

There's a constant controversy over the playing of the sand wedge or heavy soled niblick. The great players of a decade ago declare that by the use of this one iron alone the modern star has taken several strokes from every round.

That is probably true but the game is difficult enough anyway, so if this club has made a difficult hazard easier to overcome let's by all means have a sand iron in our bag and learn to play it.

In the explosion shot the wide flange sole of the wedge rides or glides through the sand, and a firm sweeping shot with a full follow-through will take the ball up and out.

There's a difference of course in the power of golfers, but this is minimized by the amount of sand between your wedge's face and the ball. So no matter how strong you are hit firmly and by practice determine just how far you should hit behind the ball to acquire various distances.

The wedge shot is a very upright one. The feet are placed so that the ball is played well ahead and even with the left foot. The stance is slightly open, and the feet must be very firmly set into the sand. In setting the feet you may determine the density of the sand, for you may not touch the sand in a trap with your club head without penalty.

In taking the club head back do not use body turn or pivot and bend the left knee in very slightly. Remember you do not hit the ball but hit into the sand behind it, and that the sand cushions your wedge face so that you will get very little roll. So do not baby the shot no matter how close the pin - just hit firmly and let the amount of sand taken determine the distance.

There are of course several types of sand from the fine white dense sand of the sea side courses to the large grain sand of many inland traps, and all of it plays differently when wet. So the really right way to learn to cut these strokes from your game is to take a bag of practice balls and your favorite pro out with this new wedge and learn to master it right at home. Don't be surprised if he nearly faints when you ask him for a lesson on the wedge, for no one knows better than he does how few of us are taking full advantage of this real stroke saving club.