

Golf Strategy Guide: How to Use Strokes Gained Analytics to Lower Your Score

Golf is a game of precision and strategy. To play well, golfers must make intelligent decisions on each shot and execute those shots to the best of their ability. But how do you measure how well you're playing? One answer is strokes gained, a statistical approach developed by Professor Mark Broadie of Columbia Business School that has become the go-to performance measure for professional golfers and amateurs.

In essence, strokes gained measure how well a golfer performs relative to the rest of the field. It does this by comparing a golfer's performance on each shot to the expected performance of an average player from the exact location on the course. The difference is the golfer's "strokes gained" for that shot.

For example, let's say that the average professional golfer takes 2.8 shots to hole out from a particular location on the green, and you take two shots to hole out from the exact location. In this case, you've gained 0.8 strokes on the field, which is your strokes gained on that shot. If, on the other hand, you take three shots to hole out, you've lost 0.2 strokes to the field.

By tracking strokes gained for every shot a golfer takes, it's possible to get a comprehensive picture of their performance throughout a round or a season. This information can help identify areas of strength and weakness and allow golfers to focus on improving their performance where it matters most.

One of the most valuable aspects of strokes gained is its ability to quantify the impact of different parts of the game on a golfer's overall score. For example, it's often said, "Drive for show, putt for dough." - Strokes gained showed that approach play is the most essential part of the game when it comes to reducing scores.

Overall, strokes gained are a powerful tool for golfers serious about improving their game. By tracking their performance in detail and focusing on where they can gain the most strokes, golfers can shoot lower scores and enjoy the game even more.