for, the figure in the handicap column by your name on the noticeboard, the distance of your drives, the putts you take per hole. As golfers, we're taught from the first time we pick up a club that the better these numbers are the more we will enjoy the game. But is looking at golf in these terms stopping us from truly enjoying the game and having fun in what is our precious leisure time?

In the first article of an exciting new series, that will challenge the way you think about golf, Alex Nicolson, PGA professional and founder of Premium Golf, asks us to look back at our own season.

As 2012 draws to a close, it's a good time to reflect on your game – how well it's treated you, how relaxed, refreshed and fulfilled you feel after a year's playing. You can enjoy a sense of achievement from how your handicap dropped, and how your understanding of the game increased. You can look back on how, even in the heat of competition, you played with freedom and confidence. You can recollect how each time you stood on the 1st tee you swung so freely that not only did you enjoy the result, but the actual movement of the swing gave you pleasure.

You can bring back memories of moments on the course where you were so absorbed in the game that you were completely free of stress, and brushed aside the occasional loose shot with Zen-like calmness. It's been a great year. If you were nodding your head to those statements, then you have it sussed.

However, I suspect that there might be a greater number of readers for whom those lines rapidly became a piece of fantastical fiction, completely detached from reality.

GOLF AS OUR LEISURE TIME

But why does it sound so unlikely? If this game is not your living then, by default, it's your leisure time, right? Leisure is defined as: time where a person is "free to engage in enjoyable activities", and in another context, "unhurried ease". Is it unreasonable to want a bit of "unhurried ease" in our spare time? How well does golf deliver this? In fact, how consistently is it enjoyable?

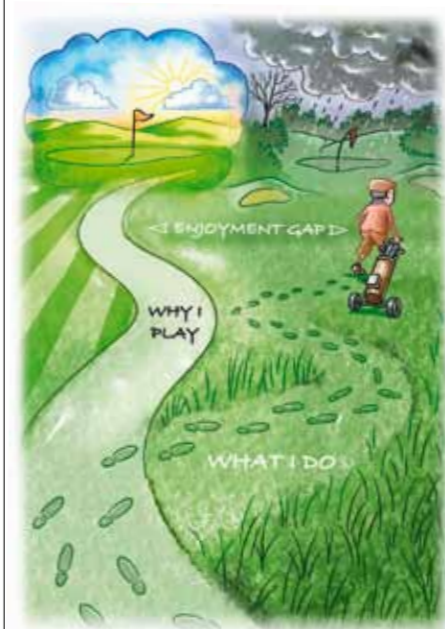
I'm talking not just about our recollection of a game (where selective memory can do some neat editing), but how it actually felt at the time. That hot-under-the-collar feeling, tension in the arms, inner mental battles, the troublesome inner voice that draws your attention to the out of bounds down the left, the sheer physical effort expended when fighting a slice on the course. Those feelings.

THE CULTURE OF GOLF

"He enjoys that perfect peace, that peace beyond all understanding, which comes to

its maximum only to the man who has given up golf." PG Wodehouse

The quote above is often met with a rueful laugh, illustrating that frustration has become synonymous with the game. I should point out that I, like you, am mad about the game. I'm not a cynic, I love it. It's just that I've heard these stories of anguish, the roller coaster ride of hope and despair, for so many years that I began wondering why we all accepted it. In truth, many don't accept it, and quit the game. Research shows participation in the sport has decreased in recent years. Presumably, time and economic factors are involved, but is it not worth pausing to see if we can't ditch the bad bits and keep the fun stuff?



THE ENJOYMENT GAP

Golfers lose their way all the time. It could be for a few shots if they're lucky, a few holes, a few rounds or even years. The Enjoyment Gap can be experienced in any time frame, but is essentially wherever our needs become unfulfilled. There's a slightly ritualistic nature about the game and so it's easy to keep doing what we habitually do while gradually becoming detached from why we play. A golfer might not have felt inspired or a sense of achievement for some time. What's worse is that we become desensitised to an unfulfilling game, and begin to accept it.

In subsequent articles I'll discuss some of the key reasons why golfers frequently experience Enjoyment Gaps, and what we can do to close them. One of their fundamental causes is our collective obsession with performance.

THE PROBLEM WITH THE PERFORMANCE EQUATION

The performance equation "Play Better = Enjoy More" is so ingrained in golf that

we don't even notice it. Everyone assumes performance is all that we seek. The way we measure the game (handicap, medal scores, driving distance, putts per round stats) is all about performance. However, for golfers who aren't playing for their living, this focus brings baggage that can actually harm our ability to play, and starve us of experiences truly worthy of our leisure time. If you're keen on getting a richer, more consistent enjoyment from the game, I'd encourage you to take a broader view.

THE BEST MEAL YOU'VE EVER HAD

In two different ways, really enjoyable, fulfilling golf is like the best meal you've ever had. Firstly, it's hard to reproduce if you don't know the recipe. Secondly, the experience of a wonderful meal comes from so much more than just the quality of the ingredients. It's about what it's served with, the setting, the ambience, how you were feeling, who you were with...

Like the ingredients, your golf score won't always be up to scratch. If your experience depends wholly upon it, you're robbing yourself of opportunities for enjoyment and will often be disappointed. Bringing other factors into the mix can offer a richer, more enjoyable experience, and can in itself contribute to better golf.

MAKE 2013 YOUR MOST ENJOYABLE YEAR OF GOLF

For two years, we at Premium Golf have been learning what really pushes golfers' buttons, and developing innovative ways to help them get it. With your help, we can further broaden our understanding of what contented golfers have in common and share the results with you. Throughout 2013, in partnership with *Golf Monthly*, we'll be sharing ways to get more out of the game by showing you how to...

- Pick from the menu of golf in a way that keeps your zest for the game fresh
- Reduce or even remove anxiety and tension
- Make the process of improvement enjoyable and not just a means to an end
- Produce your best swings with less effort than you might think
- Become a golfer everyone wants to play with.

If you join us online and tell us about your golfing experiences, we'll show you that the mystery golfer described at the beginning of the article needn't seem like such a stranger after all. **GM**

To get involved and take the short survey visit premiumgolf.co.uk/surveys



Visit premiumgolf.co.uk
or follow them on Twitter
@Premiumgolf



THIS MAN WILL CHANGE THE WAY YOU THINK ABOUT YOUR GAME

Golf is a game dominated by numbers. The score you sign for, the figure in the handicap column by your name on the noticeboard, the distance of your drives, the putts you take per hole. As golfers, we're taught from the first time we pick up a club that the better these numbers are the more we will enjoy the game. But is looking at golf in these terms stopping us from truly enjoying the game and having fun in what is our precious leisure time?

In the first article of an exciting new series, that will challenge the way you think about golf, Alex Nicolson, PGA professional and founder of Premium Golf, asks us to look back at our own season.

As 2012 draws to a close, it's a good time to reflect on your game – how well it's treated you, how relaxed, refreshed and fulfilled you feel after a year's playing. You can enjoy a sense of achievement from how your handicap dropped, and how your understanding of the game increased. You can look back on how, even in the heat of competition, you played with freedom and confidence. You can recollect how each time you stood on the 1st tee you swung so freely that not only did you enjoy the result, but the actual movement of the swing gave you pleasure.

You can bring back memories of moments on the course where you were so absorbed in the game that you were completely free of stress, and brushed aside the occasional loose shot with Zen-like calmness. It's been a great year. If you were nodding your head to those statements, then you have it sussed.

However, I suspect that there might be a greater number of readers for whom those lines rapidly became a piece of fantastical fiction, completely detached from reality.

GOLF AS OUR LEISURE TIME

But why does it sound so unlikely? If this game is not your living then, by default, it's your leisure time, right? Leisure is defined as: time where a person is "free to engage in enjoyable activities", and in another context, "unhurried ease". Is it unreasonable to want a bit of "unhurried ease" in our spare time? How well does golf deliver this? In fact, how consistently is it enjoyable?

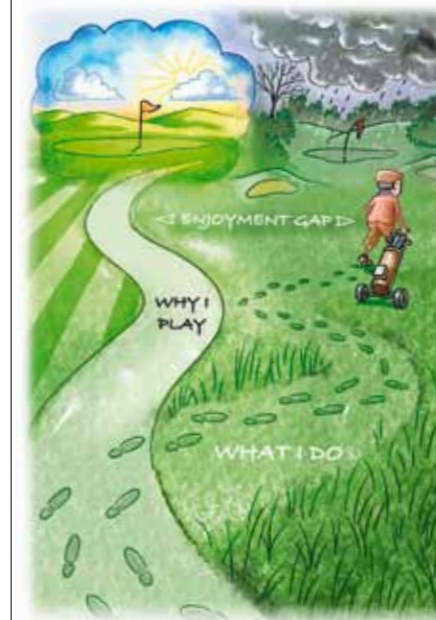
I'm talking not just about our recollection of a game (where selective memory can do some neat editing), but how it actually felt at the time. That hot-under-the-collar feeling, tension in the arms, inner mental battles, the troublesome inner voice that draws your attention to the out of bounds down the left, the sheer physical effort expended when fighting a slice on the course. Those feelings.

THE CULTURE OF GOLF

"He enjoys that perfect peace, that peace beyond all understanding, which comes to

its maximum only to the man who has given up golf." PG Wodehouse

The quote above is often met with a rueful laugh, illustrating that frustration has become synonymous with the game. I should point out that I, like you, am mad about the game. I'm not a cynic, I love it. It's just that I've heard these stories of anguish, the roller coaster ride of hope and despair, for so many years that I began wondering why we all accepted it. In truth, many don't accept it, and quit the game. Research shows participation in the sport has decreased in recent years. Presumably, time and economic factors are involved, but is it not worth pausing to see if we can't ditch the bad bits and keep the fun stuff?



THE ENJOYMENT GAP

Golfers lose their way all the time. It could be for a few shots if they're lucky, a few holes, a few rounds or even years. The Enjoyment Gap can be experienced in any time frame, but is essentially wherever our needs become unfulfilled. There's a slightly ritualistic nature about the game and so it's easy to keep doing what we habitually do while gradually becoming detached from why we play. A golfer might not have felt inspired or a sense of achievement for some time. What's worse is that we become desensitised to an unfulfilling game, and begin to accept it.

In subsequent articles I'll discuss some of the key reasons why golfers frequently experience Enjoyment Gaps, and what we can do to close them. One of their fundamental causes is our collective obsession with performance.

THE PROBLEM WITH THE PERFORMANCE EQUATION

The performance equation "Play Better = Enjoy More" is so ingrained in golf that

we don't even notice it. Everyone assumes performance is all that we seek. The way we measure the game (handicap, medal scores, driving distance, putts per round stats) is all about performance. However, for golfers who aren't playing for their living, this focus brings baggage that can actually harm our ability to play, and starve us of experiences truly worthy of our leisure time. If you're keen on getting a richer, more consistent enjoyment from the game, I'd encourage you to take a broader view.

THE BEST MEAL YOU'VE EVER HAD

In two different ways, really enjoyable, fulfilling golf is like the best meal you've ever had. Firstly, it's hard to reproduce if you don't know the recipe. Secondly, the experience of a wonderful meal comes from so much more than just the quality of the ingredients. It's about what it's served with, the setting, the ambience, how you were feeling, who you were with...

Like the ingredients, your golf score won't always be up to scratch. If your experience depends wholly upon it, you're robbing yourself of opportunities for enjoyment and will often be disappointed. Bringing other factors into the mix can offer a richer, more enjoyable experience, and can in itself contribute to better golf.

MAKE 2013 YOUR MOST ENJOYABLE YEAR OF GOLF

For two years, we at Premium Golf have been learning what really pushes golfers' buttons, and developing innovative ways to help them get it. With your help, we can further broaden our understanding of what contented golfers have in common and share the results with you. Throughout 2013, in partnership with *Golf Monthly*, we'll be sharing ways to get more out of the game by showing you how to...

- Pick from the menu of golf in a way that keeps your zest for the game fresh
- Reduce or even remove anxiety and tension
- Make the process of improvement enjoyable and not just a means to an end
- Produce your best swings with less effort than you might think
- Become a golfer everyone wants to play with.

If you join us online and tell us about your golfing experiences, we'll show you that the mystery golfer described at the beginning of the article needn't seem like such a stranger after all. **GM**

To get involved and take the short survey visit premiumgolf.co.uk/surveys



Visit premiumgolf.co.uk
or follow them on Twitter
@Premiumgolf



**THIS MAN WILL
CHANGE THE WAY
YOU THINK
ABOUT YOUR GAME**

Golf is a game dominated by numbers. The score you sign for, the figure in the handicap column by your name on the noticeboard, the distance of your drives, the putts you take per hole. As golfers, we're taught from the first time we pick up a club that the better these numbers are the more we will enjoy the game. But is looking at golf in these terms stopping us from truly enjoying the game and having fun in what is our precious leisure time?

In the first article of an exciting new series, that will challenge the way you think about golf, Alex Nicolson, PGA professional and founder of Premium Golf, asks us to look back at our own season.

As 2012 draws to a close, it's a good time to reflect on your game – how well it's treated you, how relaxed, refreshed and fulfilled you feel after a year's playing. You can enjoy a sense of achievement from how your handicap dropped, and how your understanding of the game increased. You can look back on how, even in the heat of competition, you played with freedom and confidence. You can recollect how each time you stood on the 1st tee you swung so freely that not only did you enjoy the result, but the actual movement of the swing gave you pleasure.

You can bring back memories of moments on the course where you were so absorbed in the game that you were completely free of stress, and brushed aside the occasional loose shot with Zen-like calmness. It's been a great year. If you were nodding your head to those statements, then you have it sussed.

However, I suspect that there might be a greater number of readers for whom those lines rapidly became a piece of fantastical fiction, completely detached from reality.

GOLF AS OUR LEISURE TIME

But why does it sound so unlikely? If this game is not your living then, by default, it's your leisure time, right? Leisure is defined as: time where a person is "free to engage in enjoyable activities", and in another context, "unhurried ease". Is it unreasonable to want a bit of "unhurried ease" in our spare time? How well does golf deliver this? In fact, how consistently is it enjoyable?

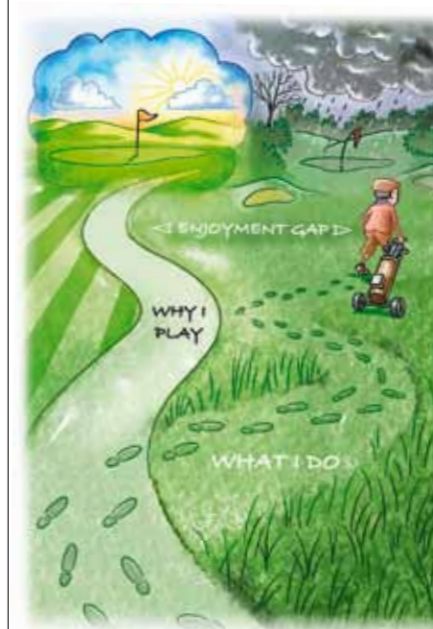
I'm talking not just about our recollection of a game (where selective memory can do some neat editing), but how it actually felt at the time. That hot-under-the-collar feeling, tension in the arms, inner mental battles, the troublesome inner voice that draws your attention to the out of bounds down the left, the sheer physical effort expended when fighting a slice on the course. Those feelings.

THE CULTURE OF GOLF

"He enjoys that perfect peace, that peace beyond all understanding, which comes to

its maximum only to the man who has given up golf." PG Wodehouse

The quote above is often met with a rueful laugh, illustrating that frustration has become synonymous with the game. I should point out that I, like you, am mad about the game. I'm not a cynic, I love it. It's just that I've heard these stories of anguish, the roller coaster ride of hope and despair, for so many years that I began wondering why we all accepted it. In truth, many don't accept it, and quit the game. Research shows participation in the sport has decreased in recent years. Presumably, time and economic factors are involved, but is it not worth pausing to see if we can't ditch the bad bits and keep the fun stuff?



THE ENJOYMENT GAP

Golfers lose their way all the time. It could be for a few shots if they're lucky, a few holes, a few rounds or even years. The Enjoyment Gap can be experienced in any time frame, but is essentially wherever our needs become unfulfilled. There's a slightly ritualistic nature about the game and so it's easy to keep doing what we habitually do while gradually becoming detached from why we play. A golfer might not have felt inspired or a sense of achievement for some time. What's worse is that we become desensitized to an unfulfilling game, and begin to accept it.

In subsequent articles I'll discuss some of the key reasons why golfers frequently experience Enjoyment Gaps, and what we can do to close them. One of their fundamental causes is our collective obsession with performance.

THE PROBLEM WITH THE PERFORMANCE EQUATION

The performance equation "Play Better = Enjoy More" is so ingrained in golf that

we don't even notice it. Everyone assumes performance is all that we seek. The way we measure the game (handicap, medal scores, driving distance, putts per round stats) is all about performance. However, for golfers who aren't playing for their living, this focus brings baggage that can actually harm our ability to play, and starve us of experiences truly worthy of our leisure time. If you're keen on getting a richer, more consistent enjoyment from the game, I'd encourage you to take a broader view.

THE BEST MEAL YOU'VE EVER HAD

In two different ways, really enjoyable, fulfilling golf is like the best meal you've ever had. Firstly, it's hard to reproduce if you don't know the recipe. Secondly, the experience of a wonderful meal comes from so much more than just the quality of the ingredients. It's about what it's served with, the setting, the ambience, how you were feeling, who you were with...

Like the ingredients, your golf score won't always be up to scratch. If your experience depends wholly upon it, you're robbing yourself of opportunities for enjoyment and will often be disappointed. Bringing other factors into the mix can offer a richer, more enjoyable experience, and can in itself contribute to better golf.

MAKE 2013 YOUR MOST ENJOYABLE YEAR OF GOLF

For two years, we at Premium Golf have been learning what really pushes golfers' buttons, and developing innovative ways to help them get it. With your help, we can further broaden our understanding of what contented golfers have in common and share the results with you. Throughout 2013, in partnership with *Golf Monthly*, we'll be sharing ways to get more out of the game by showing you how to...

- Pick from the menu of golf in a way that keeps your zest for the game fresh
- Reduce or even remove anxiety and tension
- Make the process of improvement enjoyable and not just a means to an end
- Produce your best swings with less effort than you might think
- Become a golfer everyone wants to play with.

If you join us online and tell us about your golfing experiences, we'll show you that the mystery golfer described at the beginning of the article needn't seem like such a stranger after all. **GM**

To get involved and take the short survey visit premiumgolf.co.uk/surveys



Visit premiumgolf.co.uk
or follow them on Twitter
@Premiumgolf



THIS MAN WILL CHANGE THE WAY YOU THINK ABOUT YOUR GAME

Golf is a game dominated by numbers. The score you sign for, the figure in the handicap column by your name on the noticeboard, the distance of your drives, the putts you take per hole. As golfers, we're taught from the first time we pick up a club that the better these numbers are the more we will enjoy the game. But is looking at golf in these terms stopping us from truly enjoying the game and having fun in what is our precious leisure time?

In the first article of an exciting new series, that will challenge the way you think about golf, Alex Nicolson, PGA professional and founder of Premium Golf, asks us to look back at our own season.

As 2012 draws to a close, it's a good time to reflect on your game – how well it's treated you, how relaxed, refreshed and fulfilled you feel after a year's playing. You can enjoy a sense of achievement from how your handicap dropped, and how your understanding of the game increased. You can look back on how, even in the heat of competition, you played with freedom and confidence. You can recollect how each time you stood on the 1st tee you swung so freely that not only did you enjoy the result, but the actual movement of the swing gave you pleasure.

You can bring back memories of moments on the course where you were so absorbed in the game that you were completely free of stress, and brushed aside the occasional loose shot with Zen-like calmness. It's been a great year. If you were nodding your head to those statements, then you have it sussed.

However, I suspect that there might be a greater number of readers for whom those lines rapidly became a piece of fantastical fiction, completely detached from reality.

GOLF AS OUR LEISURE TIME

But why does it sound so unlikely? If this game is not your living then, by default, it's your leisure time, right? Leisure is defined as: time where a person is "free to engage in enjoyable activities", and in another context, "unhurried ease". Is it unreasonable to want a bit of "unhurried ease" in our spare time? How well does golf deliver this? In fact, how consistently is it enjoyable?

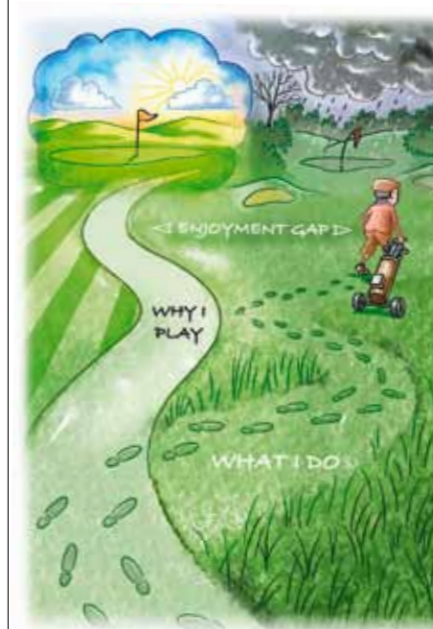
I'm talking not just about our recollection of a game (where selective memory can do some neat editing), but how it actually felt at the time. That hot-under-the-collar feeling, tension in the arms, inner mental battles, the troublesome inner voice that draws your attention to the out of bounds down the left, the sheer physical effort expended when fighting a slice on the course. Those feelings.

THE CULTURE OF GOLF

"He enjoys that perfect peace, that peace beyond all understanding, which comes to

its maximum only to the man who has given up golf." PG Wodehouse

The quote above is often met with a rueful laugh, illustrating that frustration has become synonymous with the game. I should point out that I, like you, am mad about the game. I'm not a cynic, I love it. It's just that I've heard these stories of anguish, the roller coaster ride of hope and despair, for so many years that I began wondering why we all accepted it. In truth, many don't accept it, and quit the game. Research shows participation in the sport has decreased in recent years. Presumably, time and economic factors are involved, but is it not worth pausing to see if we can't ditch the bad bits and keep the fun stuff?



THE ENJOYMENT GAP

Golfers lose their way all the time. It could be for a few shots if they're lucky, a few holes, a few rounds or even years. The Enjoyment Gap can be experienced in any time frame, but is essentially wherever our needs become unfulfilled. There's a slightly ritualistic nature about the game and so it's easy to keep doing what we habitually do while gradually becoming detached from why we play. A golfer might not have felt inspired or a sense of achievement for some time. What's worse is that we become desensitised to an unfulfilling game, and begin to accept it.

In subsequent articles I'll discuss some of the key reasons why golfers frequently experience Enjoyment Gaps, and what we can do to close them. One of their fundamental causes is our collective obsession with performance.

THE PROBLEM WITH THE PERFORMANCE EQUATION

The performance equation "Play Better = Enjoy More" is so ingrained in golf that

we don't even notice it. Everyone assumes performance is all that we seek. The way we measure the game (handicap, medal scores, driving distance, putts per round stats) is all about performance. However, for golfers who aren't playing for their living, this focus brings baggage that can actually harm our ability to play, and starve us of experiences truly worthy of our leisure time. If you're keen on getting a richer, more consistent enjoyment from the game, I'd encourage you to take a broader view.

THE BEST MEAL YOU'VE EVER HAD

In two different ways, really enjoyable, fulfilling golf is like the best meal you've ever had. Firstly, it's hard to reproduce if you don't know the recipe. Secondly, the experience of a wonderful meal comes from so much more than just the quality of the ingredients. It's about what it's served with, the setting, the ambience, how you were feeling, who you were with...

Like the ingredients, your golf score won't always be up to scratch. If your experience depends wholly upon it, you're robbing yourself of opportunities for enjoyment and will often be disappointed. Bringing other factors into the mix can offer a richer, more enjoyable experience, and can in itself contribute to better golf.

MAKE 2013 YOUR MOST ENJOYABLE YEAR OF GOLF

For two years, we at Premium Golf have been learning what really pushes golfers' buttons, and developing innovative ways to help them get it. With your help, we can further broaden our understanding of what contented golfers have in common and share the results with you. Throughout 2013, in partnership with *Golf Monthly*, we'll be sharing ways to get more out of the game by showing you how to...

- Pick from the menu of golf in a way that keeps your zest for the game fresh
- Reduce or even remove anxiety and tension
- Make the process of improvement enjoyable and not just a means to an end
- Produce your best swings with less effort than you might think
- Become a golfer everyone wants to play with.

If you join us online and tell us about your golfing experiences, we'll show you that the mystery golfer described at the beginning of the article needn't seem like such a stranger after all. **GM**

To get involved and take the short survey visit premiumgolf.co.uk/surveys



Visit premiumgolf.co.uk
or follow them on Twitter
@Premiumgolf