

## CLASSIC LESSON

## SWING IN A BARREL

↘ Percy Boomer is a name little-known outside Sunningdale, where he served as professional in the first half of the 20th century. But he was a pioneer, recognising the dangers of 'paralysis by analysis' and ushering his pupils towards a more instinctive approach. "What you need to learn are not the technical or mathematical details of a good shot, but the feel of it," he once said – and his most famous lesson, detailed in his 1946 book *On Learning Golf*, is the perfect example.

**On the slide**

A prolific teacher, Boomer grew to realise just how many golfers struggled with the rotational nature of the swing. He would regularly see his students slide laterally during both the backswing and the downswing – moves that compromised the swing's arc, path and low point, with inevitable impact inconsistency. His solution was simple, yet effective: picture yourself swinging in a barrel.



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**The barrel swing**

"Imagine you are standing in a barrel, hip-high and big enough to be free of each hip but a close enough fit to allow NO to-and-fro movement," Boomer wrote. "Learn to feel the pivot from the hips, the shoulders moving in response to the pivot, the arms moving in response to the shoulders... and your wrists free to respond to the momentum and weight of the clubhead."

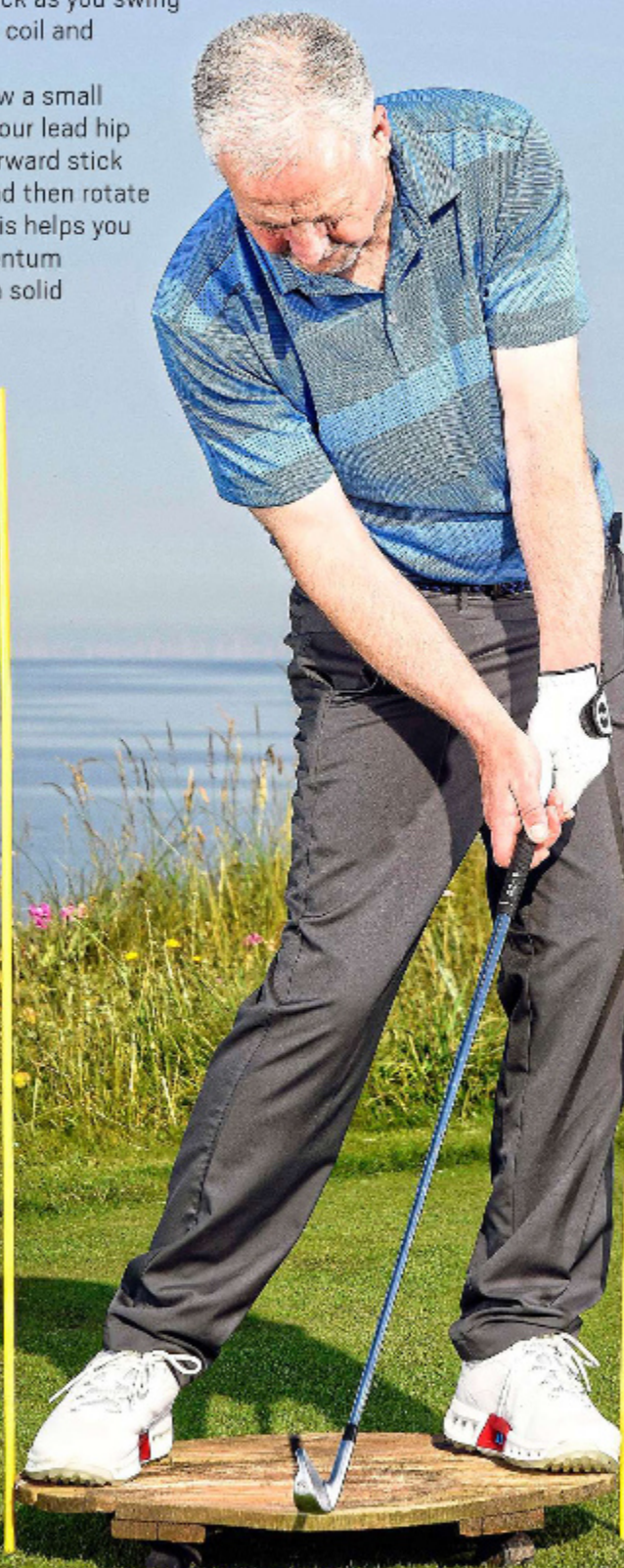
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**How to use Boomer's timeless tip**

While 'swing in a barrel' is an excellent thought, it remains just a visualisation for all but the seriously committed! For a more practical way to use this tip, invest in a pair of alignment sticks and place them upright against the outsides of your feet.

■ **Backswing:** Maintain the gap between your trail hip and the rear stick as you swing back. This will help you coil and rotate nicely.

■ **Throughswing:** Allow a small lateral shift that sees your lead hip move up against the forward stick but NOT through it... and then rotate and clear from here. This helps you drive weight and momentum forward and gives you a solid hitting platform.

**WHY IT REMAINS RELEVANT TODAY**

The concept of swinging around to hit straight has only ever been a problematic one for golfers. Nothing has changed here since Boomer's day, with most club golfers still inclined to see the golf swing in linear terms... which encourages more of a side-on slide than a robust and committed turning back and through. The concept of rotation is literally at the centre of good golfing technique, and eight decades later, Boomer's barrel has not been bested as an image to promote it.

## YOUR COACH



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