



THE BIG PICTURE – What Putting Has to Do with Scoring

You have three shots that determine what sort of demands you face for putting:

1. the first putt after hitting the green in regulation
2. the first putt after chipping on for a par save after missing the green in regulation
3. the putt remaining after a lag putt or a chip-on for par save

The tough one is No.2, Without a very close par-save chip, you WILL card a bogey. How close do you need the chips? To whatever range makes you 90% sure it's a 1-putt. So to keep the card clean, you have to work very hard on those par-save chips. Drop ONE ball down off the green some distance, chip it, and then pick up your putter and take that long painful walk over to your poor chip and try to 1-putt from there, and then repeat with another chip from a different location, but this time with greater determination to get close enough to 1-putt, and keep that exercise forever.

As to No.1, the PGA Tour average first putt length is nearly 9 meters, and the chance of 1-putting from 9 meter is about 1 is less than 5%, so it's a 2-putt. Pros don't often stick approach shots close enough, but in the course of a round, they make 4-6 birdies with probably 3-5 ONE-PUTTS plus a chip-in. If they hit 13 GIRs, they face FIVE PAR-SAVE CHIP and ONE-PUTT cases and 13 GIR first putts.

To gather 4 birdies means 1-putting 4 out of 13 first putts. Probably 2-3 of these occurs on par-5s, so the third (GIR) shot is from close range. So only 1 or 2 putts are ONE-PUTT after hitting the GIR on a lengthy par-4 from 100-150 yards out.

That means most GIR first putts are lag putts and you had better not turn 2 shots into 3. Take it easy and learn how to lag safely with PZ.