

# CASE STUDY



**Darren  
Webster-Clarke**

*Slope Adaptation and  
Ground Reaction Force  
Training*

**ZEN**  
**GOLF**

**Coach: Darren Webster Clarke**, Zen Golf Coach

**Technology:** Zen Swing Stage and Trackman

**Player:** 15 Handicap golfer

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## **BACKGROUND**

Darren Webster-Clarke, an experienced coach, welcomed a 15-handicap golfer into the studio — a player who, for the first time, explicitly identified that his performance issues were tied to specific slope conditions. The player confidently articulated his struggle: while he could play well from ball-above-feet lies, he consistently failed when faced with a downhill lie where the ball was below his feet. This encounter offered a rare and valuable opportunity to use **constraints-led learning** principles in a highly tailored and representative way.

## **ASSESSMENT**

Upon video analysis, Darren observed that the player:

- Came down steeply onto the ball on flat and downhill lies.
- Exhibited a distinct tendency to **hang back on his trail (right) foot**.
- Lacked **lateral pressure shift** into his lead (left) leg during the swing.
- Had **poor rotational use** of his lead side, affecting swing shallowness and control.

Interestingly, when the ball was above his feet, the natural alteration in slope forced a shallower swing arc, temporarily masking these underlying issues and producing better results.

## **INTERVENTION: USING THE ZEN SWING STAGE**

Employing the **Zen Swing Stage's** dynamic slope manipulation, Darren crafted a progressive training task:

- **Uphill Slope Creation:** The stage was tilted uphill to exaggerate the necessity for a pressure shift into the lead side.
- **Force Pedal Integration:** A **Force Pedal** was placed under the player's left foot to heighten proprioceptive awareness of lead-side pressure.
- **Sensory Feedback Loop:** The player could viscerally experience the desired pressure shift as a task demand, rather than relying solely on verbal instruction.

This intervention aligned with **ecological dynamics principles**, promoting **perception-action coupling** where the player attuned to the slope and organized his movement self-adaptively.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

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*The player quickly realized:*

- **Importance of Lateral Shift:** Moving into the left side not only stabilized his body but naturally helped **shallow** the swing.
- **Swing Direction Awareness:** Improved lateral shift corrected the previously steep, outside-in swing path, leading to more neutral attack angles.
- **Tendency Awareness:** By exploring different slopes, he could predict and pre-empt his movement tendencies on various terrains.

By **representing competitive constraints** through variable slope conditions, Darren helped the player **self-organize** a more adaptable and resilient swing pattern — one capable of surviving under the real pressures of a sloping course.

## BROADER IMPLICATIONS

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This session highlighted a growing trend, reflected even at the elite level (e.g., Bryson DeChambeau's Masters comments), that players are seeking not just technical skill but **environment-specific adaptability**. Slope-based training, when executed with **representative design** and **repetition without repetition**, offers a major advancement in real-world golf skill acquisition.

## CONCLUSION

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Through the Zen Swing Stage, Darren enabled a **constraints-led** and **ecological** training environment that encouraged **self-organization** rather than prescriptive corrections. This empowered the golfer to feel, adapt, and own the solution — a hallmark of resilient skill learning.

"The slopes taught him what no amount of technical instruction could. It was the course itself — recreated in the studio — that became the true teacher."



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