

# Master the Possibilities

Follow these five keys to set yourself up for competitive success

**W**ith winter turning to spring, the Masters fast approaches. Who will come away with the green jacket? The drama builds until Sunday afternoon, April 8.

Everyone wants a seat at the Tuesday Champions Dinner. For those of us who do not get an invitation to Augusta, we also long for golf recognition.

Every year in little towns and big cities, at country clubs, public courses and private clubs, people tee it up in a tournament that means something to them.

Their desire to win is just as real and heartfelt as any major champion. Whether you play for your club championship, member-guest, local or state tournament, you will experience highs and lows, much like the competitors at Augusta.

Everyone wants to win their personal major. The nerves you feel to perform are as relevant as anything players may feel at Augusta.

"How do I win my big event?" Here are five key steps to help you create a winning mindset.

**1.**

## Let go of the hype

The Masters is the single, greatest mass media event in golf. The media drowns us in predictions. In the end, it's all speculation. The buildup that is generated creates a buzz for the start of the tournament. But forecasting a winner in a golf tournament is difficult.

In your personal Masters scenario, it seems as if everyone is talking about a certain player or group of players who have the best chance of winning. You need to ignore that and let your clubs do the talking. Many golfers become intimidated by the members discussing who is hot. It becomes internal noise and distracts you from playing your best. Distance yourself from the boasters and the chatterboxes. Put your energy into preparing yourself for playing your game.

**DR. BOB WINTERS**  
Mental-game consultant



**2.**

## It's about the golf

During the 1992 Presidential election between Bill Clinton and George H.W. Bush, Democratic campaign strategist James Carville coined the phrase, "It's the economy, stupid!" Although the message was designed for an internal audience of campaign workers, the phrase became a slogan for the Clinton election campaign and changed voting opinion across America. It's also an analogy for golf.

Golfers are far from stupid. They are intelligent athletes who need to direct their attention to the simple task of playing golf. The golfing slogan should be: "It's about the golf!" What seems like a straightforward concept is difficult for many to implement. We become distracted by complicating the game with technical, mechanical and numerical noise. In order to tap into your "inner genius," remember that the task is simply to play your game and not get carried away with expectations of score or other players or how they may be doing.

**3.**

## Devalue the want

Because we all want to succeed, a certain amount of desire and motivation is important to drive ourselves toward that goal. But if we want it too much or start trying too hard, we end up sabotaging ourselves. We create an emotional state of "wantism." This is an abnormal feeling of wanting or needing to play so well that it creates pressure and interferes with our ability to perform to a natural state that has been developed through our training and repetition.

We need to develop a neutral state of golf desire.





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This means that you treat golf shots with a neutral value and that one shot or one round does not elicit an emotional response too high or too low. This is not to imply that I want you to become a robot without feelings, but rather to enjoy your good shots and to accept and release the poor ones.

4.

#### Give yourself permission to play

Giving yourself permission to play before you step onto the first tee is crucial to winning your personal championship. Making it safe for your performance on this golf day means that whatever happens, you can live with yourself and your score and not hold yourself emotionally hostage or feel bad when tough times occur.

Giving yourself permission means that you are providing yourself the creative license to play the way you want without having to meet preconceived expectations about how things

should or could be.

5.

#### One is the only-est number

Three Dog Night had a number of great hits including "One," with the opening line about the loneliest number. The song illustrates the value of one standing alone. Transferring the song to golf, it represents that we can only hit one shot at a time, to perform in that single moment.

For us to do our best in the total scheme of creating a golf score, we need to recognize the value of the one-shot moment. As the great Ben Hogan said, "The most important shot in golf is the next one." Investing yourself into the present shot is the most important and only thing on which you should focus. **Gwk**

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**ABOVE:** Too much focus on the scoreboard can distract a player.