

The Natural Bottom of the Swing

There seems to be some confusion about where the “Bottom of the Swing” is in relation to the conventional wisdom. So I want to clarify waters that may be muddy. *The Golfing Machine* and its disciples locate the bottom of the swing just inside the leading shoulder socket. They say this is where the swing plane changes directions from moving downward and outward to upward and inward. Technically, they are right. Unfortunately, what is not made clear are the assumptions made to come to this conclusion. I’ll come back to this issue.

This “Technical” bottom of the swing cannot be *the* bottom of the swing. This is because the bottom of the swing moves – but along the body line – in relation to the placement of the feet at address. It moves forward with a closed stance and backward with an open stance, because the target line has long been considered the overriding measure of the definition. The “Technical” bottom of the swing is as *The Golfing Machine* sees it, is measured along the target line.

Assumed in *The Golfing Machine* is the parallel left, or “Square” alignment. The ball placement has been assumed to be forward of center to coincide with conclusions about the location of the “Bottom” of the swing. The swing plane is built around this ball position, which means it is upright and oriented at the target. To be fair, when *The Golfing Machine* was written, golf clubs were shorter, much shorter, than today, so assuming an upright swing plane is more understandable. All analysis of a golf swing is built around the assumption of solid contact and a straight ball flight. Contact infers “Path” which is where the discussion ends – at impact.

The measure of the swing’s “Bottom” is always in relation to the *golfer* - along the line of the feet and the ball at impact. The “Natural” - bottom of the swing is anatomically constant. The technical bottom of the swing can violate the natural bottom of the swing, as in the *closed stance*. But the natural bottom cannot violate the technical bottom of the swing, because the target line is the overriding measure in the technical definition, and the golfer’s swing adapts to alignment over time. Instead of using the term “Anatomical” bottom of the swing, I prefer “Natural” bottom of the swing. I’ll describe how a “Violation” can occur later.

By definition, the “Bottom” of the swing, if to be accurate, cannot be movable. But along which measure – the feet or the target line? How about both. Assuming a consistent set-up, it does not change along the “Technical” determinant - the target line. And it does not change in reference to the “Natural” determinant - the line of the feet. But it *does change*. So both definitions are right. But only one of these definitions insures that both power and precision are present at impact. Only one of these definitions allows the body to be preserved in repetitious practice. Only one of these definitions allows for a change of set-up. Only one of these definitions describes the philosophy chosen by the greatest ball-strikers in history. The “Natural” bottom prevails because the human being forms his swing around a philosophy – not an equation.

The “Natural” bottom of the swing is where the most power and precision are stored, which is where the muscles in the golfer’s core are almost unwound. This constant, “Natural” bottom of the golf swing is in the middle of the feet along their line. It can be placed anywhere the golfer wants back of this placement in the body-line because the measure of the “Technical” bottom is the target line. They can set-up to locate it behind the ball or in front of the ball depending on the shot desired. With a neutral grip and a clubface square to the target, an open stance is the only set up that guarantees both power and precision – to say nothing of longevity.

As discovered in earlier studies, a flatter swing creates more power due to the presence, and necessity, of lag. So the ball position that compliments a flatter swing is one that is center or back of center. Now, with this ball position and constant mechanics, the clubface must open to counteract the path, which is more inside-out. And to keep from missing away from the target line with a straight, powerful strike, the set-up requires the stance to *open* to bring the target into the ball’s line of flight.

The golfer can change where the club bottoms out in the line of the feet as in a violating set-up, but with the target line as the reference line. It changes along the body-line as measured by the target line, but not along the target line itself. In describing the “Natural” bottom of the swing, one cannot point to a place on the body to show the *target line* definition. The “Natural” bottom of the swing cannot be measured using the target line when the golfer is the swinger of the golf club. When every golfer sets up repeatedly square and develops an upright plane, the technical, target line “Bottom” will prevail. Until then, the “Natural” bottom of the swing must be measured with the target line as the measure of open, square, or closed, but with the line of the feet as the one determinant of the “Natural” bottom of the swing. It is a determinant that is moveable because the golfer – every golfer – is *adaptive*. What is inviolate is kinesthetic efficiency.

When measured perpendicular to the line of the feet, the “Natural” bottom of the swing does not change, because the golfer’s body does not change anatomically. The swing does not change kinesthetically because kinesthetic movement is a *response* to neurotransmitters in the brain firing in different orders as needed. However, a violation of the “Natural” bottom of the swing, however, would mean the ball position would have to have moved forward because past the “Natural” bottom of the swing is where the body starts to break down. The club passes the hands along the “Technical” determinant, and therefore, is not repeatable as power is lost and impact is too shallow to impart backspin for carry. This ball position generally occurs to compensate for a closed stance. This says nothing of the physical stresses in the golfer’s body that are necessary to strike the ball in this forward location.

The natural bottom of the swing is in relation to the golfer alone - with their target line as the non-movable qualifier of power and precision. Any ball position back of the middle of the stance can enhance distance and accuracy with an open stance – until the length of the club-head run is maximized. ANY ball position forward of this bottom risks inconsistency in ball-striking and compensatory movements that sacrifice power.

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