

The Mentally Mutilating Dirty Dozen

(for those who don't care about fair)

SPECIAL REPORT

1. Straight Up

Does your group play 100% by the rules all the time? Do they roll the ball in the fairway? Do they move it off roots to avoid hurting their club?

Occasionally I play with a couple of guys whose rules are, "Two off the first tee, one mulligan per side, and you can improve your lie wherever you want."

Your thinking, "That's not real golf." Right. Anything other than the strict rules is not real golf. And most "golfers" don't play strict. I'm not saying you can't make up your own game, but it is not golf. That's what makes this method so potent.

On the first tee **make it clear**, "No mulligans and play everything as it lies."

The average golfer will break down immediately knowing that he isn't going to get to play "his" game.

2. The Tortoise and the Hare

Each person has his own internal speed that makes him most comfortable. Watch the others in your group - especially anyone beating you - and clock their pace.

Nominate yourself as the **pace police**.

If a slow-poke is ahead by a stroke do your best to speed him up. Break his rhythm. Mention the group waiting in the fairway, or the tee box. Ask him to step it up a bit. Get a little sarcastic, "At the rate you're moving you would have been underwater on the Titanic before realizing there was a problem."

If you have a speed demon in the group, slow him down. Take your time. Line up the putt from four angles. Watch John Daly at any tournament and you can see what deliberate play can do to a guy who likes lightning golf.

3. Throw down the gauntlet

Some people thrive on pressure, while others will avoid it like road kill. Do you know someone like that?

If you've got a **can't take the heat** kind of player then throw down the gauntlet. Make each shot a do or die. Up the stakes. Create "must" moments.

"John, I'll bet you five bucks you can't hit the green from here. You don't have to get close...just get on."

4. Miss clubbing

This might sound contrary to the advice I give, but I really do feel you should be honest. Cheating to win is not a real win. Taking advantage of a mentally weak opponent is totally different.

In order to stay honest I will deliberately miss-club to throw the opposition off.

Today at a par three I needed to hit a nine, but I dusted an eight. My partners played off of my club instead of trusting their game. I won the hole.

If you feel that a guy is trying use you as a guinea pig then miss club him. Shoot, even the pros can't ask their partners what they hit.

5. Stay in control

Control the rules. Control the bet. Control the pace. Control the scorecard. **Be a control freak.**

Others will think you're being anal. Maybe you are, but if their mind is not strong enough to handle the heat chances are swell that you'll be the victor.

6. Concession Reversal

It's an old match play trick. You know the drill. You give the competition those three foot putts for the first twelve or so holes then stop toward the end of the round.

The idea is to get them used to not putting the short ones. When you stop conceding the putts their blood runs cold and they start missing them.

Most people expect you to give the putts the first few holes...so don't do it. **Make them mak'em right from the first hole.**

Yes, they might think you're a pain if you don't give them one "in the leather," but if they miss you're already 1 up.

This idea works really well on those who have confessed that putting is the weakest part of their game.

Putting allows the touchy golfer two to four opportunities to blow a gasket in the short space of two to forty feet.
--Tommy Bolt

7. Lay It Out

In HEAD GAMES you learned the importance of painting mental pictures. That is critical when it comes to laying out the hole for the unsuspecting.

Here's what to do:

Mention all the “safe” places first. Tell them exactly where to hit it.

Close by telling them where not to hit it. Point to the trees or water. Describe the thickness of the rough. Make it clear and vivid.

Even though you may sound helpful by giving them the head’s up about the trouble - make sure the last thing their mind pictures is a negative result.

8. What’s Your Handicap?

More lies are told about handicap than lies about finding the ball just inside the OB stakes.

If you are playing with someone new ask about his handicap, then remember it.

If he plays better than his handicap you can say, “Are you sure you’re a 14? You’re playing like an 8. You’re not trying to mess with anyone, are you?”

If he plays worse say, “Hey, don’t worry about it. We all have bad days.”

With either statement you have caused the person to think they should be playing differently than they are.

9. Just Down Right Mean (for the desperate)

If you are getting mashed you can always get cruel (though not a recommended. But sometimes you have to decide if it’s better to win, or just swallow your pride.)

What I mean by mean is that you become obvious. Most head games should be covert... undercover. It’s **mean** to be transparent.

Four ways you can be mean:

1. *Tell them you hope they lose.* That’s not kind, but it is true.
2. *Exploit the worse part of their game and keep mentioning it.* (Poor driving, three putting, shanking, etc).
3. *Ignore their play.* Walk off the tee before they hit. Pull your club for the next hole while they are still putting. Make it plain that you don’t care about their round.
4. *Give them an old ball on OB holes so they won’t lose a good one.*

You can probably think of dozens more. Being mean is not fair, and not good sportsmanship, but if you’re desperate, and don’t mind risking a friendship, proceed at your own risk.

10. A Quick Investigation

Check out the equipment.

What kind of driver? How many wedges? What iron set? (Forged blades? Watch out!)

Check out the swing.

Smooth? On plane? Over the top? Squatting like sitting on a toilet?

Check out the language.

Know-it-all? Down grades his play? Sounds like he is trying to throw you off the trail?

Check out the bag.

Tags from Pebble & Sawgrass? Bag receipt from the local golf pasture?

Every small detail can provide some clues about the real level of the player. Then use them against the player. Ex: “I see you play

forged irons. You must be awesome. I'm already nervous."

Now the question is, can he play up to your expectation?

11. Guess What I Saw Last Night On...

Golf instruction can disable all but the best golfers.

Reverse every natural instinct and do the opposite of what you are inclined to do, and you will probably come very close to having a perfect golf swing.
--Ben Hogan

If you start telling your partners what you saw on Golf TV you can have them believing they ought to give it a try in a matter of moments.

Demonstrate the instruction. Ask them to watch you. Ask them to demonstrate it for you. Ask how it feels.

Then ignore all that and bust it down the middle. The range, a practice round, or a day beyond recovery is the only place to try something new. **Anyone foolish enough to**

experiment during a live round deserves to lose.

12. Don't Let Him Fool You

This last point is for your own mental health...

Don't fall for any junk! Stay focused and play your game.

When I was playing my best I used to show up at the course with tattered shorts and my shirt tail out. I looked like a mess. My glove had a huge hole in it.

Back in those days I played alone and let the clubhouse pair me up with whoever.

When I walked up to the first tee I could tell they didn't want me to join. They were afraid I would slow them down chasing the ball through the woods.

After a couple of holes they were saying, "You've played this before."

Too late. They **never had a chance** to win because they couldn't believe they were getting thrashed by a kid with a mound of duct tape on his driver.

Don't get fooled. Be on the mental offensive and you won't have to get defensive.

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