



Elite Insider Circle Monthly Handicap Improver January 2016



Hello Fellow Golf Enthusiast,

This is **Jacob Bowden**.

To recap last month, we included a **CD** of my interview with **Martin Chuck**. Martin is a fellow “**Top 100 Most Popular Instructor**”. You may also know him as the **inventor** of the **Tour Striker** Training Aid or from his **videos** at **Revolution Golf**.

Martin was lucky enough to **meet and train** with **Canadian legends Moe Norman and George Knudson**. Check out the interview in your member area if you haven’t already done it.

We had a **Long Drive Q&A** with **professional long driver Justin Young**. Justin has finished both **5th and 6th** at the **World Long Drive Championship**...an amazing feat.

Some things from **Justin’s Q&A** that I think are **worth pointing out** for you to take home are:

- Justin **has sufficient club head speed** to compete at an elite level in long drive with a max of 142 mph. Although, I think for him to get a better

chance of winning, another 4-5 mph wouldn't hurt. An average **Final 8 competitor** typically **averages about 141-142 mph**.

- He has a **go-to shot** that he uses **in competition**. The **longest ball potential typically comes from the straight ball**, however, if what you hit best is a draw (or a fade), **utilizing a shot that you can hit repeatedly well** definitely has merit. Jason Zuback won a lot of championships with his go-to fade shot.
- Justin has his **equipment built and fit to his swing to maximize his distance**.
- He **works with a trainer** to improve his strength and flexibility. Note the length of his backswing. There's definitely a **correlation between length of back swing and club head speed**.
- He also advises you to focus on **hitting the ball in the center** of the club face. This is also good advice because the average golfer gives up 0.05 in smash factor compared to a tour player. That would translate in to about 4 mph of ball speed or about **10 yards of extra distance**...just by hitting the center of the club face more consistently.



Nutrition, practice, and general golf expert Adam Young wrote about the **best type of shot to play**. By doing some testing on Trackman, you can **find out what suits you** the best. This is **not only limited to shot shapes but also swing thoughts**.

Equipment and club fitting expert Tom Wishon wrote about the **important elements of putter fitting**. While custom club fitting is gaining popularity amongst the clubs in the rest of the bag, it doesn't occur to many people that the putter should be fit as well. But it's important when you think about how many times you use your putter during a round.

There are **5 primary things** to fit on the putter: **putter length, putter lie angle, putter loft angle, putter grip shape and size, and putter weighting.**

I can personally tell you that after I went through a thorough putter fitting, I haven't yet been able to find anything that out performs my current putter.

Putting expert Geoff Mangum wrote about **how to think about reading a putt.**

On a side note, if you haven't already heard or checked them out, I was also a **guest on two different golf shows** last month.

The first was on **December 10th** in which I was a guest of Michael Breed (the host of "The Golf Fix") on his new show "**A New Breed of Golf**" on **Sirius XM PGA TOUR Radio**. You can listen to that show here:

<https://www.siriusxm.com/siriusxmpgatourradio>



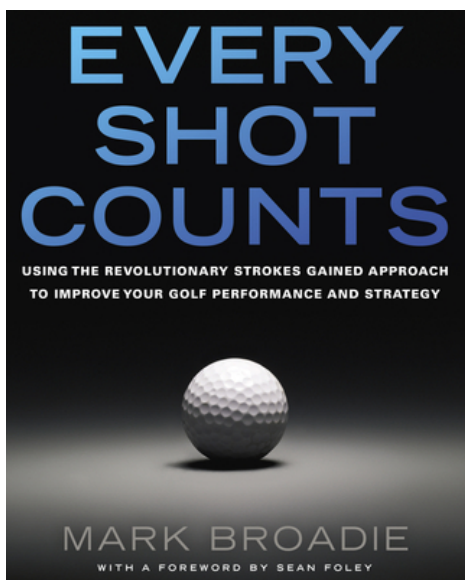
The second was with **Bernard Sheridan** on his "**Par Breakers**" podcast. The below link is long, so if you simply go to **ParBreakers.com** and look for **Episode 99**...that's the one!

<http://www.parbreakers.com/breaking-par-with-bernard-sheridan-episode-99-jaacob-bowden-interview/>

This Month

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

- We've got a **Long Drive Q&A** with **professional long driver Will Hogue**. Will has **two 3rd place finishes** in the **World Long Drive Championship**.
- **Expert Adam Young** has an article for us about **practicing what you don't want to get what you do want**.
- **Equipment specialist Tom Wishon** will tell us about "**fitting for weight feel**".
- **Putting expert Geoff Mangum** has the first of a **two-part piece** on drills that you can do to develop the four skills of putting in your game. This particular one gives you a bunch of **drills for touch and line**.
- We'll have our usual "**Member of the Month**" and **golf joke**.



As part of your Monthly Handicap Improver Insider Circle, **we've included a CD of my extended audio interview with...Mark Broadie.**

Mark Broadie is a **Columbia Business School Professor**. Golf junkies may already know him as the **creator of the strokes-gained statistics** that the PGA TOUR is now using...or perhaps you've seen his **articles on PGATOUR.com or Golf.com.**

He's also written a book called **"Every Shot Counts: Using the Revolutionary Strokes Gained Approach to Improve Your Golf Performance and Strategy"**. If you like to read golf books, I would definitely add this one to your reading list. In fact, I put it in the **Top 5 most important books** I've ever read.

Here is a link to the book:

<http://amzn.to/1Ue6RjV>

I had the pleasure of having lunch with Mark at Columbia University and in our interview we talked about all those things I mentioned above. I hope you enjoy it!

Lastly, I wanted to share a few more random things.

First, on **January 4th I had a milestone birthday...my 40th**. I had some initial celebrations with family in Kansas City. On the official day, I slept in, worked on my laptop at a coffee shop, had a 2-hour session with my career coach, went to happy hour, and then went to AIRE Ancient Baths and had sparkling with my wife. We finished off the celebrations with a trip to Nicaragua for yoga, surfing, drinks and more. I'm happy to have made it this far and I'm looking forward to continuing to live life to the fullest.

Second, many of you know I've put my own personal game on the back burner for the last few years to work more on golf business. Due to not playing, practicing, and training as much, **my swing speed dipped back** down to a point where I was about **105 mph on the course.**

Having maxed at around 140 mph when I last competed in long drive in 2007, this was quite a difference in speed and distance. It sure was **making the game a lot harder** to play for me! The **good news is that I know about swing speed training.**



So I took a little time out of my schedule to pick away at getting some speed back. I was inconsistent and periodic with my training, but it was enough to make a difference. My **fastest speed in 2015 was 133 mph** on Flightscope and **144 mph on my SSR**. I also set a new **personal record for my half squat...605 lbs.**

Although I've been busy and haven't trained much in recent weeks, the good news is that if you are willing to work on your speed **using the knowledge from Swing Man Golf and the MHI, the gains are there for the taking.** I can do it...you can do it too. It just **takes a little elbow grease.**

Lastly, I want to make a quick little teaser announcement about **a project** I've been working on **with Tom Wishon**. As you might know, I'm a **big fan of the single length iron concept**. A couple years ago, Tom agreed to collaborate on a single length set of irons with me. After tons of research and testing, **we're finally almost ready to launch SterlingIrons.com**. These clubs are a **huge step up in single length iron technology!**



Stay tuned for more info about this project in the next couple months. In the interim, you can **find out more at Tom's website** at:

<http://wishongolf.com/designs/sets/sterling-irons-single-length-set/>

Okay, let's get started!

Long Drive Q&A with Will Hogue



Age: 29
Height: 6'3"
Weight: 220 pounds

Driver Specs: Callaway XR 5-degree /Paderson shaft
XXX

Sponsors: Callaway/Paderson/Tornado Tee

Special Accomplishments:

- 1st 2014 Rockwell Championship
- 1st 2015 East Coast Classic
- 1st 2015 Bluff City Shootout
- 3rd 2013 World Long Drive Championship
- 3rd 2015 World Long Drive Championship

What is your longest drive in competition?

469 yards in the 2014 World Long Drive Championship

What were the conditions of the drive?

Downwind



What are the fastest swing speeds you've recorded on a Swing Speed Radar and/or Trackman?

Swing speed 153 on Trackman
Ball speed 224

What lead you to choose your particular equipment specifications?

I love Callaway and Paderson shafts. Both companies make superior equipment and the people who work for/ run these companies are amazing. I really appreciate all they do for me.

Do you favor a particular shot shape to hit it long?

hahaha I prefer whichever shot shape is going to win but I usually hit a fade. If my ball ever turns left that was completely accidental because I really don't know how to do that on purpose haha

Do you use any training aids to work on your speed and power?

No, but I reserve the right to do so in the future. ☺

Do you do any other types of training to drive it further?

I lift weights on a daily basis. It is important for me both as a golfer and as a firefighter.



Is there any particular bit of advice you would give the regular amateur for him or her to hit the ball longer?

Don't over swing. Really focus on getting a solid smash factor and good ball flight. It doesn't matter how hard you swing if you miss the ball. Solid contact is critical.

Where can people contact you or learn more about you?

Willhogue@comcast.net

What is “Fitting for Weight Feel”?

By Tom Wishon

Perhaps you have heard other golfers talk about it. Maybe you have experienced it in your golf clubs. Possibly you have had it before in a previous golf club but you can't find it now.

The “ it “ to which I refer is **golf club WEIGHT FEEL** or rather, the sensation that when you swing your golf clubs, you have the perception that they either FEEL GOOD and are effortless to swing with good timing and tempo, or they don't.

For those golfers who have picked up a golf club and uttered the comment, “wow, that feels good” after hitting a few shots, golf club “weight feel” is an element of equipment that can have a huge positive influence on every area of shot performance from clubhead speed to accuracy to on center hit performance. Conversely, when the golfer's perception is the club “feels bad”, there is virtually no way the golfer can hit the club successfully.

So just what is “golf club weight feel”? Can we measure it? Is it strictly a qualitative element that can never be measured or can golf club weight feel be identified as a quantitative, identifiable specification on your golf clubs?

There are two different elements of weight feel in a golf club:



- 1) The total weight, or overall weight feel of the golf club, i.e. the sum of the weight of the grip + shaft + clubhead in total.
- 2) The weight of the clubhead in relation to the length and weight of the rest of the golf club, AKA the “swingweight” or the “clubhead feel”, again noted chiefly during the beginning of the downswing to impact with the ball.

Proper fitting must involve combining these two separate elements of golf club weight feel to fine the partnership of total weight and head weight that best matches each golfer's unique combination of swing tempo, swing timing, rhythm and golfer strength.

Get it right for the golfer and they will achieve a higher clubhead speed with better accuracy and a higher percentage of on center hits. Get it wrong and the golfer will continually struggle to maintain a consistent swing tempo, coupled with a loss of distance and an increase in errant, off line shots.

Fitting for the overall weight feel in your clubs is one of the most critical parts of clubfitting.

While we certainly can measure the total weight and the swingweight of any golf club, the difficult part is to determine WHAT total weight and WHAT swingweight with it will deliver the best results for each DIFFERENT golfer.

Unfortunately, there is no such thing as a “weight-feel-o-meter” device that a clubfitter could use to determine what YOUR best combination of total weight + swingweight should be. The process requires a bit of trial and experimentation in a test club procedure. But good clubfitters do have things they look for in the golfers and their swing characteristics to give them a valid starting point, from which the trial and experimentation can be short cut in a more efficient manner to arrive on that best, right combination of total weight and swingweight for each different golfer.

Some keys to look for include. . . .

- If you keep telling yourself to “just slow down a little” when hitting shots, this is a definite indication that either the shaft weight or the swingweight of your club(s) is too light for your natural sense of swing timing and tempo and strength.
- If you start to feel a little tired and notice that you have to make a little more effort to swing the club after 20-25 range balls, this is a good indication that either the shaft weight or the swingweight of your club(s) is too heavy for you and your swing characteristics.
- Golfers with a much more aggressive downswing and faster tempo tend to do better with a shaft weight above 70g with the driver, above 100g with the irons, and typically with higher than average swingweights in their clubs.
- Smooth swingers, golfers who are much more rhythmic with their swing motion and are most definitely not characterized as a “hitter” tend to do better with lighter weight shafts such as 60g or less for the woods, under 80g for the irons, with lower than average swingweights in their clubs.

If you struggle with maintaining a consistent swing tempo and timing, think seriously about finding a good, experienced clubfitter with whom you can work to experiment with different combinations of shaft weight and swingweight to find your perfect weight feel in your clubs. Do it and you may be more than amazed at the overall improvement you can achieve in the game.

You can find reputable Clubmakers at the following places:

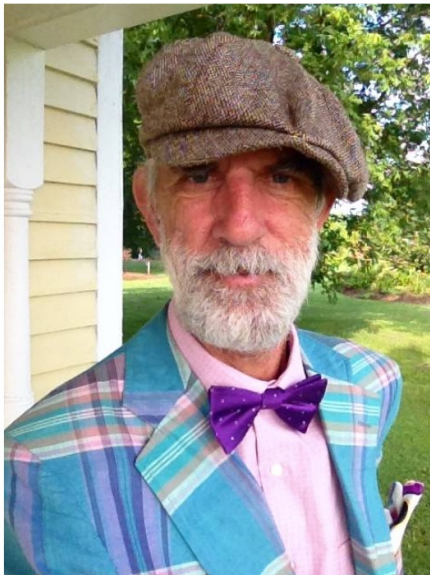
The AGCP (Association of Golf Clubfitting Professionals) -
<http://www.agcpgolf.com/locator/>

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/>

Best wishes in this great game!

PuttingZone Practice Exercises for Touch & Line



The following exercises are used in "deliberate practice" to learn and hone the four putting skills. Golfers should separately build independent skills and then periodically test integrating the skills in "one ball, one read, one putt" situations testing long lag putts and short (under 10 feet or 3 meters) breaking putts.

As a constant "practice mindset", golfers should always or nearly always monitor and diagnose the correctness or error of a putt in read, aim, stroke for line, or stroke for distance, so as to fix and improve the next putt by applying knowledge of how the skill is performed correctly with body perception and movement processes.

Drills for Touch

1. Get rhythm and tempo; swing arms, swing putter relaxedly back and forth the same in pendular swinging. Set the tempo and rhythm of all strokes.
2. Putt balls with the same size stroke, using the usual tempo and rhythm, to send balls all some one distance. This "core putt" stabilizes the tempo and rhythm for the day and incorporates into the body the sense of the day's green speed.
3. Send a ball out 20 or 30 feet then putt several balls with intentionality to

bump the distant ball, to make sure the body using the sense of green speed and stabilized tempo and rhythm now responds with correct sizing to random distance.

4. Explore some significant uphill and downhill putts to get the body appropriately responsive to slope steepness as it affects distance (similar to uphill being slower green speed and downhill being faster green speed and how much slower or faster depending on net elevation difference from ball to hole); in general, a 2% slope uphill stroke is about twice the size as the same distance putt downhill.

5. Practice the smallest swinging stroke you can make to see that that size rolls balls at least 3-4 feet.

6. Putt to an area behind the hole two balls each from 10, 20, 30, 40 feet using the same intentionality plus usual tempo and rhythm to size the putts, noting that one tempo loads the size in the backstroke and an enjoyment of the swoosh thru impact with the same tempo in the thru-stroke is what goes safely all the way not short.

7. On a long putt first see the size stroke that succeeds then just repeat that size with the normal tempo-rhythm swinging, even "faking" the natural swinging with tight-muscle swinging that actually replicates the pendular tempo timing back and thru (to learn that timing reality trumps preferred body action, or more properly stated, to learn that distance control is performed only with the correct impact velocity of the putter head no matter how that is achieved, while the natural instinctive body does this by tempo-rhythm sizing to perform impact velocity).

8. Putt to a target (coaster, tee peg, coin, pencil, golf ball, glass, two lines of string, base of wall, etc.) on the carpet from random distances.

9. Putt to an intended stopping place on concrete, linoleum, wooden floor, artificial-surface tennis court, or basketball court to test skill on extreme green speed.

Drills for Line

1. Putt along the base of a wall, with the putter heel-toe line perpendicular to the wall and the toe end about 1/4th inch from the wall, setting up so the chest and shoulders align parallel to the wall and thus to the aim of the putter face, making strokes using only the arms and hands swinging thru

impact square and up along the wall, the toe remaining close to the wall thru and past impact and the putter face remaining perpendicular to the wall, with the chest and shoulders remaining parallel and stationary.

2. Putt in a 9-foot gravity-return putting mat watching television (or not).
3. Putt a 10-15 foot straight uphill putt under an elevated string line, staying far enough away from the stick near the ball so as not to cramp the backstroke sizing.
4. Punch two tee peg holes in the green 5-10 inches apart to establish a line and place balls on the back hole and putt across the front hole and use the same size-tempo-rhythm so all putts accurately and consistently travel the same path and bump into each other like freight cars hooking up.
5. Practice the impact dynamics by visualizing impact that has the putter face moving square, straight and slightly rising thru the ball and then performing that impact with rhythm.
6. Practice setting up and making sure you don't crowd the ball by standing too close (unless you are doing so to overrule the too-flat lie angle and use a heel-up setup on purpose), but only standing the distance back from the ball set by how naturally hanging arms meet the flatly-soled putter's handle.
7. Practice making sure the lead arm is fully relaxed so not stranded too high up the handle, which requires attention to the elbow tension of that arm.
8. Practice moving the aim-line on the putter head like a cue stick thru impact.
9. Practice separately using enough grip pressure while keeping that pressure steady throughout the duration of the stroke.
10. Practice separately keeping the base of the neck stable during the stroke and not following the putter head thru impact.
11. Practice not hurrying the second half of the stroke.
12. Practice thumb-print management thru impact for square-straight impact.

13. Practice not focusing on sweetspot-only impact but instead on any-putterface-point impact that is square and moving straight -- deliberately messing up the backstroke with across-the-line loops or too-much-inside backstrokes.
14. Practice rear-arm-only backstroke too inside but shoulders do not also rotate inside in backstroke, to allow unhurried self-correcting stroke for thru-stroke in which the errant arm falls back in line beneath the correctly-aimed shoulders before impact.
15. Practice starting backstroke with lead pectoral muscle contraction that simply "starts" the stroke into its swinging action and then wait for the thru-stroke to occur by itself.
16. Practice focusing only on base of the neck (stationary stability) and flatness of thumb-print (putter face control), then starting the stroke back with lead arm and making square-straight-slightly-rising thru-strokes as the forward stroke just happens without hurry.

Cheers!

Geoff Mangum

For more great putting advice, tips, drills, and exercises, check out Geoff's putting book here: <http://www.swingmangolf.com/golf-putting-tips.php>

Practice What You Don't Want, To Get What You Do

By Adam Young

The old adage of "Perfect practice makes perfect" is deeply ingrained amongst golfers worldwide. At one point, I also bought into this dogmatic statement. Golfers in every range are beating ball after ball in hopes that they groove a perfect swing that repeats. However, it is very likely that you now realise that this hasn't worked for you.



But, what if there was a different way? What if there was a lesser-known practice method that has been shown to yield better results? Wouldn't you want to know about that?

Well, there is – it's called differential (experimental) practice.

The Main Premise

The idea behind differential practice is that you will actually practice things that you may never normally need on the golf course. This completely changes the mind-set of a practice session away from “grooving a swing” and more towards “exploration”.



Some examples of differential practice could be:

- Intentionally trying to hit hooks or slices
- Exploring different divot depths
- Trying to hit different parts of the clubface (toe/heel)
- Trying to hit different parts of the ball – such as intentionally catching it a groove low, or even hitting a full cold top
- Exploring different movement patterns

I know what you are thinking – this guy is crazy. Why would I want to go to the range and practicing topping?

Well, in doing the above examples, you not only build a bigger co-ordination base which can help you calibrating good shots, but you increase awareness. Your brain also has more information with which to work with, so you can instinctively make appropriate adjustments towards correcting yourself when things go wrong.

Anecdote and Data

My worst nightmare when I started teaching golf was that, due to having to demonstrate different swing styles etc, I was worried that it would hurt my game. On the contrary – by improving my ability to demonstrate tops, shanks, duffs, hook and slices (to show the pupils what happens when you get certain things

wrong), I exponentially improved my skill at being able to control what I do want to happen.

I decided to test this by setting up a beginner group of golfers – one group would practice hitting the middle of the clubface over and over, and a second group would practice hitting heels and toes. After 5 days, the heel/toe group were better at striking the sweet spot than the group that only practiced sweet spot striking.

How to Use this Information

Next time you go to the range, set aside at least a few balls to exploring different things such as strike, swing paths, clubface angles etc. Why not even try to hit your target with varying ball positions or stance directions – see if you can get the path and face back into a functional position at impact.



It is no surprise that some of the top players are able to demonstrate incredible trick shots. Seve Ballesteros was able to hit 3 irons out of bunkers and shots off hit knees. Tiger used to demonstrate incredible displays of shot making during clinics (and on the course), where he would shape it extremely in both directions, as well as high and low. There is even a YouTube video of Rory McIlroy practicing his top shot.

Rather than ruining your swing, you might just add a bit more feel, awareness and skill to your game, as the science is showing in other sports.

About Adam

Adam Young is author of “The Practice Manual – The Ultimate Guide for Golfers”, a best seller on Amazon.com in both the UK and the US.

You can learn more about differential practice in his book, as well as other forms of practice rooted in motor learning science by visiting <http://tinyurl.com/adamyounggolf>.

Member of the Month

"I've increase my swing speed by 12-15 mph to about 120 mph...I feel stronger and less vulnerable to injury and sore back since doing the training."

- Dan S, Australia, 38 years old, +1 handicap

Finishing Up With Fun



Ralph goes for a quick round of golf, and at the first tee, Bill is about to tee off in front of him. Bill takes a brand new ball out of his bag, unwraps it and places it on the tee and slices into the trees.

"Damn!" He reaches into his bag and takes out another brand new ball, unwraps it, and tees it up. Thwack! He then hooks it miles into the bushes.

"Damn!" He stomps back to his bag for another ball, when Ralph approaches him.

"Err, excuse me, but I notice you're losing a lot of brand new balls. Why don't you use an old one?"

Bill looks at Ralph. "Cos I've never bloody had one!"

We hope you enjoyed the Monthly Handicap Improver...

- Anything you want our experts to write about?
- Any other questions or comments?

Let us know at info@swingmangolf.com with the subject "FEEDBACK"!

Have a great month!