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## Elite Insider Circle Monthly Handicap Improver July 2015

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Hello Fellow Golf Enthusiast,

This is **Jaacob Bowden**.

To recap last month, I answered several questions from our Insider Circle members.

I also went over the importance of lie angles in our irons and the importance of having them checked and fit to your swing.

In my preparation for British Open qualifying, I was missing more greens than I expected...despite feeling like I was swinging well. It turns out that **some of my lie angles had drifted** and several of them simply needed to be re-set. **After I had them bent, my approach shots immediately started going closer to my targets.**

Our equipment expert Tom Wishon wrote about **whether steel or graphite shafts would be better for your irons.**

**Two big reasons** why you might **consider changing to graphite** would be to:

1. **Increase distance** with a **decrease in fatigue** from the irons being too heavy

2. **Reduce discomfort** if you have arthritis or pain in your hands, wrists, elbows, and shoulders.

**Graphite shaft production consistency is at a high level** these days, **graphite is no longer significantly more expensive** than steel, and **graphite can get everything you'd need in terms of performance** (even for good players).



We also had a **Long Drive Q&A with Houston Hair**. Houston is a top competitor in long drive and he has **swung in the high 140s**.

I think the **main take-a-ways for you** from his Q&A would be:

- He has a **driver that optimizes his launch conditions**
- **He practices swinging fast**
- **He uses several training aids**, which include the Orange

Whip, Draw Athletics Weighted Agility Gloves, and the Ultimate Swing Trainer.

**For our** audio interview, we included a CD of my interview with golf ball designer Dean Snell. This was one of the more interesting interviews I've done.

Dean is a **golf ball designer** and among other things he **designed or co-designed the Titleist Pro V1, Titleist Professional, TP Tour Preferred, TP Tour Preferred X**...so an impressive share of all the balls that have been played and won on tour over the last 15 years or so.

We talk about **technology, how it developed** over the years, **how John Daly, Justin Rose and Sergio Garcia were** to work with, what he could transfer from designing the F-16 fighter plane heads up display to **building the entire TaylorMade-Adidas ball department**, and the **best way he recommends to be fit for a golf ball**.

If you missed it, make sure to log in to the member area and listen to it on the website. It's a good one.

**This month**, here's what's coming up for you.

First of all, I've been asked multiple times about the **status of Dan Shauger**. For those that aren't familiar, **Dan Shauger was my original golf coach** and he was the one that **introduced me to Mike Austin**, the man who hit the **Guinness World Record 515-yard drive** in the **1974 US National Senior Open** at the **age of 64**.

Sadly, **Dan was fighting a battle with lung cancer** that was apparently caused by asbestos during the work he did years ago as a carpenter on movie sets.

Dan first told me about this in October 2013. **The last time I had personal contact with him was December 2013**. March 2014 was the last time someone else reported to me they had heard from him.

**There is recent activity on some of his social media accounts**, for example Twitter and YouTube. However, **it appears that someone else is making those posts** and not actually him. **Rumor is that he passed away, but I have heard nothing official**. I tried looking online for death records or an obituary to no avail.

If you have **any info about Dan**, please let us know so we can pass on the word.

Also coming up...

- I'll write about **my experience in "The Open Championship" qualifying**
- **Tom Wishon** will answer the question of **whether or not you can really change the loft with an adjustable hosel driver**.
- **Adam Young** will tell you about how you can **transfer what you do on the driving range to the golf course**.
- **I will answer Monthly Handicap Improver member questions**.
- We'll have our usual **"Member of the Month"** and golf joke.

Finally, as part of your Monthly Handicap Improver Insider Circle, **we've included a CD of my audio interview with...Mick Yelovich**.

As you may recall, we did a **Long Drive Q&A with Mick** for the **April 2015 Monthly Handicap Improver**. **Mick won the 2012 Heartland Shootout** and has qualified for **every RE/MAX World Long Drive Championship finals since 2009...including a 3<sup>rd</sup> place finish**.

We hope you enjoy it!

Let's get started.

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## The Open Championship and Pursuing Dreams

By Jaacob Bowden

As I mentioned last month and in this month's intro, I had recently been getting in some play and practice to get ready for The Open Championship qualifying.

This particular Open Championship had special meaning and I really wanted to get in for a couple of reasons.

First, my Dad is now 70 and has had a couple of bouts with cancer. Fortunately, he got through it and his health returned enough to a level where he and I were able to meet in Scotland to play The Old Course in St. Andrews. It was a special thing to share together. Not only was it a dream of his to play the course but it was also actually his first time out of North America.



I thought if I advanced through qualifying, he and I could go back to The Old Course again...but this time with me playing in The Open.

Second, part of the reason I decided to quit my corporate job and pursue a golf career, despite being a 27 year old 14-handicapper at the time, was because I didn't want to be 40, look back, and wonder "What if?". This coming January I'll be turning 40, so I really liked the idea of playing in The Open this year.

Unfortunately, things didn't go as expected in the qualifier and I missed the cut.

It was just one of those days where everything from my tee shots, to approach shots, to short game, and to putting was just a little bit off. Nothing was firing...which happens in golf sometimes.



Add in the wind and rain and it made for a tough day.

I was a bit perplexed because everything felt pretty good. The mental work I've done over the years really helped and I didn't feel particularly nervous.

I was also enjoying playing in front of a gallery again. I even saved my best shots for when the most number of people were around, which included hitting a 4-iron to about 4 feet from a 216-yard par-3 to make birdie.

On a side note, an additional benefit of playing in front of a gallery is they can help you find a ball in the rough! This actually happened a couple of times!



But alas, it wasn't meant to be this time. I thought about changing my flight and heading back home, but I decided to use the extra time to do a bit of site seeing. I had a tour of Manchester United's stadium and went to Wimbledon, Cambridge, Oxford, Stonehenge, Bletchley Park, and more.

There are pictures at the following links if you'd like to see:

<http://facebook.com/jaacobbowden> - personal pics

<http://facebook.com/jaacobbowdengolf> - golf pics

It ended up being a great trip but playing golf poorly in bad weather away from home wasn't particularly enjoyable. I had also really felt like I was supposed to play in this year's Open Championship...and I took not getting in pretty hard.

I felt shocked, depressed, angry, frustrated, and I thought...if I were to quit golf all together, would I be a failure? And if I gave it all up, what would I do then?

After all, the barometer of success I set for myself when I originally started was be to be playing full-time on the PGA TOUR. Despite having played in a PGA-sanctioned event, here I was closing in on 40 and I hadn't "made it" yet. Maybe I was a failure. It's funny the things that can pass through your mind.

At the encouragement of my wife, I wrote down a list of other successes in my golf journey (or things that happened because of the decision to "pursue the dream").

Here were a few of the initial things I came up with:

#### Golf Related

- Been on TV, Radio, podcasts, magazines, etc...including ESPN, CBS, and Golf Channel.
- Featured in a book chapter about golf
- Played in over 30 week long professional golf tournaments, shot rounds in the 60s and 70s, and made several cuts
- Had a month where I played to a +5.8 handicap and shot 64 (-8)
- Competed in US Open and British Open qualifying
- Played golf in the US, Europe, Africa, Asia, and Australia
- Had a golf gallery clap for nice shots I hit
- Hit multiple drives over 400 yards
- Had 3 hole-in-ones
- Tied the course record at Pebble Beach's Peter Hay course
- Created golf videos that have over 3 million views
- Created golf websites that have over 2 million views
- Wrote golf articles that have over 1 million views
- Wrote #1 best selling e-book on Amazon
- Been "recognized" by fans at golf courses
- Became one of the "Top 100 Most Popular Golf Instructors in the World"
- Became a world leading expert in a niche area
- Finished 5<sup>th</sup> in the Speedgolf World Championships and tied the record for golf score at Bandon Dunes with my Dad in attendance

- Won the Pinnacle Distance Challenge with my Dad in attendance
- Played Pebble Beach and St. Andrews with my Dad
- Had my Dad caddie for me in a professional golf tournament

### Non-Golf Related

- Met my wife and got married on the beach in Maui
- Lived in Arizona, California, Switzerland, and New York
- Worked on a movie set and got to be in the movie
- Attended the Australian Open, French Open, and Wimbledon
- Snowboarded and went paragliding in the Swiss Alps
- Had a romantic weekend in Paris
- Learned pieces of multiple languages
- Beat a fear of heights and a fear of public speaking
- Started a profitable business from scratch that employs multiple people
- Drove 162 mph on the German autobahn
- Drank beer in Munich for Oktoberfest
- Gone on an African safari

As I was going through the list, my perspective changed and I felt a lot better. Had I not had the courage to take the leap of faith to go after my dream, conceivably none of these other successes would have happened.

I forget where I saw it, but during this time I also came across some quote that read along the lines of “the purpose of pursuing a dream isn’t always to achieve the dream but rather to give yourself something to aim at...which will help you learn certain things about yourself, achieve your life purpose, etc”.

So, will I ever be a full-time player on the PGA TOUR?

I don’t know.

But whether or not I do end up achieving that dream, my journey will have been a success regardless.

I would say the same for you.

Dream big, do things that scare you, and take chances on really living your life. In the end, it’s worth it...and it’s only too late if you don’t start now.

# Can You Really Change The Loft With An Adjustable Hosel Driver?

By Tom Wishon

Over the past three years, virtually every golf equipment company has introduced their new driver designs with an adjustable hosel sleeve device mounted in the hosel of the clubhead. The primary claim for the adjustable hosel drivers is for them to offer golfers a change in the loft angle of the head.

Unfortunately there is a lot of confusion about this because very few of the companies offering adjustable hosel drivers tell golfers precisely how they have to use the club to achieve a change in the loft.

Upon changing the hosel sleeve positions, the **ONLY** way that an adjustable hosel driver can offer a change in the loft is if the golfer **ALWAYS HOLDS THE CLUB WITH THE FACE SQUARE TO THE TARGET LINE BEHIND THE BALL** after the hosel sleeve is rotated into a different position.

As a golfer if you are used to letting the driver head rest on the ground, sitting on the sole, the adjustable hosel drivers will not change loft as the hosel sleeve is rotated into different positions.



For golfers who sole the driver on the ground, rotating the hosel sleeve to a lower loft designation will bring about a more open face angle – rotating the sleeve to a higher loft position will cause the head to sit on the ground in a closed face position.

This is a very important fact to know because most of the companies that offer an adjustable hosel driver do not clearly tell golfers that the only way they can achieve a change in the loft is to always hold the clubface square to the target line after each change in the hosel sleeve designation.

Since a large percentage of golfers do commonly rest the driver on its sole in the process of addressing the ball, the lack of explanation for how these adjustable hosel drivers are to be used is resulting in golfers getting less than the desired shot results with these clubs.

What's even more unfortunate is the fact that when a golfer holds the face of the driver square to the target to get the loft change, this action has the effect of completely eliminating the face angle from ever being a possible fitting help to a golfer to reduce a slice or hook.

It comes down to this – if you naturally hit the ball straight and do not suffer from a slice or hook problem, the adjustable hosel drivers will perform very well for your game, as long as you know you always have to hold the face square to get the loft change from the adjustable hosel sleeve.

But if you do slice or hook the ball enough for it to be a problem with keeping the ball in play consistently, then do not even think about using one of the adjustable hosel drivers.

Instead, go to a good custom clubfitter who will fit you with a driver that can offer you both the proper loft and the right face angle on the driver head together for your swing and your playing needs.

If you're interested in a more in depth explanation of the adjustable hosel drivers, I welcome you to take a moment to watch this video -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aj5KOk2oXU0>

As always, to find a good clubfitter near you, please refer to the following links:  
The AGCP (Association of Golf Clubfitting Professionals) -

<http://www.agcpgolf.com/locator/>

The ICG (International Clubmakers' Guild) -

<http://www.clubmakersguild.com/index.php/membership-directory/guild-google-map>

The TWGT Clubmaker Locator at - <http://wishongolf.com/find-a-clubfitter/>

Thanks for your interest and the best wishes to you as always in this great game.

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# Transference

By Adam Young

One of the main issues golfers struggle with is the ability to transfer what they can do on the range to what they do on the course.



Even Tiger Woods himself is struggling with this right now, with reports of him striking it better than ever on the range, yet unable to post a decent score in live play.

Obviously, if you can hit the shots on the range, technique is not necessarily the issue. It is more a problem of accessing the technique you own.

A motor program is like a math problem; if someone asked you the same question over and over again, the first time it may take some time to work out. Yet the very next time they ask you the same question, you will answer straight away. It may appear that you are performing well as you are giving the right answer, but you are not actually learning how to calculate.

Similarly, a golf shot requires us to go through certain calculations.

- Distance
- Wind effect
- Lie effect
- Risk/reward

Then we have to go through the process of accessing the swing we desire.

For those reasons, we also need to practice to improve our ability to access our best movement patterns. Beating balls from the same place to the same target is just like someone asking the same math question to us.



So how can we tweak our practice to improve better movement pattern access?

Simple.

Next time you go to the range, after a sufficient warm up, start alternating shots each time. Hit one wedge, followed by a drive, followed by an iron. Not only that but vary the target each time. Throw away the alignment stick and work on doing your full routine and pick an intermediate target instead (this works on our perception and target awareness, which we need on the course).

If you are more advanced, try to shape shots into the target each time, varying the trajectory and curvature. The more variations you can throw into the mix, the better.

### **One Caveat**

While you are doing this, you may notice a performance drop. Sure, you would perform better when beating balls to the same target, with the same club and from the same spot without moving.

But don't be fooled; performance is not learning.

Studies have shown that even though athletes perform worse during practice when they include more variability, they actually improve quicker and retain better performance on the course. Short-term detriments for long-term improvements.

### **Add Some Quantification**

I am a big fan of this for several reasons. The idea is to “game-ify”, or quantify your practice so that you keep a record of it that you can try to beat each time. This improves your focus during the session, creates a sense of achievement when you notice improvement, and also induces more pressure that can get closer to simulating on course situations.

An example of quantification would be to hit 3 different shapes into a target (20 yard green). Score one point every time you hit the green – repeat for 10 shots total.

## Cliff Notes

A small tweak to your practice can work wonders for your golf game. Try to change targets and shot type each time. Also, try to quantify your practice so you have a target to beat next time.

Adam Young is author of “The Practice Manual – The Ultimate Guide for Golfers”.

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## Your Questions Answered

### Member Question:

*Jaacob,*

*My question is, what happens when I start swinging closer 115 mph? My ideal launch angle and spin rate will change and the loft I am playing will need to change with it right?*

*Best,*

*Jon M, 44 years old, 16 handicap, Arizona, 100 mph swing speed*

### Jaacob's Answer:

Launch conditions do indeed change as your speed changes.

For 100 mph, I would put you between 12-15 and 1900-2500 depending on if you want max carry or max total distance. What you optimize for depends on various factors like the type of course you play. If the course(s) has a lot of dog legs, there is trouble to carry, you don't the ball to run in to the rough, etc...you could go for carry. If you've got light rough, firm conditions, etc...you might do total distance.

At 115, for example, those numbers would be about 11-13 (slightly lower) and 1700-2400 (slightly less spin).

With more speed, launch and spin would go up...so you'd need something a little lower-lofted at that point.

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Member Question:

*Hope all is well. Here are my profile stats:*

*Swingspeed Driver - 135mph  
Longest Official Drive - 437m Las Vegas-Nevada  
Average Driving distance - 360m  
Driver Used - Callaway X2 Hot 8.5deg Pro  
Smash Factor - 151  
Spin Rate - 2800*

*Need a whole new make-up, driver and shaft please.*

*Recommendations?*

*David M, Long Drive Pro & Golf Pro, South Africa*

Jaacob's Answer:

At 135 mph, for max carry I would recommend something that spins in the 2117-rpm range. For max total distance, I would get that down to 1432 rpm. You may want a couple drivers for different conditions. For example, you might want more carry downwind or on a wet grid. But if the grid is firm, the other would be better.

Assuming your current driver is actually 8.5\* (they aren't always what they say they are), to get your spin to 2117 rpm I would get you in a 6.4\* driver. To get your spin to 1432, you would probably need a 4.3\* driver.

Of course, in either case this will also bring your launch angle down, but your spin rate would be good. So you would just have to figure out how much farther forward and higher you would need to tee it to get the launch angle up. Keep in mind the further forward and further up you go, the more right you need to swing.

If you want to stay with Callaway, Sellinger's Power Golf (<http://sellingerspowergolf.com/index.php/long-drive.html>) is a good place to get the lofts you need. They actually offer other brands too. But the important thing is that if you specifically request it by email or phone, they can pull the exact loft from stock even if it's not listed on the website. I've seen guys get lofts custom pulled as low as 2\*.

There are a lot of shafts on the site. My guess is that House of Forged is most popular. But get what you think fits best. You are striking the ball well with whatever you have now. So perhaps something similar spec-wise would be a good way to go.

Length-wise, that will depend on what you can hit most solidly and with the most speed. Most guys go between 46-48" USGA. At your current smash of 1.51, again that's a really solid hit. So certainly whatever length you are at now will work fine. If you're under 46", you might try to go longer, provided you get higher speeds and still retain good contact.

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Member Question:

*Just curious, I've just started the Basic Speed Training. I'm 56 and currently around 100 mph with the driver. The training says to pause at the top, halfway down, and impact positions with both arms, right arm and left arm. My question is, would there be any additional benefit if I broke the pauses into about 5 or 6 positions instead of 3?*

*Wintertime allows for a lot of after dark workout time. Also, the second part of the Basic training says "30 speed swings with your driver". Any benefit to adding some with say a 5 iron?*

*- Alan W, 56 years old, 8 handicap*

Jaacob's Answer:

The main concept with the band isometrics is to increase the strength of your down swing muscles. Everyone, whether you are World Long Drive Champion or senior lady, starts at 0 mph at the top and gets to whatever they are at impact.

Doing 3 positions with both arms, right arm, and left arm is certainly enough to get benefit. I've never tried 5-6 positions with anyone, though. I'm not sure there would be much additional benefit from doing 5-6 versus 3, but feel free to try it if you like.

As far as swinging with your 5-iron, most people do the training with driver because that's typically the club with which you want to get the most speed and distance. However, doing it with your 5-iron is fine too. Regardless of

which club you use, make sure to do the swing speed training itself at maximum speed and use the radar for feedback to track your progress.

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Member Question:

*Hi Jaacob,*

*I have been a member since last year but wanted to wait to this year to attempt your basic program. I didn't want to mess up my distances during the season. Today is day 1 for me.*

*When I get to day 30 whatever is gained do I need to continue with the 4-day routine to keep my gains or do they typically stay once completed?*

*Currently on Golfsmith Flightscope my swing speed is 95-100 mph I swing on average around 105 on the SSR with a Max swing speed of 110 recorded once in awhile. Even a 10mph gain would be great IMO.*

*Hoping this works out.*

*Thanks,*

*Matt*

Jaacob's Answer:

Generally, the building phase requires more work than the maintenance phase. Once you get to your goal speed, you can cut your workouts down quite a bit. At that point, as long as you're doing something at least once a week to maintain it, the speed should for the most part hang around.

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**Member of the Month**

*"I've used your basic swing speed training routine...which I worked diligently for 30 days. My overall distance has increased up to 30 yards"*

*- Robert L, 63 years old, 6'0", 185 lbs*

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## Finishing Up With Fun



Bill really enjoyed playing golf. He could occasionally put up with taking in a round with his wife. One time (with his wife Sally along) he was having an extremely bad round. On the 12th hole, Bill sliced a drive over by a grounds keepers shack.

Although he did not have a clear shot to the green, his wife noticed that there were two doors on the shack and there was a possibility that, if both doors were opened, he might be able to hit through.

Without hesitation, Bill instructed his wife to go around to the other side and open the far door. Sure enough, this gave him a clear path to the green. He stepped up to his ball and prepared to hit. Sally had been standing by the far door, waiting for him to hit through. After a moment, she became curious and stuck her head in the doorway to see what he was doing. At that exact moment, Bill cracked a three-wood that hit his wife square on the forehead, killing her instantly.

Bill avoided golf for a year.

However, he finally recovered, remarried, and started playing golf with his new wife Jill. Again, on hole #12, he slices his drive to the shack. Jill says, "Honey, if I open the front and back door of that shed, I think you could play through."

"Nah," replied Bill, "The last time I did that, I shot a 7 on the hole."

**We hope you enjoyed the June 2015 Monthly Handicap Improver...**

- Do you have a **golf joke** you want to share with your fellow members?
- **Anything you want our experts to write about?**
- Any **other questions or comments?**

Let us know at [info@swingmangolf.com](mailto:info@swingmangolf.com) with the subject "FEEDBACK"!

Have a great month!