

SPECIAL COLLECTOR'S ISSUE

GOOLF



GUEST EDITOR

IAN POULTER

"MY BIG GAME MATCH PLAY TIPS"

"WHY EUROPE WILL WIN AGAIN"

"OUR TEAM SPIRIT IS UNBREAKABLE"

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Ultimate Preview THE RYDER CUP

45-page guide to the best golf event on the planet

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THE TEAMS ★

We highlight the strongest and weakest links on each side



RORY V BUBBA

Which monster hitter has the game to tame Gleneagles?



Escape like a Tour Pro

Contrary to popular belief, Tour Pros are human. They miss fairways like the rest of us. According to the stats, Martin Kaymer and Luke Donald barely hit more fairways than they miss. If you could hit two out of every three fairways, you'd

be among the European Tour's top 40 straightest hitters.

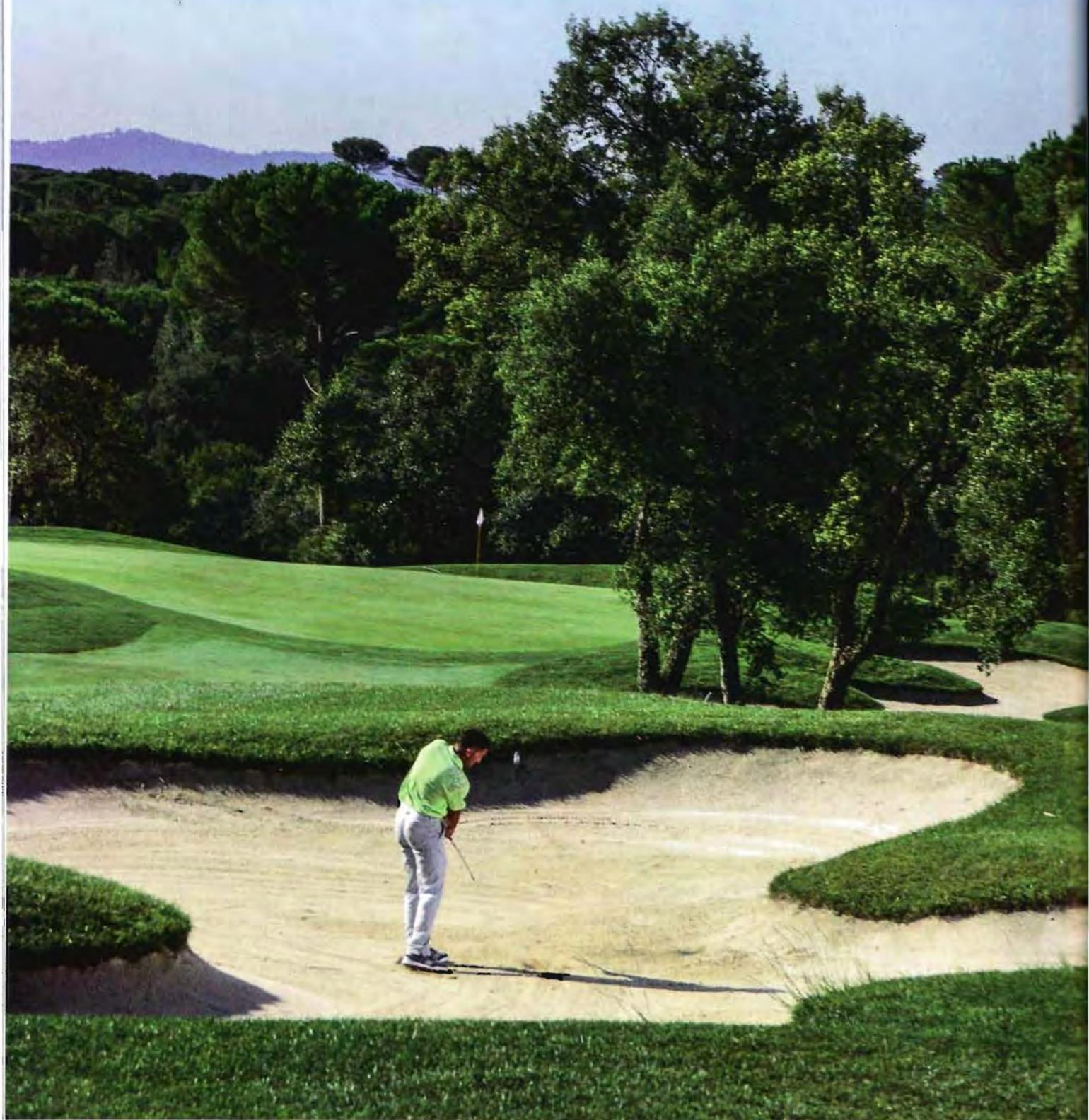
Where all Tour Pros excel, however, is in their ability to escape trouble when they do miss the short grass. Whether it's having to shape the ball, strike it cleanly from

sand or find an escape route through timber, they rarely fail to finish on or near the green.

Here, we look at the secrets they employ in all three scenarios. Put them into play and you can start saving par more often.



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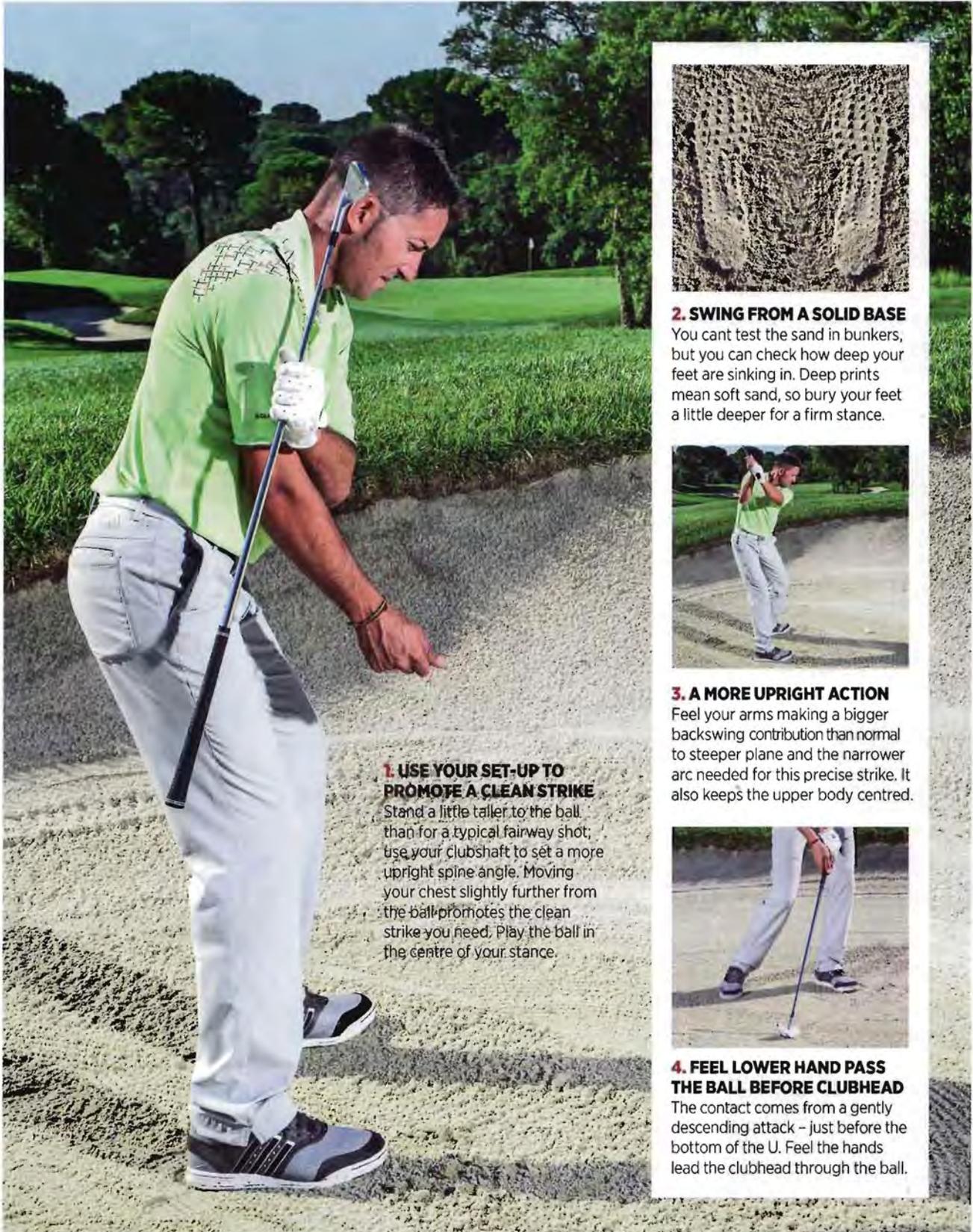


1. Find the green from fairway bunkers

Unless the lip is severe, any Tour Pro will expect to find the green from a fairway trap. The key to this is of course a clean strike; even a few grains of sand between

face and ball is enough to rob the shot of vital yards. You'll find that clean strike by making key changes to your set-up and swing to promote a U-shaped action. This

narrower arc creates a short, flat spot at the bottom, limiting the chance of heavy contact and letting the club whisk the ball off the surface. Follow this four-step plan...



1. USE YOUR SET-UP TO PROMOTE A CLEAN STRIKE

Stand a little taller to the ball than for a typical fairway shot; use your clubshaft to set a more upright spine angle. Moving your chest slightly further from the ball promotes the clean strike you need. Play the ball in the centre of your stance.



2. SWING FROM A SOLID BASE

You can't test the sand in bunkers, but you can check how deep your feet are sinking in. Deep prints mean soft sand, so bury your feet a little deeper for a firm stance.



3. A MORE UPRIGHT ACTION

Feel your arms making a bigger backswing contribution than normal to steeper plane and the narrower arc needed for this precise strike. It also keeps the upper body centred.



4. FEEL LOWER HAND PASS THE BALL BEFORE CLUBHEAD

The contact comes from a gently descending attack - just before the bottom of the U. Feel the hands lead the clubhead through the ball.

The first step to hitting the draw is to frame a clear picture of the shape in your mind. Once you can see the shot, use your address position to send the ball along your chosen line, and release the club confidently through impact.

2. Move the ball right-to-left

Given some 85% of club golfers play with a fade (good day) or slice (bad day), it's not surprising most are more comfortable using a cut than a draw to escape trouble. Yet there are times when you'll need to swing it the other way. A good way to grasp how to play the draw is simply to reverse what's

needed for the fade. When you cut the ball the body works ahead of the hands and arms, which resist the release and rotation of the club. For the draw you need to let the hands and arms take the more dynamic role, releasing past a relatively passive body. Follow these rules to move it right-to-left.

PULL YOUR RIGHT FOOT AND SHOULDER BACK

The first part of a draw is sending the ball right of target. Aim your feet, hips and shoulders right of your ball-target line for an in-to-out path. Aim the clubface between your shoulder line and ball-target line. Because the clubface is closed to the club's path, it applies draw spin to the ball.



FEEL 'LAZY' WITH YOUR BODY

A great swing thought for a draw is to feel side-on at impact – a position that allows the hands and arms to rotate and release the clubhead through impact. If your downswing body action is too aggressive, your hands and arms will be unable to catch up and will leave the face open.



3. Recover successfully from the trees

Before you consider your technique, your first goal is to identify a realistic escape route. Trees generally offer a safer but less ambitious route back to the fairway, or a

narrower risk/reward option towards the green. Base your decision on the lie, the rewards for taking on the riskier shot, and your confidence. Try a shot you're worried

about and you'll be tense at address and tentative in execution. Whichever option you choose, you need to make an action that forces the ball out low and straight.



Set your weight forward and keep it there to create the downward, driving impact you need to send the ball out low.

'SAW OFF' YOUR FOLLOWTHROUGH

Finish with the clubshaft around parallel with the ground. This short followthrough keeps your hands ahead of the blade, which keeps it de-lofted; it also keeps the face squarer for longer through impact, helping you squeeze the ball down your intended line.

The harder you hit the ball, the more it rises. Take a straighter-faced club and hit the ball softer. Allow for extra run on the ball.

Set up with more weight on your front foot and your shirt buttons are ahead of the ball. This promotes a squeezing attack with a de-lofted face.