

# Get your **Head** in the Game

## Making the most of your golf in Winter.

With many of our nation's golf courses facing a deluge of bad weather including torrential rain and snow storms, the winter looks bleak for the golfer who is unable to get away to warmer climes to play a round or two. But all is not lost. Although the weather may be bad and full competitions may not always go ahead there are a number of things that you can do to keep your golf warmer than the weather. Here are a couple of tips to get you started.

### Decision making.

With weather affecting the way you ball flies and carries, there are more variables to consider when selecting your club and shot shape. Give yourself longer to make a decision on what club you are going to use. Remember that often you will need to take a club up to counter the cold climate and the shorter run of the ball. Don't fool yourself into thinking the club you use in the summer will provide with the same result in the winter; it will only frustrate you when the ball doesn't reach the intended target.

### If you worry about the weather it will affect your swing.

Ok, so the weather is bad. But when you're addressing the ball don't let that pesky crosswind affect your confidence in your swing. The more you think about the effect the wind may have, the more likely you'll bottle it or overcompensate. After choosing your club and the shot you



want to take, imagine the flight of the ball taking into consideration the wind. If you're happy with it, back yourself to achieve that and step confidently into the ball. Knowing that you have carefully considered the adverse conditions will help you focus on what you want to happen rather than what could happen.

As we all know when playing winter golf in the UK we get more than our fair share of inclement weather! Be it strong winds, rain, or just freezing cold temperatures! However, to play winning golf in these conditions it's imperative that we have sampled and practiced in them before we find ourselves teeing it up in the Sunday monthly medal... that's if we want success.

### The reasons are simple:

First you need get used to playing in many layers of clothing and wearing water-proof suits. This can be both mentally and physically challenging, with the additional clothing being restrictive and awkward. The restriction that results from wearing winter apparel will ultimately reduce your swing mobility and therefore the amount of power you can generate with the swing. Something that needs to be

tried to see how it effects your clubbing and yardages; and Secondly you need to train in these challenging types of conditions as you want to find out how other factors such as ground conditions, wind, rain, and temperature affect your game. Things to be aware of - your ball will fly shorter in cold temperatures; when the ground conditions are wet providing no roll (this being very important for your judgement in the short game); you will need to make varying alignment compensations depending on the wind; and your putts will be slower and take less break when the greens are wet or there's still morning dew on them.

However, many players just simply need to practice in poor conditions to find out their limitations and ways to adapt and overcome the many varying challenging situations that winter golf provides. Practicing in these conditions helps to build up the mental toughness and patience that's needed to deal with anything the elements can throw at you... that is if you want success.



### Darren Gass

PGA Head Professional; St Mellion International Resort & Performance Manager; Tournament Golf College.

Darren has coached players that have competed on all major European Tours & in the Open Championship. For many years he was the head coach for the Cornwall County squad and has helped to produce National Champions at boy's, youths and men's level. Darren now splits his time between his home base, the academy at the St Mellion International Resort and his role as the head of performance for the Tournament Golf College.



### Richard Collins

Richard is a member of the British Psychological Society and has worked with a number of elite athletes who participate in a variety of sports. He is currently working with the Tournament Golf College with a group of individuals who are looking to become professional golfers. Richard has been working alongside Darren Gass providing golfers with a completely holistic approach to improving their golf technically and mentally.

You can contact Richard on [richard@headforwin.co.uk](mailto:richard@headforwin.co.uk)