



Elite Insider Circle Monthly Handicap Improver January 2017



Hello Fellow Golf Enthusiast,

This is Jacob Bowden.

Last Month

To recap last month, we strayed a little from our usual format and I gave you an exclusive behind-the-scenes look at the 2.5-year development process of Sterling Irons® single length irons.

I hope you enjoyed the access!

We also included a CD of my interview with 6-time World Long Drive Championship qualifier Maurice Allen. You'll recall that Maurice is one of only several guys to swing over 150 mph in the finals of the World Championships.

That's fast!

This Month

This month, we're getting back to our more normal format.

- We've got a Long Drive Q&A with long driver Mitch McDowell. Not only is Mitch a long drive competitor but he is also an excellent player having reached the Sectionals of US Open Qualifying.
- Expert Adam Young has something for us entitled "Change to be Consistent" in which he'll provide his thoughts on, you guessed it, how to be more consistent.
- Golf equipment icon Tom Wishon is back to talk about what was up with Jimmy Walker using a 42" driver earlier in the month at the SBS Tournament of Champions in Hawaii.
- I'll answer questions from our fellow Monthly Handicap Improver members.
- We'll have our usual "Member of the Month" and golf joke.

As part of your Monthly Handicap Improver Insider Circle, we've included CD of my audio interview with Glenn Wilson Jr.



Like Maurice Allen, Glenn is also one of the only long drive competitors to swing over 150 mph in the finals of the World Long Drive Championships. He holds the ball speed record for the finals at 225 mph.

That means he has literally has hit a golf ball harder than anyone else at the finals.

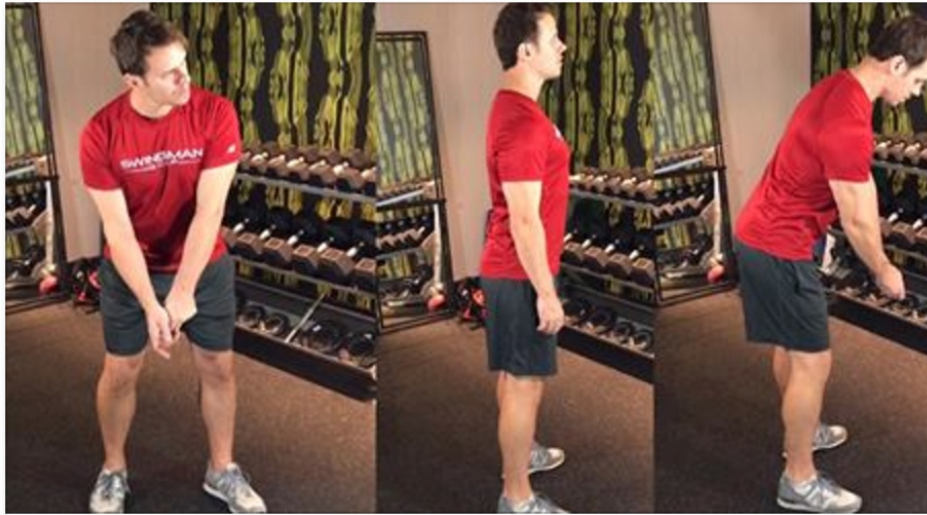
How does he do it?

Listen up and find out!

Side Notes

On a few side notes...

I forgot to mention it last month, but I had an article come out on GolfWRX.com on December 1st called “How to set up your feet to minimize the risk of injury”.



You can check that out here:

<http://www.golfwrx.com/416592/how-to-set-up-your-feet-to-minimize-risk-injury/>

Sterling Irons® were featured right next to Cobra’s new single length irons on page 87 of the December Issue of Sports Illustrated Golf Magazine in an article called Swinging Singles.

In case you missed it, here’s what that looked like:



Also with Sterling Irons®, Tom Wishon and I have been making some new progress.

The left-handed sets are in the works and those should be available around mid-May. If you want to pre-order them, just send an email to Bessie at info@sterlingirons.com and she can take care of getting that getting you a spot in the front of the line.

We're also in the process of redesigning the Sand Wedge and adding in a complimentary Lob Wedge to the set.

Here's a photo.



These probably won't be available until June but I wanted to give you the heads up.

These wedges will have more of a traditional wedge shape. They will also incorporate Tom's "zero bounce heel" grind. Basically, what that allows you to do is to use the bounce on shots in thick rough or heavy sand...but then you can open the club up for more loft and hit flop shots from tight lies as well as hard pan type bunker shots. These changes basically make the wedges more versatile around the green.

Okay...let's get going!



Long Drive Q&A with Mitch McDowell

Age: 32

Height: 6'1"

Weight: 250 lbs

Driver Specs:

Krank 3.5*/ 47.75" xx

Sponsors:

Krank Golf, XPHLEXXX, 2nd
Guy Golf Apparel, Chiscan

Special Accomplishments:

I have made it to the sectionals of US Open qualifying, and I have shot 60 multiple times. And I was lucky enough to win a LDA tour event.

What is your longest drive in competition?

481 yards

What were the conditions of the drive?

15mph down wind, there was a hill at 390 i hit ghetto back side of it at it took off.

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

SSR 160mph, Trackman 141 mph... kinda makes you wonder what's real huh!?

NOTE: This actually makes sense as a Sports Sensors Swing Speed Radar measures the fastest part of the club head (typically the toe) whereas a Trackman has an algorithm to measure the center of the club face.

What lead you to choose your particular equipment specifications?

12 years of trial and error, and sponsor changes



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

A straight ball

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

Over speed training, I use an alignment sticks with a grip on it.

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

I have never really trained for long drive, but I did Crossfit for fun, I think that helped a lot.

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

Swing faster more often, treat speed like any other part of your game and practice it.



Where can people contact you or learn more about you?

Legacygolfperformancecenter.com
Mmcdowell@lpcaz.com

I am an instructor at the Legacy Golf Resort in Phoenix, Arizona, and I teach Web.com tour players as well as Symetra Tour players and many Long Drivers.

Change to be Consistent

By Adam Young

Every golfer desires more consistency, and the main method that a golfer employs in order to get this is to try and make a repetitive motion by grooving their swing on the range.

What if I were to tell you that this might be one of the least effective ways to become more consistent?



Adapt

As golfers, we have to adapt to a lot of things.

Each day, the weather is different. We also have to play from a multitude of varying lies on the golf course from shot to shot – sometimes having the ball above or below our feet, or often having to dig the ball out of a divot.



The late Sev Ballesteros hitting a shot from under a tree

Add to this the fact that, as humans, we vary from day to day in our perceptions and skill levels. You may have noticed that each day brings with it a new pattern of shots or strikes.

Two Golfers

Imagine two golfers standing on the range. For whatever reason, they have both developed the shanks, and are due to go out for a competitive round of golf in 20 minutes.

Golfer A has only trained by trying to groove a consistent swing – he has no means to be able to change his strike pattern. This upcoming round is now a loss for him, as he is destined to shank it around the course.

Golfer B, however, has trained to hit different parts of the clubface (variability training). Due to this, he can now call upon a feeling to shift the shank pattern more towards the toe (thus moving it towards the sweet spot).

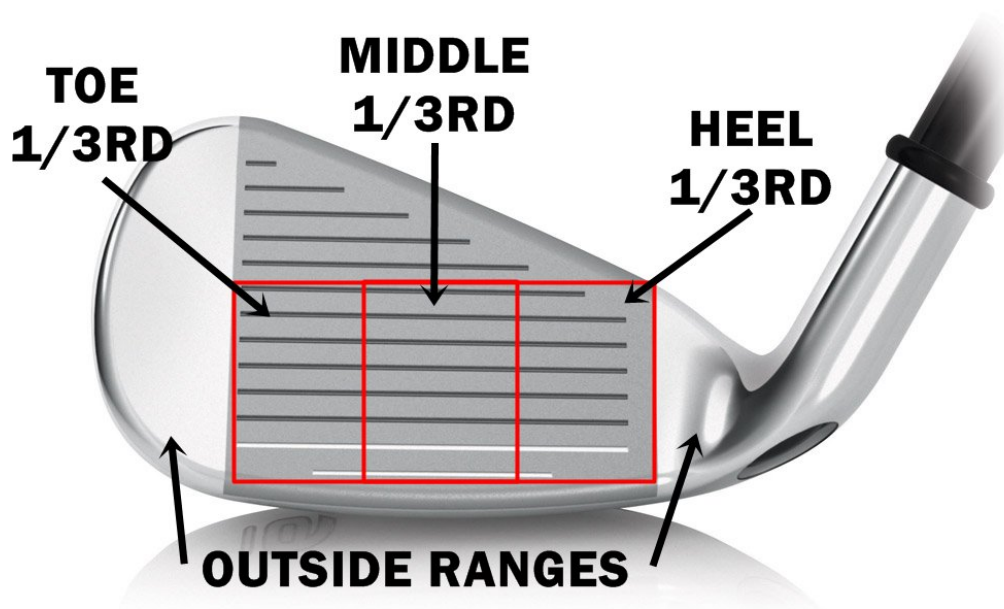
Golfer B, through practicing variations (hitting different parts of the clubface) is not able to take that shank and turn it into something playable. Effectively, the player who practiced in a more varying manner will be more consistent, as they are able to adapt to the every changing patterns that occur due to normal biological variability.

Such a paradox – by practicing change we can become more consistent.

Studies

Not only do I have anecdotal evidence of this form of practice improving my own game and others, but I actually conducted a study on this.

I asked two groups of golfers to either practicing hitting the middle of the clubface over and over, or to alternate between striking the heel or the toe. I then tested both groups to see which one could produce a good quality strike more often.



Players were either asked to hit the middle 3rd over and over, or vary between the heel or toe 3rd.

Surprisingly, the group which alternated and never hit a centered shot during training was the group which was able to hit more centered shots during the post-intervention test.

While both groups improved strike quality, the group which practiced grooving one, correct variation was effectively beaten by a group which alternated between variants.

How to Improve This

Effectively, there are 3 ways to improve skills.

One way would be the way that most golfers employ – to try and calibrate a single outcome. This may be a straight ball flight, or hitting the middle of the face.

A second way would be to practice undesirable variants, such as in our study. Examples of this might be to hit hooks or slices intentionally, or hitting the toe or the heel of the club intentionally.

A third way would be to practice the correct variant (straight shot or centered contact), but doing it in different ways. For example, have you ever tried setting up out of the shank of the club, swinging back and trying to hit it pure? I can tell you that exercises like this really develop skill and spatial awareness unlike anything else.

Phasic Approach

In my bestselling book (The Practice Manual – The Ultimate Guide for Golfers, available via my website listed below), I discuss these different approaches to learning.

I also discuss the idea of periodizing your training program so you are doing the most effective things at the most effective times. For example, now that winter is here, it is a good time to be working on grooving new body motions, as well as working on this type of variability practice.

When next spring comes around, you can start to do more calibration practice, as well as simulating the golf course (or playing more often). However, you will now have a better motion, as well as newly learned skills to be able to adapt to whatever shot patterns happen each day.

This is effectively the key to long term improvement and consistency.

About Adam

Adam Young is author of “The Practice Manual – The Ultimate Guide for Golfers”, a best seller on Amazon.com in both the US, UK, Canada, Germany, and France...and has been featured as a must-have book on Golf Channel.

To learn more, check out Adam’s book at <http://tinyurl.com/adamyounggolf> as well as The Strike Plan - a video series looking in depth at the concepts, skill-building drills and techniques which create crisper strikes for better distance control and accuracy.

What’s Up with Jimmy Walker’s 42” Driver on Tour?



By Tom Wishon

The week of January 2-8 brought the beginning of the 2017 calendar year US PGA TOUR and with it, some very startling news as Jimmy Walker, winner of the 2016 US PGA Championship, teed it up in Hawaii with a new driver that was just 42” in length.

For those who take a more casual look at their equipment, 42” is the typical length of a men’s 5-wood!

It is in fact, some 3” to 4” shorter than the 45 to 46” length that just about every major golf club manufacturer makes their men’s drivers.

With Walker being a very successful tour player, the question that begs to be answered is “why?”, or rather, “why would a successful tour player use a 5-wood length for his driver?”

While Walker currently holds a world ranking of #20, his 2016 statistics with the driver were not very good. Walker is longer than most on the tour off the tee. His 2016 ranking of 24th in distance proves that but he stood at 183rd in driver accuracy last year, a statistic that caused Walker to miss quite a few cuts during the 2016 season. In addition, his “Strokes Gained Off the Tee” statistic placed him at #129 on the tour last year.

Not good in other words when it comes to the driver!

Plain and simple, Walker’s move to a 5-wood length driver was prompted by the simple fact he knows he must hit a lot more fairways to be able to consistently contend to win more tournaments. And as the old clubfitting adage so astutely says, “the longer the length of the driver, the more difficult it is to keep the ball in play, while the shorter the driver, the easier it is to achieve a higher level of accuracy.”

But 42”? A 5-wood length for a driver?

Yes, 42” is a very extreme reduction in driver length. It is in fact, 3” shorter than the 45” length Walker had been using for his driver in 2016 and before.

Very often in clubfitting, when you wish to make a change to improve ball striking performance, it is not a bad idea to jump in the deep end first by making a drastic change. From this, the process can gradually move back until the right balance is found between accuracy improvement without a significant loss in distance.

Walker maintained during the SBS Tournament of Champions that at 42” he had not lost any distance.

For players with a late release such as all tour players have, a drop of 3” in length should bring with it a loss of at least 4 to 6 mph of clubhead speed. With the driver, each 1 mph represents a difference of 2.8 yards of carry distance.

Yet Walker maintained he had not lost any distance.

Is this possible and if so, how can that be?

For each golfer, with the driver there is a combination of length + shaft weight + head weight that results in a perfect match to the golfer's unique and individual sense of swing timing, rhythm and feel.

Get it right and the swing becomes much more unrestricted and free such that the golfer can actually gain clubhead speed.

Get it wrong and the golfer struggles with consistency and tempo and swing timing such that they cannot achieve their maximum possible clubhead speed.

When making a driver to be 42" in length, to be able to achieve a normal range of swingweight balance and head feel, the weight of the driver head has to be significantly heavier.

Just look at the normal head weight difference between a driver and a 5-wood. A typical driver head will weigh between 198-202 grams while a typical 5-wood head will weigh in the range of 216-220 grams.

The 5-wood head has to be heavier to allow the club to achieve a normal range of head feel balance, known as swingweight, at its much shorter length of 42".

Same for a driver that is made to be 42".

So, for Walker, the change from a 45" length with a 198-gram head to a 42" length with a 220-gram head probably shifted the feel of the clubhead in a manner that just happened to match extremely well with his preference for the swing feel of a driver.

And obviously, this is something he would never have known had he not taken a wild leap of faith to try such an extremely short driver.

The moral to this story is not to compel all golfers to go out to try a driver made to the length of a 5-wood. But it is very definitely a fact that way, way too many golfers are playing with a driver that is much too long for their skills and which is preventing them from playing to the best of their ability.

If you are a golfer who has any of these characteristics - over 8 handicap, average to faster tempo, outside in swing path, slicer of the ball, short fast backswing to

downswing transition move – then you would be well advised to play a driver length no longer than 43.5” to 44” at the very most.

And if you choose to simply cut down the length of your existing driver, you must add weight to the head to bring back the head weight feel that will be lost in the reduction of length.

Better yet, do yourself a big favor for the 2017 season by contacting a good, independent custom clubmaker to be custom fit for ALL 12 of the key fitting specifications in a brand new custom fit driver for this new season to come. Do that and you will hit the driver better than you ever have before.

To find a good clubfitter, go to the FIND A CLUBFITTER search tool found here:

<http://www.wishongolf.com/find-a-clubfitter/>

Your Questions Answered

Member Question:

Hi Jaacob, how are you? I hope you are always doing well!!!

Question: besides creatine, do you also take tribulus, potassium in the morning and magnesium at night? If so, how much dosage? Thanks.

-Hendrik H, California, 43 years old, +1 handicap

Jaacob's Answer:

When I was competing in long drive, I did not take tribulus, potassium, or magnesium specifically. However, I was taking protein shakes (and creatine), which quite possibly may have had them.

Generally, for body builders, the rule of thumb is 1 gram of protein per day per pound of body weight. I haven't tested if you need that much for swing speed training in particular, but I went ahead and went with it during my own long drive training because that's what I did when I was doing fitness modeling in magazines and needed to add muscle while still losing fat at the same time.

Member Question:

Dear Jaacob,

I signed up a couple of weeks ago. I got the isometric bands but have had no luck at all finding a ribbed foam noodle anywhere. I wanted to know if you sell them or had any ideas where else I might find one.

Sincerely, Frank H, Tennessee

Jaacob's Answer:

Yes, unfortunately those ribbed foam noodles are tough to find. You can find them online but often times you have to buy an entire case, which also includes all the other various noodles.

I found mine at a Wal-Mart. You might also try a local pool supply store. If they don't have one, sometimes they can special order one.

Member of the Month

**Jonathan Jones** ▶ Sterling Irons
25 mins • 🌐

Second competitive medal round with the sterling irons today, a nice gross 69 on my par 72 course. My first competition Winn with these great irons 🏆🏆🏆 down to 1.3 now the quest for scratch continues.. thanks again Sterling 👍



Finishing Up With Fun

A blonde is standing by the first tee waiting for her golf lesson from the resident professional. A foursome is in process of teeing off.

The first golfer addresses the ball and swings, hitting it 230 yards straight down the middle of the fairway.

"That was a good shot," said the blonde. "Not bad considering my impediment," said the golfer. "What do you mean?" said the blonde. "I have a glass eye," said the golfer. "I don't believe you, show me," said the blonde. He popped his eye out and showed her.

The next golfer addresses the ball and swings, hitting it 240 yards straight down the middle of the fairway. "That was a good shot," said the blonde. "Not bad considering my impediment," said the golfer. "What's wrong with you?" said the blonde. "I have a prosthetic arm," said the golfer. "I don't believe you, show me" said the blonde, so he screwed his arm off and showed her.

The next golfer addresses the ball and swings, hitting it 250 yards straight down the middle of the fairway. "That was a good shot," said the blonde. "Not bad considering my impediment," said the golfer. "What's wrong with you?" said the blonde. "I have a prosthetic leg," said the golfer. "I don't believe you, show me" said the blonde, so he screwed his leg off and showed her.

The fourth golfer addresses the ball and swings, hitting it 280 yards straight down the middle of the fairway. "That was a wonderful shot," said the blonde. "Not bad considering my impediment," said the golfer. "What's wrong with you?" said the blonde. "I have an artificial heart," said the golfer. "I don't believe you, show me" said the blonde.

"I can't show you out here in the open," said the golfer. "Come around here behind the Pro-Shop."

As they had not returned within five minutes, his golfing mates decided to go and see what was holding them up.

As they turned the corner behind the Pro-Shop, sure enough, there he was, screwing his heart out.

We hope you enjoyed the Monthly Handicap Improver...feel free to contact us at info@swingmangolf.com with questions, comments, suggestions, etc!

Have a great month!