

555 GOLF ACADEMY

'WHERE PASSION MEETS PERFORMANCE'

'SHORT GAME DRILL'

THE 'SAFETY-ZONE LADDER DRILL'

This 'Bullet-Proof PUTTING Drill' is another that is primarily a task of 'DISTANCE' or Energy / Weight Management. However, the 'Break' is always a factor as our objective is to 'Hole the Putt in One Stroke'. This is a **'STAGE ONE DRILL'** so it is designed for both 'Putting and Chipping'. You will see this by your 'Safety Zone Ladder Drill' pictures below.

The lay-out looks like a ladder. We will discover the 'Safety Aspect' soon.

Select a cup. The more the adverse or slope of the Green ('Across The Line' or 'On The Line') the greater the difficulty. You may want to start on a 'Level Playing Field'.

You require your 'Trusty Putter', ten (10) tees, ten (10) high-quality playing Balls, four (4) 60 inch pieces of light cord or heavy string (preferably bright coloured).

Select a 'Ball Rolling Line' on which you would like to 'Stroke Your Putts' (or Chips).

Lay one of the pieces of cord directly and squarely across this 'Ball Rolling Line', with the line in the centre of the cord, at about 5 feet from the center of the cup. The closer you are to the lip of the cup, the more difficult will be the Drill. This is practising within the '5 FOOT CIRCLE' as we have discussed and, as we get more proficient, we will make it about 18" to make it a more 'Tour Quality Test'!

Lay the other 60 inch piece of cord centrally and directly across the 'Ball Rolling Line' but on the opposite side of the hole. The two cords must be parallel to each other. When the Drill is fully set-up, you will have to Putt your Balls 'PAST the Cup but NOT Past the Farther of the Two Cords'. This is the 'Safety Zone' aspect. You must get your Putts not only to the hole but past the hole but not past the farther of the two cords. You have now got a range of error. Of course, the objective is to 'Hole Each Putt'. You wager and score accordingly, even to the point of perhaps again being a little late for dinner!

Now place another piece of bright 60" cord both closer and farther than the first two pieces respectively. They will all four still be parallel to each other and perpendicular to the 'Ball Rolling Line' (BRL). We might start by making this greater distance about five feet, then three feet and later to test our proficiency make the spread only 18".

So we now have two lines five feet apart, the cup five feet from the inside line and then two more lines each five feet apart. Assume that we are putting from about fifteen feet away from the closest line. Read your 'Putt or Chip'. Go through your 'PreSHOT ROUTINE' in detail. Execute.

SCORING:

A 'Points System of Scoring' is as follows: If you come up short of the cup by but 1/2 an inch, even in this twenty-five footer with the '5 Foot Safety Zones', you get 'NO POINTS'. If you come up centre hole high or just past the cup, you get 'THREE POINTS'. If your Ball finds the 'Bottom of the Cup in One Stroke' you get 'FIVE POINTS'. Have a look at the 'Illustration' below.

Putting up hill or down hill, you will have two 'Brightly Coloured Pieces Of Cord' between you and the leading edge of the cup. As instructed, the first is five feet closer to you than the cup. The second is a further five feet closer to you than the first piece of cord.

FURTHER SCORING:

If your ball comes to rest between the hole and the first piece of string on your side of the cup, in the first 'Safety Ladder Zone', you get 'NO POINTS'. If your ball comes to rest between the first and second piece of cord on your side of the cup, even shorter than the stroke before that got 'NO POINTS', you lose 'ONE POINT' or go to a negative score. If your ball does not make it past the second piece of string, you lose 'TWO POINTS'.

The same type of benefit and penalty exists on the far side of the cup or past the hole. Already explained, if you get past the cup but do not cross past the closer piece of cord on the far side of the hole, you get 'THREE POINTS'.

But, if you stroke the ball too hard (with too much ENERGY) and go past the first piece of string on the other side of the hole, you lose 'ONE POINT'. If you go past the second piece of cord past the cup, you lose 'TWO POINTS'.

We always play this 'Skill-Testing Game' to either '13 Points or to 21 Points'.

Beginners can modify the scoring system to delete the 'Negative Points' if they so desire at first, but not for long. This is a risk reward endeavour. You must make it worthy of your time and effort. Getting better cannot be accomplished by being lazy!

TEES AND BALLS?:

So where do the Tees and Balls go?

Stand to the right of the 'Ball Rolling Line', about to the outside of the cord, with your 'Derriere' to the Cup and Heels square to the cord. Take one big step away from the cord (about three feet). Stick a tee in the putting surface just outside your right foot. If you have break that will get too close to your tees, move the tees more outside.

Take one more big step and stick another tee in the grass. Take one more big step and stick another tee in the putting surface. Repeat this until you have five tees in the ground on this side of the hole. This last tee will be about 15 feet away from your second piece of cord or about 25 feet from the bottom of the cup.

Set five Golf Balls on these tees.

Go to the opposite side of the hole and repeat this process. You will then have five Balls on each side spaced about one big step farther from the safety cord each location.

You are now Set-Up. Here's the Drill.

Putt one Ball (two in the first round is OK) from or level with the first tee past the two closer cords and past the hole but NOT going past either of the two farther cords. You are now in the 'Safety Zone' and past the hole. Your Ball had a chance to go in!

Remember, Yogi Berra said **"90% Of My Putts That Come Up Short, Do Not Go In!"** You must get into the 'Safety Zone or the Hole' or you do not score!

If you are really going to give this test a go, you must start over if you do not get your ball into the '3 POINT Safety Ladder Zone'. You start from your closest Tee and move outward as you progress through the Drill or Test.

If you are not going to score, but simply practise the strokes, beginners must simply get either one or two balls into the 'Safety Zone' before proceeding to the next farther 'Rung of the Ladder'. When you think you are good, you can wager or establish some constraints. If you miss one Putt into the appropriate 'Safety Zone' from any 'Rung of the Ladder', you start over! On time for dinner again becomes an issue. That 'Just One Thin Dime' wager and carry-over 'Skin Game' will add some 'Heat' too!

GREAT VARIATION:

I often take four 'Long-Shafted Clubs' and place them on the Putting surface around the destination or 'Target Cup' with the 'Butts of the Grips' about five to ten percent of the total distance of the 'Putting Series' away from the actual Hole. So for a thirty foot Putt, the 'Butts' would be either six feet or three feet apart. With the 'Three Foot Box' you are

shooting at a 5% right and a 5% left side margin (Pro Stuff!). The Shafts and Butts would form a 'Square' with sides 'Parallel or Perpendicular' to the 'Target or Ball Rolling Lines'. I keep the shafts 'Parallel' to each other.

Also, to make the 'Bullet-Proof Putting Drill' more fun, you can utilize yet another very common tool of your golf course trade, one that is readily available at almost all quality facilities or you will likely have one of your own. Now I have you thinking!

It is a 'Small Cart or Hand Towel'. "Wipe my Hands and Face first?" you ask. Good idea! Then place the towel over the Hole or where the Hole would be if there were one. Make your 'Safety Ladder Frill Putts' come to rest on the towel and you are a Champion waiting to be discovered!

Remember to keep score or track of your performance from various 'Distances and Lines'. You remember the method. If you are short of the Cup but inside the Shaft, you lose a point. If you are short of the front Shaft, you lose two points. If you are past the Cup but not past the back Shaft, you gain a point. You are in the 'Safety Ladder'. If you go in the Hole you get 'Five Points'. If you go out the 'Back Door', you lose a point. Play to 13 or 21. Start at 13 as you will find lots of opportunity to practise your subtraction until you get quite proficient. Design variations. Have fun!

OH, BY THE WAY:

Make this 'Drill' work hard to help your learning curve!

You do not just keep moving farther away after sinking each putt from one side of the Ladder. After you sink one, you have to go to the opposite side of the Ladder and sink one from each rung and then progressively farther rungs. Each time you complete one 'Hole Out' you again move back to the previous side of the Ladder and the next rung.

In this manner, if you have either 'Up-Hill or Down-Hill' or any Side-Hill Break or Lie, you will have to carefully reevaluate and adjust each stroke and station!

The test is on!

This is a great 'Bullet-Proof PUTTING Drill' and you can make it as hard as you think is necessary to create a real test. This one never gets old.

SATISFACTION GUARANTEED

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