

The Basics of Ball Flight

Hook Cause - closed clubface at impact. Effect - ball curves to the left.

Slice Cause - open clubface at impact. Effect - ball curves to the right.

Pull Cause - outside to inside swing path. Effect - ball starts left of target and flies straight.

Push Cause - inside to out swing path. Effect - ball starts right of target and flies straight.

A draw and a fade are nice descriptions of a slight hook and slight slice.

None of the ball flights described above will get the ball to the target, unless your alignment is off. But a combination of two of these ball flights can get the ball to the target. Let me explain:

Pull-Slice (yellow-orange line) Cause - red-to-yellow swing path with an open clubface. Effect - ball starts left of target and curves right. Some characteristics of a pull-slicer:

- Usually toe-deep divots that point to the left. Toe-deep means the toe of the club digs into the ground more than the heel.
- Battle scars (skymarks) on the top and toe of the driver from hitting the ball straight up.
- Tee marks on the bottom of the driver that are at an angle.
- Contact on the toe of the club.
- Ball flight is high with a loss of distance.
- Fights a slice.
- Best feeling shot is a pull to the left.
- Tension, tension, tension.

Push-Hook (blue-pink line) Cause - green-to-blue swing path with a closed clubface.

Effect - ball starts right of target and curves left. Some characteristics of a push-hooker:

- Usually heel-deep divots that point to the right.
- Divots are usually very shallow or non-existent.
- Usually a good player, but one who fights a hook.

Note: Clubface position has a bigger influence on direction than the path of the swing.

You could be making a pull-slice swing but because the clubface is very open the ball might not fly to the left before it starts slicing.

A pull-slicer should try to swing like a push-hooker, and vice-versa.

There are a million swing thoughts to correct ball flight, but before you can figure out what's going to help correct a particular ball flight, you must know why the ball is flying that way to begin with.

And these are the basics, the most common issues with ball flight. For more in-depth information including other possible causes, see the [Faults and Fixes Tip Sheets](#).

About the Author Perry Andrisen is a PGA Teaching Professional who has worked at The Bridges Golf Club, Indian Wells and Hazeltine National, among other locations.