



## SIX RULES: BUNKER PLAY MADE EASY

Splash out every  
time with touch  
and control...

**I**F YOU FAIL TO AVOID SAND, you need to be prepared with a technique that will ensure your stay is a short one – and won't cost you a bogey... or worse. Success from sand comes from two things: first, the knowledge that your clubhead doesn't actually make contact with the ball on bunker shots; second, using the special feature of your sand wedge. TG Pro Gareth Johnston's six rules for better bunker play are all equally important, and start with your address position...

### 1. STERNUM IS KEY

Positioning the sternum in the correct place consistently at impact will lead to a consistent entry point for ultimate control of distance and spin. To do this, you need to allow the loft to reach the underside of the ball by having 60 per cent of your weight in your left side at set up and throughout the swing, which moves the sternum towards the left of your stance. Ensure the ball lies underneath your left nipple for a standard bunker shot.

### 2. REPEATING ENTRY POINT

You can have the best swing in the world but if the club is not bottoming out correctly then you'll forever struggle to achieve bunker consistency. Tour players will attempt to make contact with the sand as close to the ball as possible (assuming they have a good lie) to create spin. If roll is required, then entry will be further behind the ball, to lessen the grooves' influence.

### 3. KEEP THE SAME TEMPO

Amateurs too frequently try to control the distance of their sand shots by decelerating or over-accelerating the clubhead in the downswing. This is likely to compromise the angle of attack and therefore the consistency of strike. Feel that you maintain the same tempo no matter what the length of shot, controlling the distance only through the length of your swing either side of the ball.

### 4. UTILISE YOUR BOUNCE

The curved underside of your wedge is what allows the clubhead to glide through the sand. You can maximise this by ensuring the shaft is pointing to your belly button at address and does the same at impact. When the shaft leans forward excessively at impact, the leading edge will dig down into the sand, slowing the clubhead down and you'll leave the ball in the bunker more often than not.

### 5. HIT CLOSER IN WET SAND

Because of the increased friction that wet sand provides it is important to make the club's entry point as close to the ball as possible to negate the deceleration which will occur. To help you commit to the shot – a common problem among amateurs – try to feel that your belt buckle turns to face left of the target. This will ensure a full rotation of the body is achieved.

### 6. FAIRWAY TRAP TIPS

Always choose a club with enough loft to clear the lip of the bunker – escaping and leaving yourself in good shape remains the priority. From here, keep the sternum on top of the ball throughout the swing (this will fix the weight slightly in the left leg) and place the back of the ball in the centre of your stance. Make a swing which keeps your weight in the left side and ensure that you take a £10 note-sized divot after making impact.