

THE PGA
PROFESSIONALS'
LESSON
BOOK

Don't gamble with tricky hardpan shots



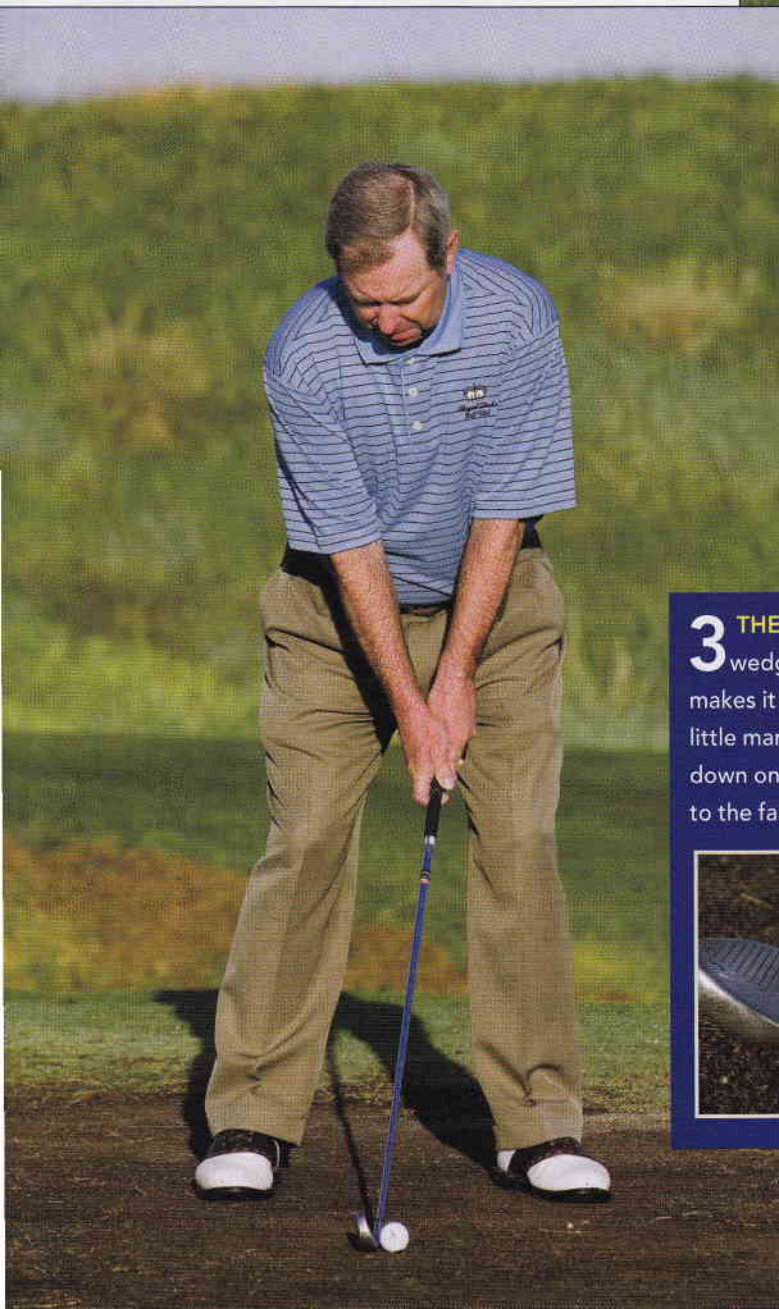
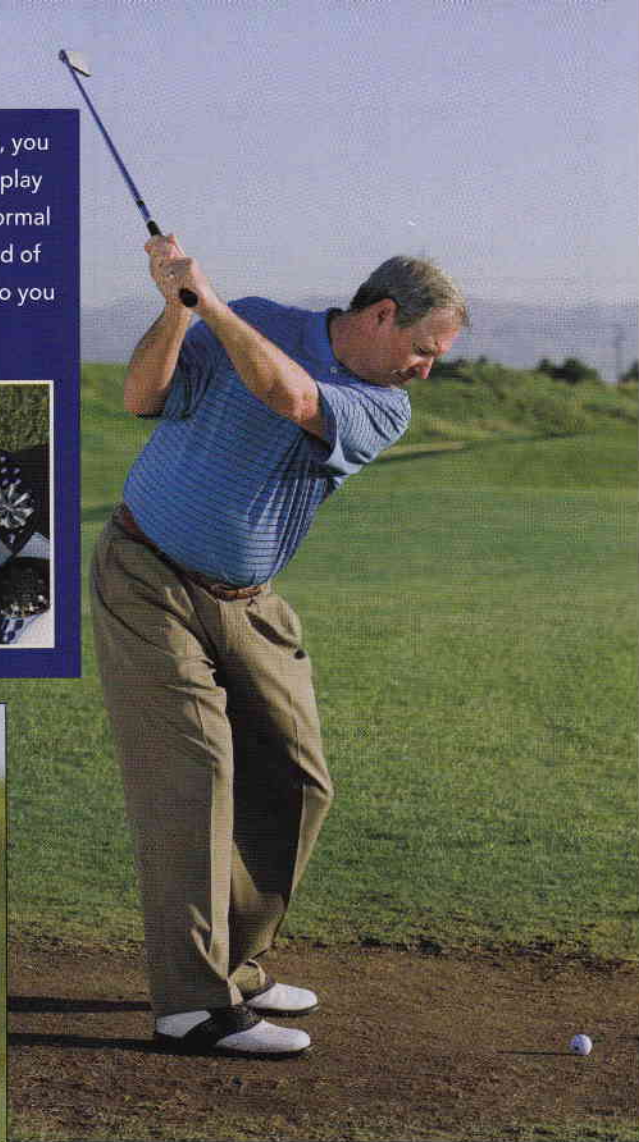
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A DROUGHT IN LAS VEGAS means courses face water restrictions. Thus, many facilities prioritize watering their greens – otherwise the short grass would just die – so your odds of finding lush fairways in town are low. If you're used to having fluffy lies at your home course, playing off the hardpan may be foreign to you, but it doesn't have to be hard. Whether you're playing in Vegas or any other desert locale with firm turf conditions, PGA Professional Mike Davis has the following advice for turning hardpan shots from a gamble into a sure bet.

1 TIGHT FAIRWAY LIES Off tight lies on firm, fast fairways, you don't want to hit down on the ball as much as you would if the grass was more lush. Play the ball slightly back in your stance and focus on striking the ball cleanly.

2 GET A GRIP When you're playing the ball off true hardpan, you want to take one more club – a 6-iron when you'd normally play a 7-iron, for example – and swing at 80 to 90 percent of your normal speed so you don't injure yourself. Try to sweep the ball instead of hitting down on it. And be sure your cleats aren't worn down so you can get a better grip and swing without slipping.



3 THE HARDPAN APPROACH On shorter shots, avoid hitting wedges off hardpan. The loft and bounce on wedges (left inset) makes it tougher to make clean contact on these shots, and there's little margin for error. Play the ball back in your stance and grip down on an 8- or 9-iron (right inset), even if you're just chipping back to the fairway.

