



KNIGHT MOVES

EXCLUSIVE BY
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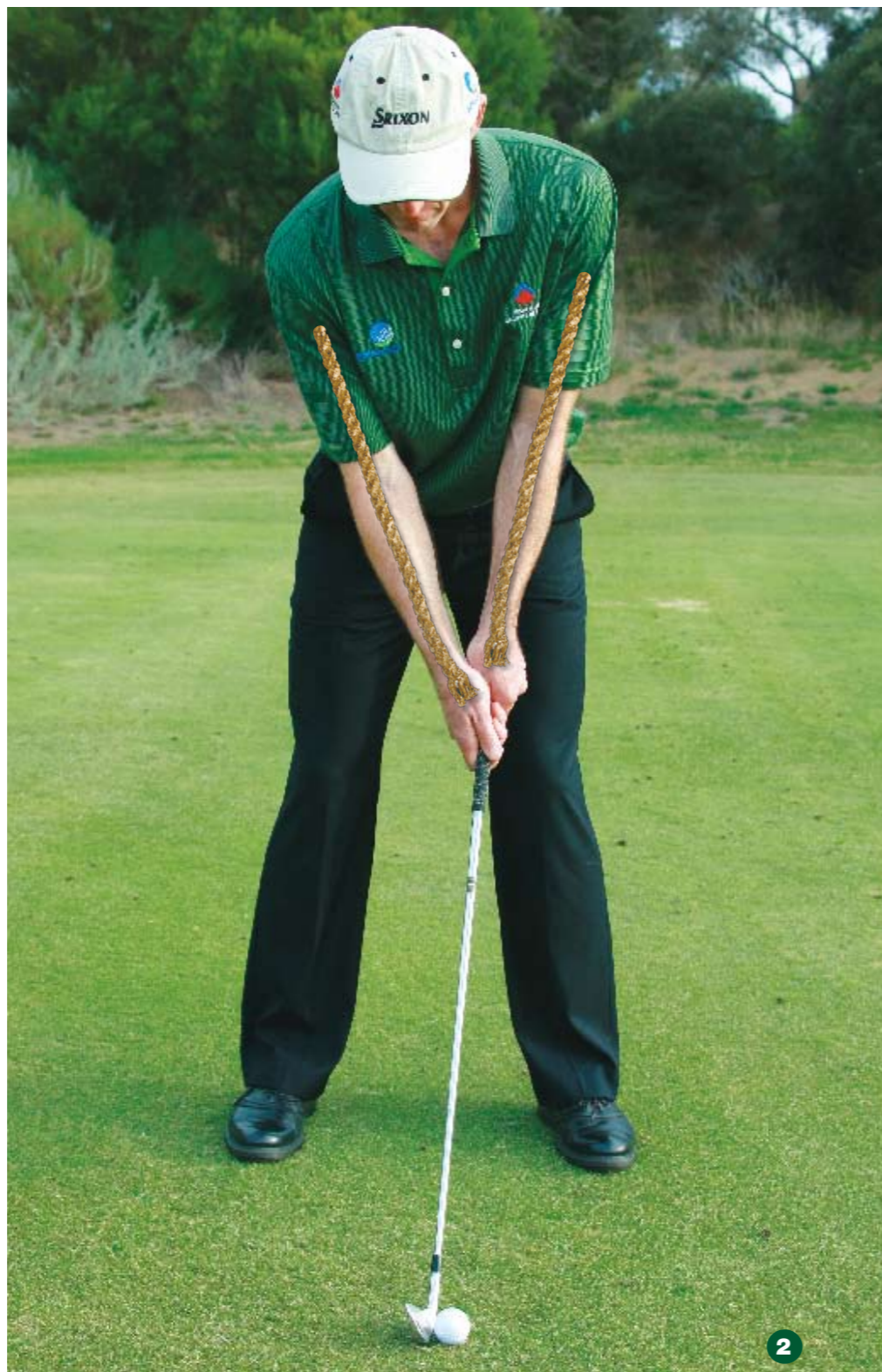
KEEPING LOOSE ARMS AND WRISTS

The golf club is held in the hands and feel from impact is felt first through the hands and is then sensed throughout the body.

Good golfers are often described as having great 'hands' or a great 'hand action'. This is misleading as it implies that the hands have a role in manipulating the club throughout the swing. While this is true in rare instances, most often the wrists are hinges between the arms and club and, as such, should be free and soft.

One thought you can have to keep your arms and wrists soft is to imagine your arms are simply two ropes hanging freely from your shoulders at address (pics 1 & 2).

The fingers will always have sufficient pressure to ensure the club doesn't move in



the fingers; however the wrists themselves should be quite soft. In order to keep the wrists soft, the arms must also have only very low levels of activation in the muscles. The initial challenge in having soft wrists is that there is an immediate sense of lack of control.

A check I will make with students is when they are standing in the address position, I will lift their club off the ground slightly and then let go of the club. If the wrists and arms are soft, the club will immediately fall to the ground (i.e. back to the address position). If there is too much tension in the arms or wrists, the club will remain in the air.

Maintaining this condition of the arms and wrists throughout the swing is crucial to achieving a well-sequenced movement with body, arms and club. As we shall see in future issues of *Golf Australia*, the left arm and club should operate like a double pendulum; this is extremely difficult to achieve if the hands are active.

IN PRACTICE

Here is one of my favourite drills as it shows exactly where your club first strikes the ground. Firstly, draw a line in the sand and set up as if you are going to play a short chip shot. The line should be in the middle of your feet and represents the ball position.

Keeping your wrists and arms quite soft, make a short chip stroke, going back and through with your arms, no more than 60cm in each direction (pics 3, 4 & 5). In the downswing, it will feel as though the clubhead is falling into the sand. Make a mental note of where the club first strikes the sand.

By adjusting the timing of the swinging movement you will be able to control where the clubhead strikes the sand. Your goal is to have the club strike the sand right on the line and cut a sand divot from there (pic 6).

CHECKPOINTS

- Left arm (for a right-handed golfer) and shaft are in a straight line at the end of the stroke. If they aren't, they should be.
- Your follow-through should be shorter than the backswing as the club is falling into the sand rather than being driven through it.
- Your body will have turned toward the target rather than being kept still during the stroke.

PHOTOS: BRENDAN JAMES X 6



Peter Knight is one of only three PGA Master professionals in Australia and is the Director of Elite National Development for Golf Australia.

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