Steve Lawrence Golf Academy

LESSON SUMMARY

Golf Bunker Shot Technique and Distance Control

Key points

1. Set the wrists early — this is the priority. Hinge the wrists early in the takeaway. If the hands and the clubhead move away at the same speed, the club sweeps, enters the sand too early and takes too much sand. The early set produces a descending strike into the sand, scooping under the ball, with the clubhead passing your hands through the impact area.

2. Build the setup for the splash. Stance shoulder width or slightly wider, square or slightly open to the target, ball about two inches forward of centre. The handle points at the middle of your body, so the clubhead sits slightly ahead of your hands — the opposite of a chip shot. Bunker play is the exception to the short-game rules: no forward press.

3. Match the clubface to the sand. Set the clubface slightly open when the sand is dry. Square the face only when the sand is wet or firm. Read the sand before you set up, not after.

4. Distance comes from speed. You never make contact with the ball — the sand moves it. Shot length is governed by the speed of the club moving through the sand, with the length of swing matched to the shot. Keep accelerating through the hitting zone.

Your practice path

- Wrist-set rehearsals: takeaway repetitions that isolate the early hinge, until the hinge — not a sweep — is what starts the swing.
- Address check on every practice ball: stance set, ball forward, handle at the centre of the body, clubhead ahead of the hands.
- Sand check built into the routine: dry sand, open face; wet or firm sand, square face.

Points for reinforcement and review

- The chipping habits that creep back: forward shaft lean at address, and a slow takeaway where hands and clubhead move together. Both produce heavy contact.
- Acceleration through impact: the club has to keep its speed to blast the sand — and the ball — out of the bunker.