

The Truth About Lies... Sand Lies, That Is.

By: John Carpineta

Let's shed some new light on sand play.

but not too deep.

Will you get by just by reading the following? No...but when you read it, you will have have some ammo to improve. As with anything, practice, practice, practice. Present situation: Your shot lands in the bunker, fear sets in, causing a need to get it over with quickly! This is followed by 1 or 2 jabby strokes at the ball.. before finally getting out.

Now, here come the excuses:

The sand was rock hard, or someone was talking as I swung, etc. What, then, was missing?

No attention paid to the lie, or to the texture of the sand. This leads to a failure in the ability to weigh options, set up properly, and lessens the chances of making a quality recovery shot.

New light on Idea One: Dig your feet in to gauge sand texture,



A hard surface requires a more "digging" shot, using the leading edge of the club a bit more. The grip required to execute such a shot is illustrated,



with a weakened left hand, slightly stronger right hand and a square club face (nicknamed the 'finesse grip' by PGA Pro John Dunigan. Thanks, Johnny!) Reminder: Square club face brings the leading edge into play, while an open face promotes bounce.



Pictured above: Troy Matty & John Carpineta

Soft bunker surfaces: After widening your stance, open the club face to bring more "bounce" into play. This will slide the face under the ball - without changing the swing. (These sand texture ideas are used and shared with us by Bill Fox.)

Beware of rolling the hands to the right to create an open grip.



It will roll face back to the left too fast during the downswing, causing skulled, topped or smothered shots.

If these swing setup tips are not enough to help your cause, then you can make minor swing adjustments. Take a steeper swing in harder surfaces to help dig more, or flatten your swing in soft bunkers to avoid taking too much sand on the way through.

Another nice tip...



A ball perched on top of a dollar bill, the idea being to remove sand equal to the length of the bill.

Thanks to fellow pros Jim Bogan, Bill Fox, Matt Foust and Tom Hueston. Photos courtesy of Andrew Smith and Troy Matty.

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