

COLUMN

Rested and Ready

Compleat Golfer's playing editor is South Africa's Louis Oosthuizen. This is his first column for the magazine where he also offers helpful instruction



I'm really excited for what 2016 holds after last year when I finished runner-up in the Majors on two occasions - at the US Open and then The Open Championship at St Andrews - and I feel my game is where I would like it to be.

The back injury issues I've had in the past have cleared up and I'm feeling a lot stronger and fitter than I have before. Believe it or not, I have even started running, and spent time on the trails and tracks on the farm in Mossel Bay in December. Running is not a career I'd sign up for, but it has given me some tough cardio workouts in the off-season.

I didn't feel too great physically at Sun City for the Nedbank Golf Challenge, where I finished in a tie for 11th on four under. I picked up a bug and the extremely hot weather didn't help me either. But after that

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I had a great break with my family and close friends, and got outdoors and enjoyed the South African summer.

I also had my Charity Day at Pinnacle Point in mid-December and although the weather was a bit iffy with a couple of seasons in one day, it was great catching up with familiar faces.

The toughest thing at the end of the year is getting your schedule right for the new season. It's pretty similar this year as there are a few more new tournaments. I've started off with the European Tour. The Qatar Masters (27-30 January) is where I've teed up my season, followed by the Dubai Desert Classic (4-7 February) and then I'm off to Malaysia from 18-21 February for the Maybank Championship at

Royal Selangor. After that I'm heading to Australia, for the Perth International from 25-28 February. I've never been to Australia and I'm excited to be going there. It's a fair distance away, but I'll be going straight from Malaysia so it won't be too bad for me.

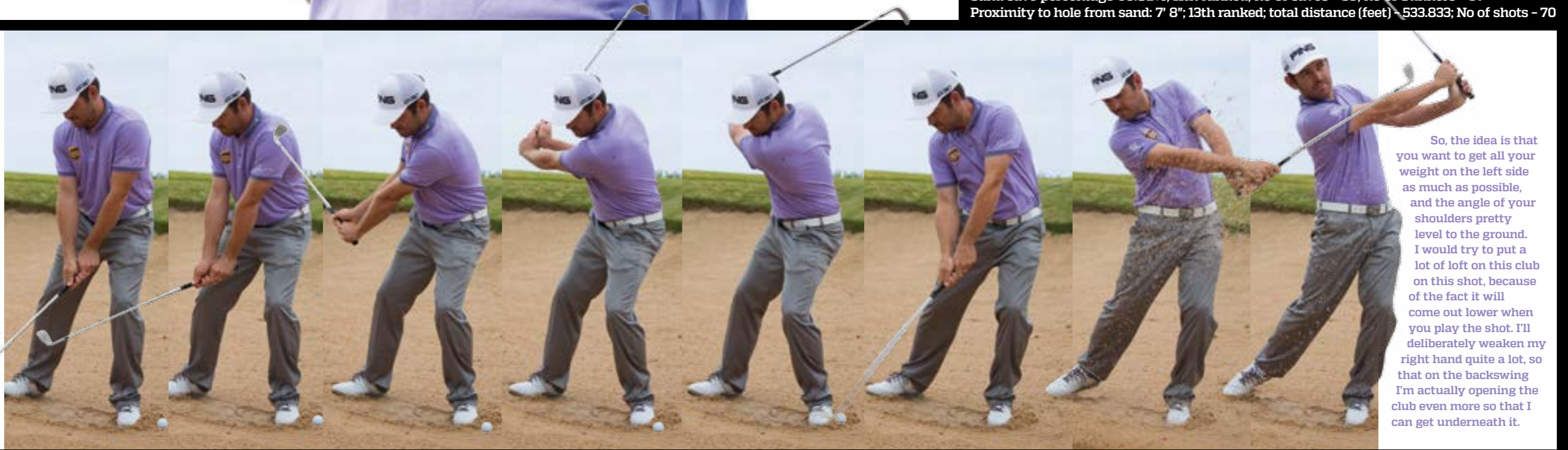
I'll start my US season at Doral at the end of February, with the WGC-Cadillac Championship and then the schedule is pretty similar to last year. The Rio Olympics will disrupt our schedule, but one of my goals for 2016 is to be one of the two or three South Africans in the squad. The Olympics is a big subject on everyone's list. But I've had a proper off-season and now that it has started, it's all business - working hard, getting ready for the Majors and Rio. ◉

Oosthuizen's 2015 PGA Tour season bunker stats

Sand save percentage 60.82%; 11th ranked; no of saves - 59; no of bunkers - 97
Proximity to hole from sand: 7' 8"; 13th ranked; total distance (feet) - 533.833; No of shots - 70

BUNKER PLAY

On a downhill lie in a bunker it's important to get your shoulders the same angle as the slope. That means on a lie like this, where it's downhill, I put all my weight on my left side. I will get my shoulders parallel to the ground because if you're leaning too far back you're going to hit behind it, and if your weight is too far on your right side you're also going to hit behind it. That will result in you leaving yourself in the bunker.



So, the idea is that you want to get all your weight on the left side as much as possible, and the angle of your shoulders pretty level to the ground. I would try to put a lot of loft on this club on this shot, because of the fact it will come out lower when you play the shot. I'll deliberately weaken my right hand quite a lot, so that on the backswing I'm actually opening the club even more so that I can get underneath it.