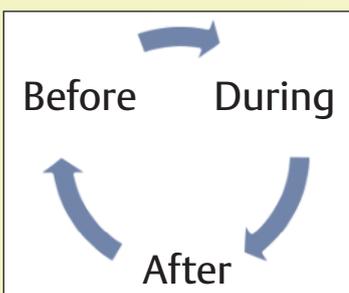


In the years I have worked with golfers I have often found the 'performance loop' model (below) to be a great educational tool for players.

It simply explains how a player thinks, feels and prepares **before** playing will have an impact on what happens **during** performance, and that the thoughts and reflections **after** performance have a direct impact on how players prepare for their next tournament.



When it comes to reviewing tournaments, golfers will often talk in extremes such as 'good or bad'. Moreover, they will often struggle to retain any sense of confidence after a poor tournament and may ignore weaknesses after a successful competition.

This sort of polarised thinking is rigid, inflexible and unhelpful when trying to establish a sound mental approach.

In reviewing performance with all levels of golfers I get them to strive for a balanced view of 'what they did well' and 'what they need to improve on', regardless of whether they think they have succeeded or failed in terms of their score or finishing position.

Learning from experience

Dr Brian Hemmings explains how a level-headed appraisal of past performances can benefit future ones.

I have found this even-keel approach leads to more robust confidence, a greater sense of control and, when a player feels out of form, to a less extreme evaluation of their game.

The key to the process outlined below is that players write out a personal evaluation after a tournament (usually about 24 hours afterwards to let initial

emotions fade) when a rational, specific review can take place. This is then shared with their coach to maintain good communication and identify where confidence is gained/maintained and where specific work, drills and practices are required for improvement to take place in the short-term build up to the next event. The example below is from an England international playing in an overseas tournament.

So why not get your players to complete a similar process? After they have done the written evaluation a few times you will probably find their thinking processes start to change and they are more able to relate specific detail to you in your coaching role, without the need for a written review each time. Golf is a game where players can experience a large variation in score with a small variance in how they performed while finishing positions are also influenced by the performance of others. This kind of performance review helps the player to become more aware of controllable aspects of their golf and to keep them focused on themselves and their own games.

GOLF PERFORMANCE REVIEW

Tournament: Portuguese

Scores & Finish: 72, 73, 76 (+5) = T35th

You **MUST** have as many points in the 'what went well' column as you do in the 'needs to improve' column. Try to list two to three points in each section. Remember these must be controllable by you. Try and be as specific as you can.

WHAT WENT WELL?	WHAT NEEDS TO IMPROVE?
<p>Long Game</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Driving accuracy. I hit 62 per cent of fairways over the week which is an improvement on my average of 47 per cent last year. My average on par 5s was 83.3 per cent which is also very pleasing. Controlling my ball flight in the wind was also good, particularly off the tee. I hit 69 per cent of fairways in a left to right crosswind, which is something I have struggled with in the past. 	<p>Long Game</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> My approach play was relatively poor with an average birdie putt length of 34 and 26ft on par 3s and 4s respectively. Last year this average was 23ft for both par 3s and 4s. My long game/swing management over the week was also poor. I did not get a good feeling on the range during the warm ups and my post round range cool down was non-existent.
<p>Short Game/Putting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> My up and down percentage from long siding myself was 67, which was pleasing highlighting an improvement in simple chip shots. Last year my average was 40 per cent. My up and down percentage from greenside bunkers was 67. Another improvement from last year (33 per cent). My birdie/mid-range putting was good. My putts per GIR was 1.76 which is similar to my 2010 average. 	<p>Short Game/Putting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> My short range putting was poor, particularly on the final day where I missed four putts from inside six feet. My pitching was poor in terms of strike and distance control. This is due to lack of technical and performance practice in this area.
<p>Mentally</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I stayed very patient in the first two rounds. I felt relatively relaxed and didn't place too much focus on the outcome. This was aided by good use of my breathing technique. Apart from the last couple of holes, I remained positive for most of the tournament. This was pleasing as I got off to bad starts in all three rounds making this quite challenging. 	<p>Mentally</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Got very frustrated on the final day, especially with my putting. On more than one occasion this affected me on the next hole and I compounded my mistakes. During the final round, I kept thinking of where I would finish rather than just trying to shoot the lowest score possible. Poor time management before early tee times...felt very rushed. Poor commitment on a number of iron shots. Not 100 per cent confident with my swing and lacked some aggression.

WHAT WENT WELL?

Course Management

- Felt I adapted to the changing wind direction well in terms of the clubs I hit off tees.
- Disciplined with when to attack flags.

Physically

- Good sleep patterns throughout the week.
- Very pleased with my travel gym routine.
- Although the food was poor, I didn't let this affect me from a mental perspective, which was pleasing.

WHAT NEEDS TO IMPROVE?

Course Management

- My green detail was poor due to inadequate preparation. Left myself in some awkward spots. To improve I need to make more notes and less time hitting shots in practice rounds.
- I too often hit what I thought was the 'right shot' for the demands of the hole rather than what I felt comfortable with at the time, which cost me some shots.

Physically

- Didn't consume enough food and drink at regular intervals on the golf course. In particular the afternoon round where I felt dehydrated and quite fatigued playing the last few holes.

Brian is the author of a fully online Golf Psychology Coaching Certificate course that is approved by The PGA of Great Britain & Ireland and PGAs of Europe, and has been completed with great reviews by PGA professionals. Go to www.golfpsychologycoaching.com for full details. The course is full of practical activities for the PGA professional to guide players through improving their mental game, and is endorsed by some of England's best coaches. You can complete the course at home so you will have no travel costs or time away from your work. All you need is a player to work with and the time to complete the course activities. For a price reduction type in the promotional code PGA to reduce the price from £295 to £215.



Dr. Brian Hemmings has been lead psychologist to England golf since 1998. During this time he has helped develop the mental skills of the best emerging English golfers including the likes of Ross Fisher, Richard Finch, Danny Willett, Tom Lewis, David Horsey and Chris Wood. Brian is author of the book 'Mental Toughness for Golf: The Minds of Winners' and is also a regular presenter on the PGA CPD programme.