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## The putting method that dominates the Champions Tour

by *Doug Hoxeng, Ph.D.*

Want to putt like a Champion?

In the last PGA Champions Tour season, Bernhard Langer and Scott McCarron led the tour in tournaments won and prize money with the closest competitor over \$700,000 behind. Together, they won four of the five Senior Majors.

Langer and McCarron were also first and second in Birdies per Round, fewest Putts per Hole, and Total Birdies for the Year. Neither, however, was the leader in Greens in Regulation, Driving Accuracy nor Driving Distance. Putting delivered their success. Incredibly, Langer (now 60 years old) averaged 1.68 Putts per Greens in Regulation bettering Tiger Woods' best season, ever!

What accounted most for their putting mastery? Both Langer and McCarron use a long putter with a non-anchored putting stroke. Many golfers mistakenly believe that the long putter itself was banned by the United States Golf Association (USGA). However, the putters of Langer and McCarron and their method have been ruled as "conforming" to the rules of golf by the USGA. McCarron is even grateful



for the USGA anchor ban, which drove him to discover the freer flowing stroke he now has.

The long putter provides several advantages. Most importantly, how the long putter is held eliminates a wristy stroke – key for Langer

who fought the “yips” for years. Additionally, straighter putts result because: 1) the much heavier club head resists twisting of the clubface and, 2) the more vertical shaft enables the club head to stay squarer through impact. Additionally, longer practice sessions are achieved due to the more comfortable vertical posture.

Even with the dominance of these champions, no major golf club company manufactures long putters today. Fortunately, Brad Butler – a Phoenix area PGA Class “A” Professional and engineer – has been making USGA-conforming long putters and teaching a non-anchored putting stroke for over 20 years. He also conducts “long putter” clinics enabling golfers to learn the non-anchored putting stroke, try out long putters, and be custom fitted.

Considering the success of Bernhard Langer and Scott McCarron, it may well be worth the time to check out Mr. Butler and his putters. He can be reached at [bbgolf@cox.net](mailto:bbgolf@cox.net) and 480.273.1378.

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