



**Play Collegiate Golf**

"creating academic and athletic success"

**W. J. Bruce Fleming, EdD**

Founder/Consultant

1725 Babington Way

Mt. Pleasant, SC 29464

**T:** 843.609.6201

**E:** bruce@playcollegiategolf.com

**W:** playcollegiategolf.com

## ***A Strong Practice Routine Helps Develop Important Facets of the Game***

*Creating an ongoing practice routine is critical to showcasing your skills to college coaches*

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You have made the commitment to play college golf. Now, you need to prepare your game to compete to the best of your abilities at upcoming tournaments to demonstrate to coaches that you are a strong player and should be signed to a scholarship. As you create your practice schedule, look at how much time you realistically have based on your other commitments such as school work, a part-time job, and other interests. Then, break that time down into three segments: short game work, driver work, and swing development. All are important facets of the game, however, you should devote the majority of your practice time to all aspects of your short game.

Golf is a game that should be taught from the green back to the tee. Therefore, in building your practice routine plan to spend 70% of your time working on your short game - improved chipping, pitching, bunker play, and putting will help you shoot lower scores and salvage bad ball-striking rounds. Work on your putting as often as possible. Work diligently on putts from 10 feet and closer. Do not practicing longer putts for two specific reasons: first, you don't see the ball go in the hole very much (putting is very much mental and seeing is believing!); and, second, green speeds are different at every course so spending time getting your speed down at your home course won't help very much when you travel to a tournament site. The benefits of practicing short putts (again, no longer than 10 feet) will become apparent in all facets of your game.

Not worrying about the second putt because you are confident you will make it will free up your stroke when attempting a birdie putt from anywhere on the green. A confident putter feels less pressure on her chip shots because she knows in her mind that she will make *any length* putt. This transfers into your iron play. If you are in the fairway thinking you don't have to hit it perfect because you will get up and down if you miss the green, less pressure is placed on your iron shots. And, if you are on the tee feeling that you don't need to hit it perfect and down the middle because of your confidence in your short game (specifically your putting), your driver swing frees up as well. The freedom exhibited in your play from the confidence in your short game will undoubtedly have a positive effect that resonates across all aspects of your game. At the very least, you won't be one of those players who frets over every mistake which may only cause additional problems and higher scores!

With the remaining practice time available groove your driver swing. A solid and repetitive driver will get you off to a great start on most of the holes you play throughout a round of golf. Additionally, work on your swing mechanics on the driving range. Your swing instructor may have specific drills that you need to be completing each practice session on the range. Record your thoughts on a notepad about each practice session so that you can talk to your instructor about your swing.

Keep this thought in mind: do not find yourself just "hitting balls," but rather have a goal for each practice session.

## Practice Routine Suggestions

Incorporate the following drills into your practice routine. As a suggestion, spend four days per week working on your short game drills (putting, chipping, etc.). Use the remaining time to work with your coach and spend time hitting balls on the practice range.

- *Clock putting drill* – 12 balls around the hole starting at 3 feet; make 12 in a row three times in a row and then progress to 4 feet, 5 feet, 6 feet, etc. See how many you can make at each distance.
- *3, 6, 9 foot putting drill* – Make three putts consecutively at the 3 foot distance and then move on to 6 feet and then to 9 feet. The goal is to make nine putts in a row; if you miss one, start back at 3 feet. Complete the drill five times each practice day. Add either a couple more balls per distance to make this harder.
- *Chipping/putting* – 10 balls chipped to one flag location followed up by holing out the putts. Change the hole location for each set of 10 chips so that you are hitting low chips, bump and runs, high pitches, and flop shots. Always finish each chip by holing out the putt to simulate an on-course environment.
- *Wedge work* – 50 balls (five stations of 10 balls each) from various distances at a short game facility. Distances should be 40, 50, 60, 70 and 80 yards (use spots on the practice range if your club doesn't have a short game facility). The goal is to learn to hit a wedge various distances as you will rarely have the “perfect” distance.
- *Driver work* – 10 balls with driver. Step behind the ball every time, visualize 10 different holes at your golf course, and go through your pre-shot routine. Repeat this five times in one practice session. Pick specific targets on the practice range so that you frame the shot and can judge where it would have landed if you were on the golf course. This will help with your ability to visualize shots on the golf course – an important component to being a competitive player.

College coaches expect you to come to the practice facility prepared with specifics in mind for your session. Begin to get yourself in this mode early and often to show them you are a serious golfer!

Good Luck.

*Dr. Fleming*

*Dr. Bruce Fleming is the founder of Play Collegiate Golf, created to mentor young women and men interested in continuing their competitive golf careers at institutions that support their academic, athletic, and personal goals.*

*For more information please visit [playcollegiategolf.com](http://playcollegiategolf.com)*

## College Academic Advisors and How They Help YOU!

### College Survival Tip



Academic advisors assist undergraduate students in developing an academic plan that encompasses all aspects of the student's academic career, including identification of personal and career goals and appropriate strategies for attaining them. You will most likely meet your academic advisor during a summer orientation program at the institution you will be attending. Create a strong relationship with this individual and make sure you meet with him or her a minimum of once per semester. Also, make the meeting most beneficial to you by being prepared having looked at some potential course offerings and times that work for your schedule taking into account the commitment to your golf team. This person is there to help you!