



Elite Insider Circle Monthly Handicap Improver February 2016



Hello Fellow Golf Enthusiast,

This is **Jaacob Bowden**.

To recap last month, we included a **CD** of my interview with **Mark Broadie**. Mark is a professor at **Columbia Business School**, he writes articles for **PGATOUR.com** and **Golf.com**, and he is the **inventor** of the **strokes-gained statistical categories** which are now used on the **PGA TOUR**.

Mark wrote a book called “Every Shot Counts: Using the Revolutionary Strokes Gained Approach to Improve Your Golf Performance and Strategy”. If you’re in to reading, I’d put this in to my Top 5 golf books of all time. Check it out.

You can get it here: <http://amzn.to/1Ue6RjV>

We had a **Long Drive Q&A** with professional long driver **Will Hogue**. Will has finished **3rd** twice at the **World Long Drive Championships** and has won several other top-level long drive competitions.

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



- I don't know if Will has been custom fit for a driver, but based on **his driver specifications** relative to his club head speed, it looks like **he has a pretty good setup**.

- He **lifts weight regularly** and is very strong. **Guys that** are able to **swing fast** **tend to be very strong** like Will (but not necessarily big).

- He recommends working on consistently **hitting the ball in the center of the club face** at a **good launch angle**. Spraying some good old **Dr. Scholl's foot powder spray** on your driver face before you hit your practice shots can help you **see where your impact pattern** is located in order that you can adjust it if necessary.

- He does have a **back swing** that **goes beyond parallel** to the ground. Long back

swings don't necessarily cause longer drives, but **there is a correlation**. Carefully working on **lengthening your back swing** is one potential way to **add distance** to your drives.

- He also said to **not "over swing"**. I gather that by that he means that we all have a maximum speed and a control speed at which we can reasonably control our golf ball. In my testing, this is usually no more than **92-95% of your max speed**. The point is to **not exceed this threshold** on the golf course if you are looking for good consistent overall distance.

Nutrition, practice, and general golf expert Adam Young wrote about the **benefit of differential (experimental) practice**, in which you **practice things you don't want** to help get things you do want. For example, you might practice hitting the ball on the heel and toe to help dial in your ability to hit the center of the club face.

Equipment and club fitting expert Tom Wishon explained "**fitting for weight feel**". Perhaps you have a club that when you pick it up and swing it, it feels just right. This is a factor of the **total weight** and the "**swing weight**" of the club. Tom told us some keys to look for ...and a **good club fitter can help you** with ensuring that all of your golf clubs feel great when you swing them.

Putting expert Geoff Mangum wrote the first of a two-part piece that included **practice drills for putting touch and putting line**. Have a read through those and see if there are any you like.

We gave you a couple links to **two different shows I was a guest on...Michael Breed's "A New Breed of Golf"** (December 10th) on **Sirius XM PGA TOUR Radio** and **Bernard Sheridan's "Par Breakers" podcast (Episode 99)**.

If you missed either of those, here are the links again:

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

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



We made a teaser announcement about the **new single length irons** called "**Sterling Irons**" that Tom Wishon and myself have been working on since October 2013 and will be **launching in the upcoming weeks**.



There is some basic information about the clubs at the link I gave you last month for Tom's website. However, since then, **GolfWRX.com** has also ran a **cover story** about the **Sterling Irons**. It has a lot more information about the clubs.

We'll be **launching next month**, but for now you can **read the GolfWRX article** here:

<http://www.golfwrx.com/350296/tom-wishons-new-single-length-sterling-irons/>

I also **celebrated my 40th birthday!**

This Month

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

- We've got a **Long Drive Q&A** with **professional long driver Jason Zuback**. Unless you follow long drive specifically, most golfers won't have heard of very many long drive competitors. Aside from Jamie Sadlowski, fellow Canadian Jason Zuback may be one you do know. Jason has **won the World Long Drive Championships** in the **Open division** a record **five times**.
- **Expert Adam Young** has an article for us about **mental strategies for golf**.
- **Putting expert Geoff Mangum** has the second 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 reading and aiming**.
- 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...Geoff Mangum.**

You'll already know Geoff as one of our contributors to the Monthly Handicap Improver each month. You've seen those articles and perhaps read his book or been to his Putting Zone website. However, this time, you can actually get to hear him.

I'll remind you that Geoff is these **most knowledgeable guy in the game when it comes to putting**. We could have easily done another interview...perhaps we will at some point!

Lastly, **I was a guest of Dude Spellings and Scott Dawley on their "Pace of Change" podcast**. They talk about innovation and transformation of the game. I was on the show to talk about swing speed training, improvement in general (as I went from a 14-handicap golfer to a touring professional), long drive, speed golf, and the new single length Sterling Irons.

You can find me on **Episode 8** at <http://www.paceofchange.com>.

Okay, let's get started!

Long Drive Q&A with Jason Zuback



Age: 45

Height: 5'10"

Weight: 218 lb

Driver Specs:

Head - Krank F6 4.0*

Shaft – Fujikura Flywire

XX/XXX, XPHLEXXX

BUSA Liquid 2 Prototype

X/XX

Grip –Golf Pride Tour

Velvet

Sponsors:

[Krank Golf](#), TPI, Foot-Joy, Sligo Golf, Golf Pride

Special Accomplishments:

- 6-time World Long Drive Champion – Open Division
1996,1997,1998,1999,2006; Senior Division 2015
- 2015 World Powergolf Matchplay Champion - Senior Division
- 2015 World Powergolf Matchplay 2nd - Open Division
- 2001 International Long Drive Champion
- 1998 LDA Tour Champion
- World Long Drive Championship (Open Division Only):
 - 19 Top 25 Finishes
 - 14 Top 12 Finishes
 - 12 Top 10 Finishes
 - 10 Final 8 Appearances
 - 7 Top 10 Finishes in a row
 - 3 Straight title defenses (next closest - 1 title defense)
 - First competitor at World Long Drive Championship to win under straight shootout and head to head match play formats
- First and only competitor at World Long Drive Championship to win both the Open and the Senior Championships in first appearances in respective divisions.
- 1472 days without a loss in LDA sanctioned Long Drive competition.

- All-time leading money winner in Long Drive history
- Recognized Guinness World Record for the fastest ball in all of sports in 2007-2013. Included in the 2013 Guinness Book of World Records Hard Copy.

What is your longest drive in competition?

1. Longest in a conventional long drive competition – 463.0 yards
2. Longest drive on the fly (in competition-certified) – 430 yards 10 51/64 inches
3. Longest drive runway (in competition-certified) – 714.1 yards
4. Longest in competition (Pinnacle Distance Challenge – 1 of 10 head to head matches for \$10,000/match – Denver, Colorado) – 501 yards

What were the conditions of the drive?

1. Approximately 3000 feet above sea level, warm conditions, wind helping L to R 15mph, firm fairway.
2. 1608 feet above sea level, warm conditions, wind light helping, plugged.
3. Sea level, warm, no wind, hard surface (runway).
4. Approximately 5000 feet above sea level, warm conditions, wind helping 10-15mph, firm fairway.

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

163 mph on BEL Swingmate swing speed radar (myself and a few of the other elite long drivers at the time had a system to minimize the potential



for a misread on any particular device with respect to club head speed or golf ball velocity in that, a particular number had to be backed up on two (2) successive swings within 2 mph).

Club head speed is difficult to ascertain as compared to ball speed. The gold standard today to capture club head speed would be an extremely high speed camera such as the Phantom line. Club

head speed with some of common devices on the market may vary greatly and be affected by: club head geometry/shape, color, club path and a variety of other factors. I use club head speed generated by my evaluation equipment only as a general guide and rely more so on golf ball speed as a more important velocity factor during evaluation.

- First to surpass 200 mph golf ball velocity (208.0 mph) – Titleist Launch Monitor – January 1997 - Del Mar, CA, USA
- First to surpass 210 mph golf ball velocity (211.1 mph) – Titleist Launch Monitor – March 1998 – Oceanside, CA, USA.
- First to surpass 220 mph golf ball velocity (100m/s – 223.7 mph) – Bridgestone Launch Monitor – May 11, 2002 – Japan

What led you to choose your particular equipment specifications?

It is purely performance based. I generally like to test everything (that is feasible) out there with respect to shaft, club head and grip and choose the club (head, shaft and grip) that produces the longest and straightest shot pattern and gives me the ability to modify the flight as needed.

I had an endorsement deal with Titleist for many years, then Cobra, and I was bound to hit the products they had offered. Over the last few years I have had the ability to test most of the long drive heads on the market and have had great results with the [Krank Golf](#) brand.

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

I like to hit it straight or with a little fade. I have won most of my titles with a fade, that's my go-to shot. I have always been able to impart low (optimal) backspin on the ball. I've worked very hard on my swing and club delivery to be able to control the back and sidespin of the golf ball coming off the driver. People will say, "Doesn't the fade hurt you"? but in reality I'm so low spin with the fade that it's like a slight draw for a left handed golfer.

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

I'm always working on body alignment - the Golfer's Toolbox is great for that.

A buddy of mine Tom Celone developed a great air resistance training device called the Powerchute. It has two great training benefits: it provides

load via air resistance and also helps with efficient body sequencing in the swing.

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

I have spent 27 years weight training. I have devoted the entirety of my long drive career (20 years) researching the most beneficial things that I could do to improve my speed with respect to the golf swing. Simply, to maximize distance there has to be a balance of flexibility/mobility, strength and speed. Everyone is different so evaluation is critical.

In the early days my training was biased substantially toward absolute strength, which gave me a good strength base, but as time went on I placed a greater emphasis on speed, velocity, flexibility and mobility.

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



On the physical side - get evaluated by a TPI certified professional to see if the body is performing to its best ability.

On the swing side - center face contact is key, along with delivering the driver in a square ascending fashion. That will give the best chance at creating the maximum ball velocity and good launch and spin elements. You can really make significant improvement in distance when golf ball velocity and launch parameters are maximized.

On the equipment side – go into a driver evaluation with an open mind, make sure the club fitter has many options of club heads and shafts. Try to do the fitting outdoors and in a situation as close to golf as possible. Ideally, the driver evaluation should be with the

same make and model of golf ball you play.

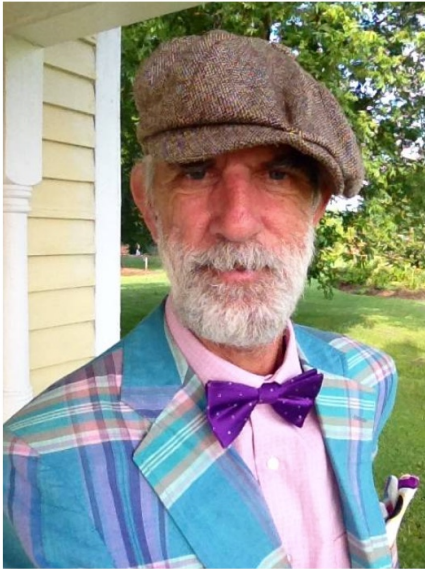
Where can people contact you or learn more about you?

Website: <http://www.jasonzuback.ca> (under construction)

Twitter: @golfzillazuback

Instagram: @golfzillazuback

PuttingZone Practice Exercises for Reading & Aiming



With Geoff Mangum

As a continuation from last month's practice exercises for touch and line, the following exercises for reading and aiming are also 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 Reading

1. Putt 6-8 balls past the hole from 6-8 feet away, stopping the balls nicely past the hole only 2-3 rolls, with the normal tempo to make sure the rhythm is same-same and "athletic" and cow-stupid, while watching the arrival and go-by speed and stopping of the balls safely in the stopping area past the hole, to install confidence that with good stopping intentionality, rhythm is always safe and never short.
2. Once the rhythm is set and the arrival speed of the ball has been witnessed and become accepted and familiar, then read breaking putts from 6-8 feet out by first seeing the correct centercut entry path of the perfect read, then pointing the putter behind the ball, then just commit and make that stroke for line and distance with intentionality to the space and the usual rhythm back and thru.

3. Explore breaking putts inside 10 feet by seeing the fall line and slope steepness to set a target using the correct inches of break per foot of distance (e.g., 1/2" on 1% slope, 1" on 2% etc. times the number of feet).
4. Add in using the three instinctive movies to adjust the math (straight-down baseline misses low X inches; back car up from perfect centercut entry path to see headlights at fall line once car backs up all the way to the ball; aim from baseline slightly higher towards high side until ball with usual pace will stay on the high side all the way to the hole and then follow putter face headlights to fall line) -- with the shortcut version being just to ask whether aiming at the math target feels right and high enough.
5. On a 20+ foot putt, use string and two tee pegs and a chop stick to establish the baseline-fall line "corner" for the breaking putt, locating the chop stick in the cup's flagstick hole and stretching the string from the ball at one tee peg to the hole where the string turns uphill onto the fall line at the chop stick and then ends up the fall line some distance at the second tee peg -- with uphill-putt corners being greater than 90 degrees, sidehill-putt corners being equal to 90 degrees, and downhill-putt corners being less than 90 degrees -- and aim the correct angle off the baseline to the high side and sink putts with Plan A strokes (usual tempo and rhythm properly sized sending balls exactly where aimed for line).
6. Change from ball-above-feet corners to ball-below-feet string corners.
7. Combine string corners with inside-ten-feet same-slope putts and try math targets marked with a tee peg on the fall line to test how reliable the math seems from different distances.
8. Add an elevated string line (over the ball to the target) to a string corner with the end stick located at the math or other target spot in the fall line to make sure the stroke starts straight with usual pace and change the target stick if necessary.
8. On same-slope putts, set one distance along the baseline and swing the baseline around the hole to different distances to test the sameness of the slope using the same target on the fall line for all same-distance putts around the circle.
9. Get familiar with how the X pattern crossing on the target spot defines which same-slope putts at that range or shorter are aimed inside the cup and

avoid over-reading these uphill or downhill "inside the X" putts.

10. Read long lag putts over different slopes using the baseline and imagining that the flagstick lays along the fall line uphill from the cup as the distance for stopping the ball, aiming the first-time high-enough line that keeps the ball high-side all the way to the hole with the usual tempo and rhythm.

11. Try estimating the overall average slope from ball to hole on long lags over different slopes (giving more weight to slopes near the hole where the balls spends more time) to set a math target as a "ballpark" beginning read to explore whether this is working well.

Drills for Aiming

1. Use colored stick-on dots on the baseboard combined with same-colored spots on the floor to set 6, 10, 15, and 20 foot distances across odd room angles, and then aim as well as possible and then use a laser on the putter face aim to see how much off your aiming skills are and try to discern any repeating patterns (e.g., mostly missing left or right, mostly good or bad from specific distances, or the absence of a consistent pattern).
2. Using a line on the floor or an elevated string line, practice aiming the skull at the line and then rotating the head / skull correctly so the eyebeam / piece of skin on nose runs straight down the line sideways.
3. Experiment with a target on the fall line aiming the line on the ball at the target (like pointing the line as a pistol barrel then setting the aimed ball down to the green like a glass of champagne lowered vertically and carefully) and then check from behind the ball how accurately you aim the ball line (and sometimes use a laser as well to check this).
4. Practice standing behind the ball with the dominant eye on the ball-target line and anchor the perceived straight line onto the ground and/or the ball, perhaps using the edge of the shaft to connect the ball and target and then look for anchor points along the shaft edge near the ball.
5. Once an anchor point is located, walk into the putt and point the putter face correctly thru the ball at the anchor point, then use a laser to check whether this process is working accurately and try to figure out what is causing any persistent problem.

6. Perform a full aiming routine of behind-the-ball perceiving and pointing the putter (perhaps using the ball line plus checking this line from behind the ball with the edge of the putter shaft) plus beside-the-ball aim checking with skull pointing and skull rotating (using the piece of skin to set the aim of the skull and track the straight sideways eyebeam run) to make sure everything agrees that the putter face aim is as desired and intended.

7. Value the straight-everytime stroke habit as creating a body-aiming system that will inform you about the correctness of the technical aiming, so there are multiple aiming systems cross-checking and reinforcing each other.

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>

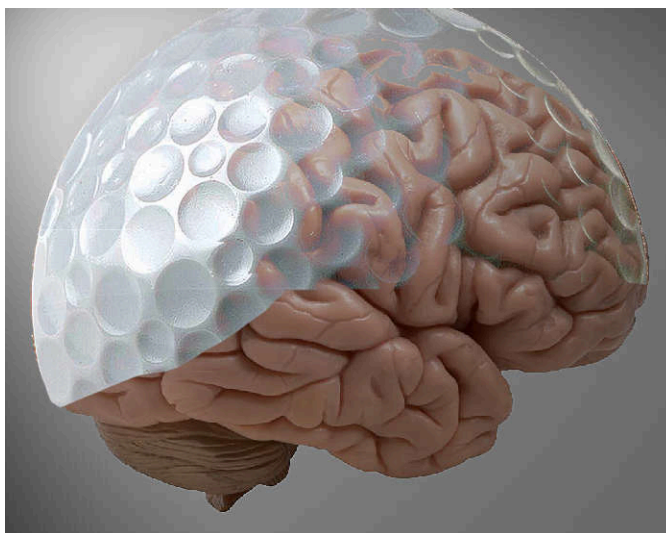
Mental Strategies for Better Golf

By Adam Young

One of the biggest things that holds a player back is their mind-set. We know this, we are told it all the time – but what can we do about it?

When I was a kid growing up, I aspired to be a top golfer. However, I constantly found myself throwing away good rounds due to an inability to just “let-go” and play golf when I was in contention. This led me to enjoy competitive golf less and less, and veered me towards teaching (which I love).

Fast forward 12 years and it's a different story – I have truly learned to play freely and without fear of a bad shot. Lots of things have gone into the reasons for this, and for everyone else, their reasons will be different.



Maturity

One of the main revolutions of my own game came with getting older. As a kid, golf meant everything to me. If I played a bad round, it would upset me and ruin my week. I took poor shots too personally – I identified too much with golf.

But we have to realize – we are not our golf games. We can put all the training in, get out techniques where we want them, understand everything about the golf swing etc. But, ultimately, we are at the mercy of our bodies. As humans, we can't just do what we want at will, or we would all be striking everything pure and flinging our irons towards pins.

It's our personal responsibility to realize this, and accept whatever our bodies throw at us. Don't tie your ego in with your golf game.

Expectations

I also came to learn that the best players in the world also play poorly sometimes. Quite often actually. Top pros average only 60% fairways and greens, and only make 60% of 7 footers – what does that tell you about this game?

Be honest, how often do you stand over a drive and think “I must make this”. While advocates of positive psychology might think that is a good mental image to have, I personally have found that caring too much about the result makes it worse more often.

A lack of caring where the ball will go allows me to make a freer swing at it. And the safety of knowing that pros often miss the fairways simply adds to that freedom.

Understand why you play

You are not playing for the history of winning a major, or to secure your tour card, or to make a check so you can pay for food this week.

No, to you, golf is a pastime for leisure. It's a time to be out with friends and enjoy the scenery, and hope to catch that one sweet shot, or have that perfect back nine.

So why not make a choice to enjoy it? Sure, not every round is going to be a barrel of laughs, but I can assure you that you can actively enjoy more of your games just by having that as the goal. I know from personal experience.

Conclusion

While this post is a little different from the normal, it may well be the thing that changes your game forever. We are often so eager to improve that we forget why we are actually playing the game – to have fun – and that is all relative to your perception.

So, next time you play golf, commit to this for me.

1. Don't tie your personal worth in with your game that day. Just as you don't really care much when your playing partners shoot a good or bad score, they don't really care whether you do either.
2. Anticipate a good shot, but don't expect it. Make a pact with yourself to deal with whatever outcome you get from your swing, good or bad. This should allow you to make a freer swing at the ball without fear of failure.
3. Make a choice to enjoy the game. This is one of the most demanding technical sports, with the fickliest of nature. One millimetre low on the face, one degree more open or closed and the result can be 2 shots different. So just let it go, and enjoy the good ones you hit. Why not keep a tally of how many good shots you hit per round instead of your score?

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>.



Your Questions Answered

Member Question:

Jaacob,

I've got a guy over here that is swinging it seriously fast.

We are going to work towards the World Long Drive Championships next year for him, what's the process?

Cheers,

Rob H, Ireland, 28 years old, Pro Golfer

Jaacob's Answer:

Process is pretty simple actually.

Advance through a Local Qualifier, then a Regional Championship, then you're in Worlds!

The list of qualifiers is here: <http://www.longdrivers.com/remax-wldc/events>

He'll probably need special equipment too. I would check out Sellinger's Power Golf. They carry a lot of really stiff shafts, including X, XX, XXX, and even XXXX. Sellinger's also has a good variety of low lofted heads under 7.5 degrees. If you need something really low, for example 2 degrees, they can often pull a head that low from stock even though it's not listed on the website.

Also, have a look around the member area. In the June 2014 issue of the Monthly Handicap Improver, we went over the numbers that someone like your guy would need to achieve to optimize his launch angle and spin rate for maximum carry or total distance. You guys will probably want to have at least two drivers made too, one each to optimize for carry and total distance. Conditions vary depending on the venue (and sometimes even during the same event), so having those options is smart because often times advancing through the rounds comes down to just a yard or two...even at those long distances.

Member of the Month

"I am a scratch player and have been doing swing speed training for the last month or so and have gotten about 10 MPH increase." - Shone F, 47 y/o, CA

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 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!