



# The 20<sup>th</sup> Hole at Five p.m.

The Mental Coaching Podcast for the Best Game of Your Life

## E-Book and Bonus Materials for Episode 5: “Dolphins, Ducks, and Dog Legs”

### Contents of this E-Book

#### 1. Episode Transcript

A word-by-word transcript of the whole episode to re-read if you don't have an MP3 player at hand or want to review the contents.

#### 2. Action Steps

The Action Steps for this episode.

#### 3. Printable Cheat Sheet

A ready-to-print card suitable for taking with you on the golf course.

#### 4. Additional Resources

Includes essential reading for aspiring golfers.

### About the HeadProCoaching Podcast

Let the Mental Golf Techniques in this podcast improve your mind and your golf game, quickly and easily. Join Mathias Maul, professional mental golf coach and inventor of the HeadProCoaching Technique, as he reveals the secrets to lowering your handicap and impressing your fellow golfers.

This podcast is aimed at all those golfers, all over the world, who still haven't reached that magic threshold: a handicap of 12 or less. Those lucky enough, or hard-working enough, to have reached that level can improve their game even further by working one-on-one with Mathias Maul. For those not so fortunate, this podcast is the next best thing – an easy, fun, affordable way for the “Mental Meister” to guide you, too, to a lower handicap – and this series is designed to work with golfers of all experience levels.

Why “20th hole”? For many golfers, the game stops at the 19th hole – the clubhouse or an after-game pub or restaurant. If you're one of those golfers whose game is finished at the 19th hole, this series probably isn't for you. But for those of you ambitious enough to look beyond the 19th hole, who are on the never-ending quest to improve their golf, themselves and their lives, who seek answers to bigger questions — if you are one of these, then this podcast is for you.

**Welcome to what may have been, till now, beyond your expectations: The 20th hole.**

# The 20<sup>th</sup> Hole at Five p.m.

The Mental Coaching Podcast for the Best Game of Your Life

## 1. Episode Transcript

It's 5 PM ... it's the 20th hole ... so welcome to the mental coaching podcast for your all-time favourite game — golf.

You're listening to episode 5, entitled "Dolphins, Ducks, and Dog Legs"

Dolphins are among the most intriguing creatures to have evolved on our planet. With their apparent playfulness, social behavior and communication skills, they have captured the interest of mankind down through the ages. What's most fascinating about them, however, is their ability to learn new behaviors quickly, even outside their natural habitat.

If you've ever been to a marine aquarium, you've probably noticed the dolphin trainers standing at the edge of the pool. Watching them, they appear to have almost magical powers as they make dolphins jump through hoops or do triple somersaults – backwards ... and all with just the wave of a hand or a shrill blast from a whistle. Now, plastic balls and hoops are certainly not part of the ocean in which this species evolved, so it is far from obvious how they can be taught such complex tasks and perform them so easily.

Obviously, no magic is involved—unless, of course, you believe there is, in which case, who are we to dissuade you? Seriously, though, the point is that in just a few minutes, you too can learn – no, not how to jump through hoops – but how to train *yourself* to play better golf ... and you'll do this by using the same principles underlying dolphin training. The underlying principle is called *Reinforcement Learning*, and it works like this:

Take a reasonably large swimming pool and suspend a hoop vertically just below the surface. Add one happy dolphin. Watch the dolphin swim around. At some point, it will swim through the hoop. When it does, reward it with a small fish and blow a whistle. Completely ignore the dolphin when it does anything else. Let it swim through the hoop a few more times and reward it, then pull the hoop upwards half

a metre and repeat the process. A few hours later, the dolphin will happily jump through the hoop whenever you blow the whistle. This is, in very basic terms, what animal trainers call Shaping.

The basic premise is simple. Reward all behaviour you approve of and – this is important – completely ignore all behaviour you don't approve of. This is also the key to training children to do the washing-up, or training a husband to use the laundry basket properly. Do *not* punish unwanted behaviour – instead, ignore it ... and reward behaviour that you approve of, and want.

Now, I'll bet you're wondering "what's *this* got to do with golf?" Well, let's look at an example. It's the first hole of the club tournament. You hit the ball with your driver and after a perfectly shaped *hook*, the ball lands, splash, in the water. How do you react? Are you angry at yourself? Do you curse the ball, the driver, the weather, yourself, or all of the above? If so, congratulations – you're using a surefire method to re-inforce hooks! If that is what you want, fine – but get ready for years of heartache. If not, and you'd like to *reduce* the number of hooks you play, and learn to hit the ball, consistently, straight down the fairway, then the following Action Steps are for you ...

### Meet the Mental Meister!

If you play to a handicap of 12 or better, you may qualify for a **private HeadProCoaching session** with Mathias Maul!

Check Mathias' schedule and book your personal coaching session or teleclass at [www.headprocoaching.com](http://www.headprocoaching.com).

# The 20<sup>th</sup> Hole at Five p.m.

The Mental Coaching Podcast for the Best Game of Your Life

## 2. Action Steps

Warning – after you've listened to these Action Steps, you may think: "Huh, this sounds familiar. Isn't this the same as what I learned in Episode 2, about the Mental Reset Button ... ?" No, it's not—there's an important difference that you need to understand if you want to take full advantage of both of these HeadProCoaching Techniques. They're similar, yes, but different? Definitely. The Mental Reset Button, in Episode 2, is a mental device that you learned to construct in order to enter a specific state of mind at any time of your choosing – all you need do is mentally push your imaginary button at the exact moment you need it, to improve the shot you're about to play. In this episode's Action Steps, you're about to learn another HeadProCoaching Technique that will allow you to apply the entire concept of positive reinforcement to your game, a virtual guarantee of much lower golf scores.

**Step One:** Get your favourite club from your bag and make sure you have a bucket of rangeballs with you. If you were a dolphin – which, of course, we are not suggesting you are – an optional extra would be a bucket of small fish to reward yourself with. Now, choose a target down the driving range – this time, choose a difficult target ... push your limits.

**Step Two:** Hit a dozen balls towards the target and pay close attention to your mental, verbal and physical reactions when you hit the target ... and also when you miss the target. Just be aware of these reactions – don't let them change what you're doing. Chances are, if you chose a difficult target, you'll find yourself muttering a few angry expletives, or thinking them at least, or even making a few "loser" gestures. Pay close attention to your automatic, learned reactions, but observe them only – do not let them, or anything else, change what you are doing.

**Step Three:** Now, for a few minutes, distract yourself – stroll around and think of things other than golf. Dolphins, maybe ... or do you need to buy groceries, or some fish, on the way home?

**Step Four:** Have you cleared your head? Good. Now, hit another dozen balls toward the target but this time, consciously reward yourself for a good shot by congratulating yourself – if you hit a bad shot, ignore it. Rewarding yourself comes easily, but learning to ignore the bad shots *is* going to take some practise. If you are a seasoned golfer who's spent years cursing those bad shots, then you're going to have to learn to eradicate that behavioural pattern. Getting angry, or cursing, is tantamount to punishing yourself and while it may seem normal, it only serves to reinforce unwanted behavior – making those bad shots – and it virtually ensures that they'll happen again ... and again ... and again.

*N.B.* This re-learning can be achieved quickly and easily in a sports hypnosis session with Mathias Maul. For that, all you need to qualify is a handicap of 12 or less. But for those of you not yet playing to that level, don't worry – you can still achieve good results following these Action Steps on your own, but you will have to work at it. Remember what they say – there are no free lunches.

**Step Five:** Repeat this behavioural pattern – good shot? Congratulations! Bad shot? Ignore it! – during future rounds of golf ... and stick to it! Rest assured, if a dolphin can learn difficult behavioural patterns, so can you – New patterns to replace old, negative ones that have been so destructive to your potentially good golf game. Remember, don't curse bad shots, *completely ignore* them. And when you hit a good shot, remember what they do with those dolphins? They reward them, so reward yourself! If you don't care for a raw fish, then at least pat yourself on the back ... if you can reach that far, that is. It's a basic, simple concept – it's called positive reinforcement.

As always, the key to success is to be consistent: *Always* congratulate yourself on good shots, and *always ignore* bad ones – they're water under the bridge. And be assured, once you have mastered this, it will dramatically improve your game ... not to mention the fun you'll have by playing so much closer to your true potential!

# The 20<sup>th</sup> Hole at Five p.m.

The Mental Coaching Podcast for the Best Game of Your Life

## 3. Cheat Sheet

This is a handy ready-to-print cheat sheet for your golf bag. Print it and take it with you on the driving range, putting green, golf course, or front lawn to improve your game.

### HeadProCoaching Podcast Cheat Sheet

for season 1, episode 5, "Dolphins, Ducks, and Dog Legs"

#### *Suitable Context(s) for this Exercise*

Driving Range  Putting Green  Golf Course  Front Lawn  Living Room

#### *Synopsis*

Get rid of old behavior patterns by applying the simple technique of positive reinforcement to your gameplay.

#### *Action Steps*

1. Get some balls, and choose a rather difficult club *and* target for this exercise.
2. Hit a dozen of balls toward the target and *perceive* those automatic physical and verbal reactions when you miss a shot. Any expletives, gestures, or cursing? Note down everything. (If you have a friend at hand, ask him or her to watch you and note down everything s/he notices when you miss a shot.)
3. Distract yourself for a couple of minutes, calm down.
4. Hit another dozen of balls toward the target. Make an effort to consciously congratulate yourself on good shots and consciously ignore bad shots. This will probably take some practise.
5. Learn to repeat this new behavioral pattern in future exercises on the driving range or during normal play and note how your gameplay improves over time.

**Bonus:** If you're still wondering where the *ducks* come into play, read the current issue of the HeadProCoaching newsletter. Subscribe for free at [www.headprocoaching.com/podcast](http://www.headprocoaching.com/podcast)

HeadProCoaching Podcast Cheat Sheet for Season 1 Episode 5, "Dolphins, Ducks, and Dog Legs"  
Copyright © 2007 Mathias Maul M.A., [www.headprocoaching.com](http://www.headprocoaching.com). All Rights Reserved.

cut here



# The 20<sup>th</sup> Hole at Five p.m.

The Mental Coaching Podcast for the Best Game of Your Life

## 4. Additional Resources

This section contains additional information about the topics covered in this podcast episode.

If you have more recommendations, or any feedback to the HeadProCoaching podcast or e-books, drop me an email at [matt@headprocoaching.com](mailto:matt@headprocoaching.com).

Most of the media mentioned below can be ordered via the HeadProCoaching shop at this address: [www.headprocoaching.com/shop](http://www.headprocoaching.com/shop)

### **Karen Pryor: *Don't Shoot the Dog!***

Probably the most down-to-earth and practical book for using positive reinforcement in any aspect of your daily life, be it training your dog, your spouse, co-workers or kids. Such is its authority that it deserves to be the single recommended book for this episode.

(This book, by the way, was one of the first books in your Mental Meister's bookshelf—it shaped much of his early experience in coaching and training.)

