

COLUMN



Keys to Taming Augusta

Compleat Golfer's playing editor is Louis Oosthuizen and this month he talks about The Masters

We're coming up to the first Major of the year and, as always, there's great excitement about what lies in store for all of us at Augusta National.

The focus for The Masters is no different to the approach for the other three Majors. You try to get yourself into some sort of form going into the event. It's always a tough week and you hope your game is coming right so that you put up a strong challenge for the title.

Having said that, I don't get nervous about playing The Masters, or any Major for that matter. The only time the nerves come into play is when you're in contention for the Green Jacket, and that's a good thing.

If you're near the top of the leaderboard after the third round, you've got a late tee-off time, around 3pm. That is a long time to wait, which can be a challenge.

At Augusta, iron play is always key. I think that over the years I have come to realise

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that one needs to be spot-on with the irons. You have to know where you want to hit them and what shape you want to hit. There's plenty of course management at Augusta and positioning your ball on the greens is always massively important.

You also have to be hot with your putter for the week. Off the tee, Augusta is pretty generous, with wide fairways and not a lot of rough.

Now, on to Amen Corner, that famous three-hole stretch that gets so much attention. They're tough holes (Nos 11, 12 and 13), but what happened to Jordan Spieth last year can happen to anyone. He teed up on the 12th in the lead and was looking

at a second Green Jacket. Yet, he came off with a quadruple-bogey seven.

Getting the wind right at Amen Corner is so difficult. You look at the flag on the 11th and it shows you one thing, you look at the flag on 12 and it tells you another, and then you look at the trees on 13 and they throw up something completely different.

The 12th is the toughest par-three hole in the world to judge the wind right.

If you hit your tee shot into the water, you must accept that you are going to take a five and move on. Hopefully you'll be able to look for birdie opportunities on the 13th and 15th. If you

find the water on 12, you might still be able to sink a 20- or 30-footer for bogey, but more often than not, it's a five.

Last year Jordan tried to play a bit more aggressively and found the water again. It can happen so easily. A bogey at the 12th hole at Augusta is not that bad a number.

I will probably opt to play for the fat side of the green on the left and if I find the bunker, the trick will be to take the punishment and get a four and try to get one back at another hole.

For those of you who are going to be staying up late at night to watch us, thank you, and you can rest assured I'll be doing my best. ☺

GARETH HODGSON/ANIK EHRMANN/GETTY IMAGES/DAVID JAMES/TW IMAGES

LIP OF FAIRWAY BUNKER

Golf can be cruel sometimes and here we find ourselves up against the lip of the 18th bunker at Pinnacle Point. It would ordinarily be straightforward towards the green, but with this lie I'm not going to get to the green, so why take the risk? Get into the bunker and move your feet around, get comfortable with your stance. Then, look to get the ball out; even five or six metres straight in front of you is fine, as long as you're on the fairway nearer the hole, and you can go for the hole with your next shot. It's no use taking the shot on, because you could hit it thin and into the lip of the bunker again.

