

LINKS

THE BEST OF GOLF



Sea Island: Your First Resort For Game Improvement

By: George Peper

A couple of weeks ago I stood beside the 18th green of the Seaside Course at Sea Island Resort and watched as Tommy Gainey capped off his victory in the McGladrey Classic with a just-missed putt for 59. Two days later I played the same course—played well, too, and I was quite pleased with myself until I realized the score I’d shot—78—was exactly one stroke per hole higher than the one Two Gloves had posted—and I’d played from tees that were about 700 yards shorter.

So that afternoon I was ready for a little instruction at the Learning Center. What I wasn’t ready for was the astonishingly high level of instruction I’d be getting.

I’d been to Sea Island before, had even gotten a lesson there from none other than Davis Love—but I’m talking about Davis Love Jr. (not III). That’s how long ago it was.

Oh how times have changed. My session began with an analysis of my putting stroke by *GOLF Magazine* and *Golf Digest* Top 50 Teacher Mike Shannon who put me through his proprietary Laser Optics Putting Improvement System, a mind-blowing program that combines laser technology with statistics on the game’s best putters to show exactly what adjustments are needed. In my case: play the ball back a bit, flatten the right wrist, weaken the grip a tad, and stop leaning right.



Next came a long-game lesson with instructor Victor Desola. A day earlier I'd played 18 holes—very poorly—with Victor so he'd had ample opportunity to observe the rich variety of my shortcomings. After filming my swing on the range, he sat me down and revealed, from several angles, the full hideousness of my lumberjack lurch. Then we went back to the range where miraculously, immediately I began hitting 6-irons straighter, higher, and longer than I thought I ever could.

Of course, it's not unusual to make some progress when the teacher is standing at your side. The proof is in the follow-through—transferring the tutelage to the course days or weeks later. Inasmuch as I've been up north ever since my lessons, I haven't had a chance to try things out. But this is where the best part of the Sea Island program comes in. A couple of days after my lessons I received a pair of e-mails—one from Mike and one from Victor. Attached to each message was a file with the full video and audio of my lesson. I've replayed those lessons two or three times each, and I can't wait to take them to the practice range and the course. In fact, so eager am I that I've ordered one of those **Rokform V3 Golf Shooters** that allows you to record your swing on an iPhone.

So look out, Two Gloves, there will be no more of that stroke-a-hole stuff.

There are surely other good strong reasons to pay a visit to Sea Island—the superb accommodations and dining at The Cloister and The Lodge, three scenic and challenging low-country courses, and plenty of non-golf activities. But if you're serious about improving your game—whether it's the long game, short game, putting, or even fitness and the mental side—trust me, this is your first resort.