

## POWER TOOLS

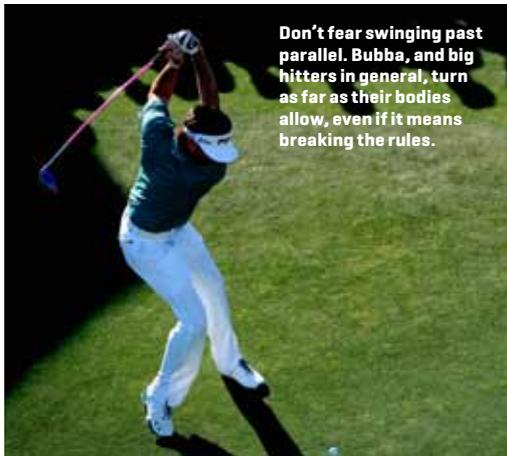
# Bomb It Like Bubba

4 WAYS TO MASH YOUR DRIVES—AND ONE TO ESCAPE TROUBLE WHEN YOU DON'T

1

### BUCK TRADITION WITH YOUR TURN

Bubba breaks at least a dozen instruction “rules” every time he swings his driver. It’s a good thing he didn’t seek formal training as a kid, because he may have been coaxed out of doing some of the things that give him his crazy speed, and there may never have been a Bubba Watson. Case in point: his backswing. He turns his shoulders and hips so far that it pulls the heel of his front foot off the ground and whips the shaft way past parallel (below). It’s more comic book than textbook, but nobody will argue the fact that bigger turns lead to bigger hits.



**Don't fear swinging past parallel. Bubba, and big hitters in general, turn as far as their bodies allow, even if it means breaking the rules.**

PATRICK SMITH

2

### SHRUG OFF THE COMMON MISS

If you’re going to follow Step 1, be prepared to deal with missing a lot of fairways. Bubba is the fastest and longest driver on Tour, but one of the least accurate. That’s the gamble with power driving, but you never see Bubba get upset or appear worried when his ball lands in the rough. Neither should you. An approach from tall grass is just as easy to execute as one from the fairway if you stand a little closer to the ball and steepen your downswing. This is especially true with a shorter iron in your hands, so distance does pay off.

3

### BUILD AN “ESCAPE” REPERTOIRE



STREETER LEKKA

**You can't pull off a miracle without practicing it first.**

Bubba misses 42 percent of his fairways, but hits 70 percent of his greens. You can’t explain this disparity other than by Bubba’s creativity and aggressiveness. It doesn’t matter what his lie is, Bubba will find a way to land the ball on the green. Call it “Strokes Saved Bubba-ing.” How creative are you? How many times, for example, have you practiced punch shots from rough at the range, or low cuts with a three-wood before heading to the first tee? You can only pull off what you train for. Dedicate one day each month to hitting nothing but wild escapes on the range.

4

### GET FANTASTIC WITH FOOTWORK

Bubba’s footwork looks sloppy, but there’s more to it than meets the eye. He pushes off his toes at impact (below) to create speed and enough room for the club to whip through the ball unimpeded, then spins his front foot out after to maintain his hip turn without stressing his right knee. These are great moves biomechanically proven to



ANDREW REDDINGTON

**“Jump” off the ground at impact to max out speed.**

work, and ones you should try during practice. Golf is funny. Nobody has ever criticized a baseball player’s footwork, but as soon as a golfer does something out of the box, watch out! If you hit it far, who cares what you look like? It’ll be interesting to see if Bubba’s foot action catches on with the masses.

5

### SPEED UP YOUR HIP TURN

Bubba is a lot like Rory McIlroy in that he relies on hip-turn speed to create power. McIlroy has the fastest hips on record (719 degrees per second, per T.P.I.), but I bet Bubba is a close second. The tip here is simple: turn your hips faster. A good drill to work on your rotational speed is to swing your driver held upside down a few times as fast as you can, and then held normally. The trick is to turn your hips fast enough so that the *whoosh* sound created by the driver as it cuts through the air occurs *after* impact. If it doesn’t, you’re not turning your hips fast enough. Try driving your driver even before you complete your backswing. Jump-starting your hip turn like this creates a whip-like feel in the transition, and nothing is faster than a whip. Well, except maybe Bubba Watson.

By Top 100 Teacher  
**Jim Murphy**  
Sugar Creek G.C.,  
Sugar Land, Texas.

with David DeNunzio



MURPHY: ANGUS MURRAY; WATSON: DAVID CANNON

SEE BUBBA'S SWING ON GOLF.COM



**“Half the things Bubba does in his swing go against traditional teaching, but they work for him—and he has two green jackets to prove it.”**

*—Top 100 Teacher Jim Murphy*

**Fast hips fuel fast swings. You know yours are quick enough if your belt buckle faces the target at impact.**