



Elite Insider Circle Monthly Handicap Improver February 2017



Hello Fellow Golf Enthusiast,

This is Jacob Bowden.

Last Month

To recap last month, golf expert Adam Young had something for us called “Change to be Consistent” in which he shares some case studies from his teaching about how to become more consistent.

Golf equipment design legend Tom Wishon covered Jimmy Walker’s use of a 42” driver in Hawaii...which is the typical length of a men’s 5-wood.

Why would Jimmy do that in a PGA TOUR event? If you missed the physical version of the Monthly Handicap Improver, you can log in to the site to access the digital version at <http://members.swingmangolf.com> to find out why.

We included a CD of my interview with long driver Glenn Wilson, Jr. Glenn, as we mentioned, has literally hit a ball harder than anyone on the planet in the finals





of the World Long Drive Championships.

That's fast!

We had a Long Drive Q&A with Mitch McDowell, who is not only a long driver but is also an accomplished player having made it to sectionals of US Open qualifying.

As we also say in Swing Man Golf, Mitch pointed out that to hit the ball longer, one component of that is simply practicing swinging fast as you would similarly practice any other part of your game.

Mitch also tries to hit a straight ball...which will get you the most ball speed because it is not a glancing blow like a fade or a draw.

I also answered a couple of questions from your fellow members.

This Month

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

- To get some insight in to distance, we've got a Long Drive Q&A with long driver Jim Waldron. Jim has qualified for the World Long Drive Championships 3-times and possibly has the longest back swing in the world.
- Expert Adam Young has something for us entitled "The 80/20 Rule of Golf". Adam will tell us what 80% he feels you should focus on along with suggestions for practice to get the best possible results out of your game.
- Golf equipment icon Tom Wishon will answer the question of whether today's sweet spots on drivers are getting bigger or not.
- 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 audio interview with David Leadbetter...yes, the same David Leadbetter who has taught Nick Faldo, Ernie Els, Michelle Wie, Lydia Ko, and many more major champions. You'll definitely want to have a listen.

Side Notes

A couple side notes...

First, I ran in to some of our members when I was presenting on single length irons on the Celebrity Stage for the Washington Golf & Travel Show at Dulles Expo Center on February 4th. Great seeing you!

Second, after having been in the golf industry since 2003, I finally attended the PGA Merchandise Show at the Orange County Convention Center in Orlando...as well as the 2-day PGA Teaching & Coaching Summit.



The Teaching & Coaching Summit was interesting. There were presentations on a variety of topics from various speakers including:

- Mike Adams & Scott Lynn – Ground Reaction Forces
- Henry Brunton & Rick Jensen – Juniors
- Michael Jacobs – Elements of a Golf Swing
- James Sieckmann – Wedge Performance
- Sandy LaBauve, Randy Smith, & Andrew Rice – Driver Instruction & Increasing Distance
- Todd Sones & Kevin Weeks – Putting
- Brett McCabe – Excellence in Teaching
- Nick Clearwater – Golf Tec's Swing-TRU Motion Study
- Dana Rader, Brady Riggs, Brad Redding, & Krista Dunton – Faults & Fixes
- Mike Duffey & Eric Handley – Ground Forces
- Dave Phillips – The Future of Technology
- Tony Martinez, Rick Murphy, Christ Carpenter, & Matt Reagan – Creating New Golfers
- Todd Anderson & Randy Myers – Connecting Your Body to Your Swing
- Cameron McCormick (Jordan Spieth's coach) – Pursuing Excellence

I hope to be able to incorporate and share with you some of the things from the summit in the upcoming months.

As for the PGA Merchandise Show, it is massive. Counting the little stop-offs I did along the way, it literally took me 2.5 days to see everything. The amount of merchandise is simply mind-boggling.

My favorite things were the Golf Board (you must try this if you get a chance!), the Edel putters (the fitting process is amazing), the Foresight Sports Quad launch monitor (word is that this is better than Trackman and Flightscope), UFO Tour Golf (great custom bags), the Net Return & Real Feel Hitting Mats (for home use), getting to try the Cobra and Edel single length irons (which I think I'll talk more about next month), etc.

But perhaps the best thing about going to the show is seeing old friends and the networking. In this age of technology, having digital friends from around the globe is becoming more and more common...but you don't always get to meet them in person. Queue the PGA Merchandise Show.

Some people I talked to I already knew – for example Michael Breed, Christopher Smith (the speedgolfer), Martin Chuck, Matthew Rudy (Golf Digest), Mike Dobbyn, and David Edel.

Others I have either spoken to, interviewed for the Monthly Handicap Improver, had email exchanges, and whatnot but had never physically met in person. Some of those include Andrew Rice, Bryson DeChambeau, Mike Schy (Bryson's coach), Shawn Clement, Steve Hopkins (UFO Tour Golf), Shaun Webb, Landon Gentry, Tim Burke, Fredrik Tuxen (Trackman), Piers Ward & Andy Proudman (meandmygolf), David Mobley, Rick Shiels, Peter Finch, Matt Adams, and many others. So it was great to get to meet all these digital friends in person.

More on that to come as well.

Okay...let's get going!



Long Drive Q&A with Jim Waldron

Age: 27

Height: 6'3

Weight: 220

Driver Specs:

Krank Golf
F6 1.5-4.0
degrees with
House of
Forged 72
gram XX or
XXX shafts.



Right now my set up is a XXX tipped an inch with a 3.5 degree head. I've hit as low of loft as 1.5 with an XX shaft.

Sponsors:

Krank Golf, Tour Striker, Tornado Tee, Puma/Cobra

Special Accomplishments:

I qualified for the World Long Drive Championships in 2013, 2015 and 2016.

Last year I had the Grid Record at the Rockwell Long Drive event with a drive of 452 yards. In that set I hit three balls over 430 yards! The record was broke this year but winds were around 20 mph downwind!

I have won the Arizona Championship Division series twice in 2014 and 2015.

Longest drive in competition:

452 yards

Conditions:

I was at around 5000 altitude and there was a slight left to right crosswind only a few miles an hour. I needed to win my last set to get into the finals at the Rockwell and I hit a ball at 437 and knew I won the set so I kept building off that drive and unleashed a freak ball.

Fastest swing speed recorded:

148 on Trackman. When I am competing I am normally in the mid 140's.

What led you to choose your particular equipment specifications?

There is a lot of trial and error when it comes to a long drive set up. I have gone through phases where I play a very low lofted driver (under 2 degrees) with a softer shaft (XX tipped) or a slightly higher loft with a stiffer shaft. It's all about finding the right combination to get the dynamic loft and launch. My set up for the World Championships is going to be a 3.5-4 degree head with a 3x shaft tipped an inch. I am hitting more of a mid trajectory compared to last year.

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

It depends on the conditions. My 452 ball was a fade. I can hit draws and fades but I would say overall my shot would be a slight draw. It's all about hitting the middle of the face and getting the right launch. Last year I was launching it too high and found it hard to control under pressure when I was hitting up on the ball 10 degrees. I would also use a 4" tee and tee it as high as possible. Now I'm teeing it a little lower and hitting more of a mid trajectory that will work in any wind condition.



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

I used some overspeed techniques starting out four years ago and still use them to maintain my speed. Swinging shafts with one arm, swinging lighter driver heads with both arms combined with heavier clubs.

I like hitting drivers with a pool noodle over the shaft as well.

I hurt my thumb last years swinging full speed with a weighted club so I don't do much Over/Underspeed training anymore.

I have changed my swing a lot over the years and the most important thing is to have an efficient swing. Just improving your timing and greatly increase speed.

Do you use any other types of training to hit it further?

I like to swing ropes attached to the grip to improve my sequencing. I tend to get vertical on the downswing with my inclination and early extend so I my right arm thrusts too soon. It's a great drill to keep me in my inclination and apply more rotation through the shot compared to standing up and thrusting.

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

Hit the middle of the face. I know it sounds like the obvious answer but taking foot spray and hit 10 drives and see where you are hitting it on the face.

For speed, learning how to raise the handle through impact while blending all the rotation and extension pieces is very important for speed and efficiency. Most amateur's have the handle of the club moving from high to low, causing more steep, slice tendencies.

Where can people contact you or learn more about you?

My email is jwaldron14@gmail.com. I work for the Tour Striker Golf Academy at the Raven at South Mountain in Phoenix, Arizona. We run 3-day golf schools from October to May. I am also available for individual lessons. My instagram is @jimld.

The 80/20 Rule for Golf

By Adam Young

You may have heard of the 80/20 rule. It states that 80% of the results come from 20% of the causes.

Often, in golf, we focus so much on the gross movement patterns – how our shoulders are moving, how our hips are rotating, where our weight is positioned at impact, etc. While these are all important aspects to good play, there is something far more vital that will create the desired results you want.



Impact!

The result of a golf shot is entirely determined by what the club did to the ball at the point of impact. Now, this doesn't mean how your hips, shoulders or shaft lean was during this time. It literally refers to that little bit of space down by the ball.

If you were to imagine that the ball cannot see your arms, legs, where your weight is, etc...all of the information that the ball reacts to is contained while the club is in contact with the ball – which is around half an inch of space or so.



The ball only knows the point of first contact (left) to the point of release (right).

Reverse the Ratio

While I find that most of my pupils spend 80% of their time working on body positions and whatnot, I see more success in changing pupil's desired results by focusing more on the impact conditions necessary to achieve such results.

For example, if a player is slicing the ball, we could look at how their hips and shoulders move and sequence – this is the normal go-to place for most golfers.

However, what if we were to look at and directly change how the club moves during impact?

What if we were to realize that a slice is caused by a club which is moving too far to the left of the target, and the clubface is too open to that path?

Surely we could visualize and change those two factors in slow motion, then work up to adding more speed.

This is a big part of my approach in my teaching, and I achieve a huge amount of success in changing someone's ball flight immediately. Not only that, but in most cases people's movement patterns dramatically change to accommodate the new impact. Often, the hip and shoulder sequence (for example) will automatically arrange itself into a better concoction without the conscious awareness of the player.

This is one of the tenets behind self-organization theory.

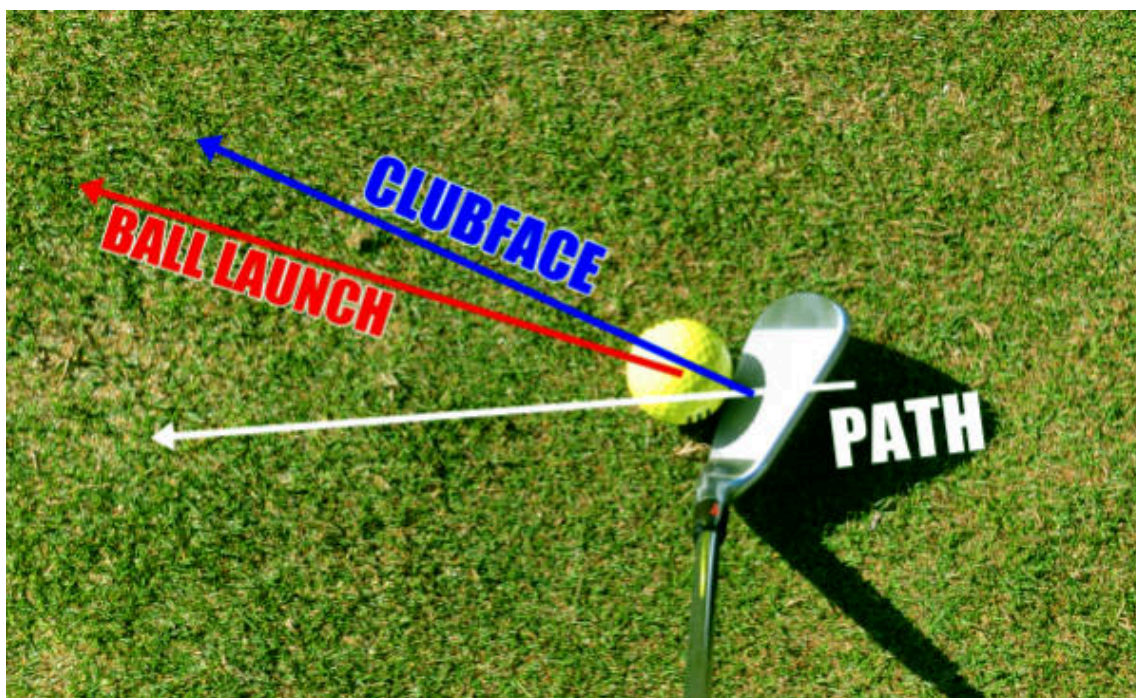
Impact Creates the Shot

The more we start to realize that impact creates the shot you see, the more you start to be able to control/fix/change and improve. In fact, while there are a million theories on how to swing the golf club, impact is the only common denominator between them.

And luckily there are only a few impact factors that matter to create the ball flight you want. Things such as:

- Clubhead speed at impact
- Where you strike on the face
- Where your club contacts the ground
- What swing path the club is taking
- Where the clubface is looking

And, with all of the above factors, we are only talking about the half-an-inch or so as the club is in contact with the ball. That's it - nothing more!



The more we can improve the above factors, the better our shots will get, guaranteed.

Suggestions for Your Practice

Spend less time obsessing over your body movements and more time working on how the club works through the impact interval. Use feedback such as a dry erase marker pen (to check strike location on the clubface), or spray paint lines on the turf to check divot location. Also, make sure you understand the ball flight laws, as they will help you interpret your shot shape so you get a clearer idea of the path and face combination you presented to the golf ball.

However, don't completely eliminate working on your body movements. At least 20% of your time should be dedicated to getting your body to work in a more effective manner – but make sure it aligns with what you are trying to improve with your impact.

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 about the ball flight laws as well as how to best structure your practice for maximum improvement, 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.

Are Today's Sweet Spots on Drivers Really Getting Bigger?



By Tom Wishon

As a club head designer with over 30 years of experience in the field, there are a handful of terms used in the marketing of golf clubs which elicit a reaction from me that is well, less than positive. One of these is the use of the term "SWEET SPOT" when trying to express the ability of a club head to minimize the loss of distance from a shot hit off the center of the face.

In truth, no matter what the designer does to the design of the clubface, when you hit the ball off center there will be some distance loss and the feeling of impact will not be completely "sweet"! In fact, there is one and only one true "sweet spot" where the feeling of impact is completely solid, as if the ball jumped off the face.

THAT sweet spot of perfect impact is a point on the face that is literally the size of the head of a pin.

The term "sweet spot," as conceived by the marketing mavens, is a way to express the fact that club heads can be engineered to reduce the amount of distance loss when the shot is hit off center. How this is done in the design of the club head and how much the distance loss is reduced can vary a lot among all the different types of club heads.

Here is a run-down of how club heads can have a "larger sweet spot", or otherwise know, how club heads can be more forgiving to minimize distance loss.

High Moment of Inertia (MOI)

Of the several MOI's that can be measured on a club head, the one that controls how much distance you can achieve when hitting the ball off-center is the MOI about a vertical line through the center of gravity of the club head.

The higher the designer can make this MOI in the club head, the less the club head will twist in response to a shot hit off center toward either the toe or heel side of the head.

To make this MOI as high as possible, a designer will rely on two things.

One, the larger the size of the head, the higher the MOI.

Two, the more weight that can be positioned around the very outer perimeter of the head, the higher this MOI will be.

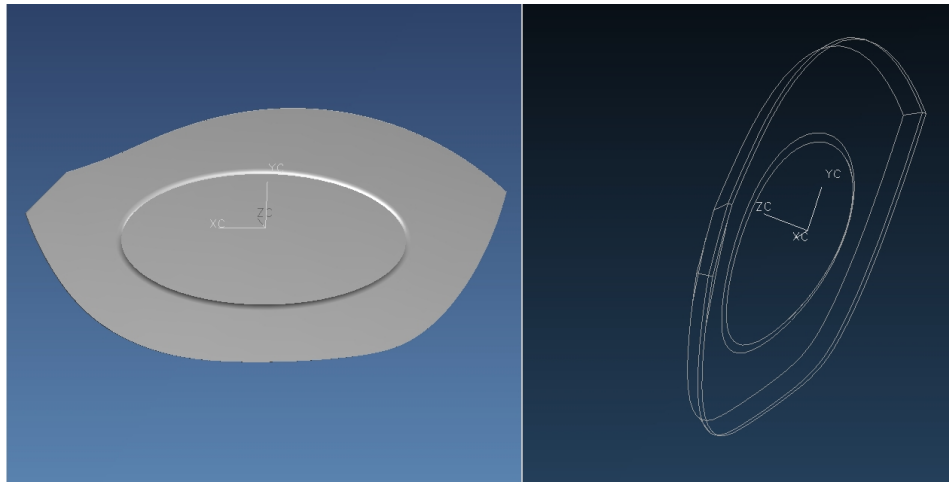
In drivers, we now have a rule that limits the size of the head, AND we have a rule which limits how high the MOI can be as well. Since pretty much every company makes their driver heads close to the size limit and since most every company makes the weight of their drivers the same, there is not a lot of difference in the golf industry today in the MOI of drivers...not enough to make any real difference in off center hit performance in other words.

Which leaves...

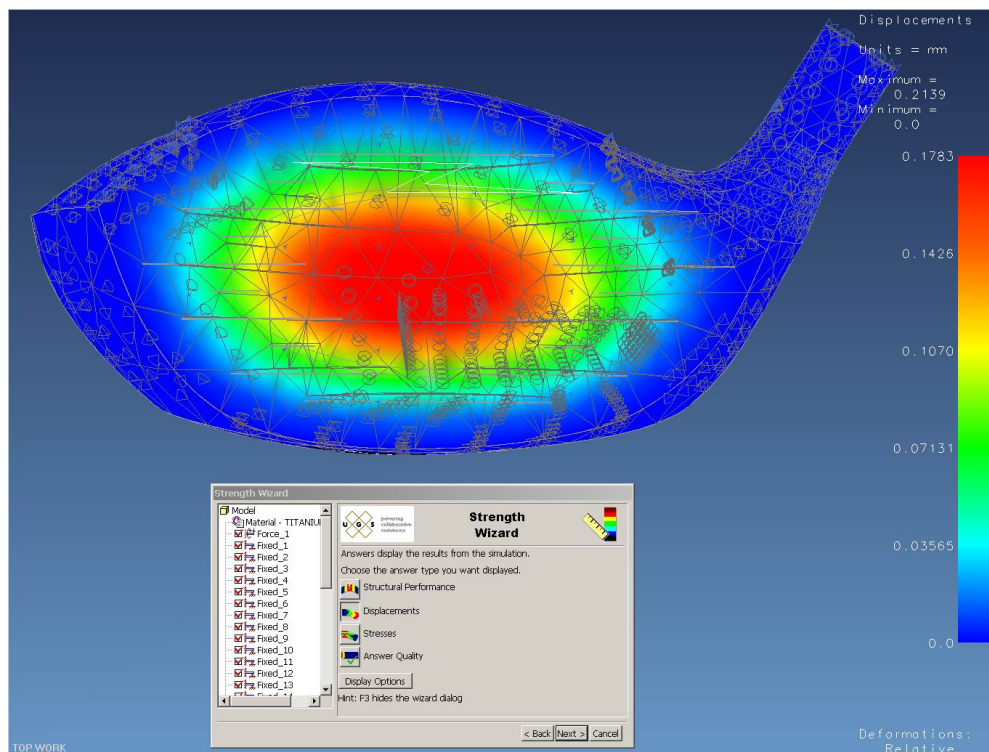
Variable Thickness Face Design

Some years ago, club head designers became aware of the fact that if you make the outer perimeter area of the face a tiny bit thinner than the center, the off center hit

areas of the face could be made to flex inward a little bit more than if the face is made to one uniform thickness.



In essence, a variable thickness face has the ability to slightly increase the COR (Coefficient of Restitution) of the outer areas of the face over what is possible with a uniform thickness face, while at the same time still keeping the COR of the center of the face within the legal limits for COR/CT in the USGA and R&A Rules of Golf.



There is no question, a well-designed variable thickness face can result in a very noticeable improvement in off center hit distance.

It is also true that a club head with a superb variable thickness face in a head with a lower MOI will deliver better off-center hit performance than a high MOI club head with a uniform thickness face.

So how do you know if a club head has a variable thickness face and if it is a superbly designed variable thickness face?

If you can see the back of the clubface, you'll see an area in the middle of the face that is a little thicker than the surrounding area. But with drivers, woods and hybrids, seeing the back of the face requires that you destroy the head by cutting it in half, something I think most golfers would have a little problem with!



The best way to know if your driver is as forgiving as possible or has the largest "sweet spot" possible is to hit shots on a good launch monitor such as TrackMan or FlightScope and look for a measurement called SMASH FACTOR.

Smash factor is the speed of the ball coming off the face divided by the speed you swing the club head.

Under the Rules of Golf and the rules of physics, if your driver face has a COR right at the very limit of the rules, the highest your smash factor measurement can be for an ON CENTER hit will be 1.50 to 1.51 (this allows for the +/-1mph error tolerance of these launch monitors).

So, when evaluating the off-center hit performance of a club head, when you hit shots off center and see a smash factor of more than 1.45, you're playing with a club head that is about as good as can be for minimizing distance loss from off center hits.

Don't forget, there are iron models available today with a high COR and variable thickness face as well. And in this case, you'll be able to tell if the iron has such a forgiving face design because in most iron models you can see the back of the face!

Have fun in this great game!

Member of the Month

"Sterling Irons® vs. In1Zone shootout - no contest.

I bought a few In1Zone single-length heads, thinking it would be nice to have a value-priced option for people who are put off by the price of premium clubs.

I built them with graphite shafts that I know well, having played with them on my own set for years, to the same specs as my personal Sterling Irons® set.

I hit about 50 shots on the range, using my (soft) game ball, not range rocks.

After a few shots I was able to hit reasonably good shots, but they never felt good. I really wanted to like the In1Zones, but I just didn't. I had to stop hitting them because my hands were hurting. Even flushed shots didn't feel right, nothing like the pure feel of Sterling Irons® heads.

I had to spend the next half hour hitting one of my Sterling Irons® to erase the terrible [In1Zone] feel from my hands.

Design and metallurgy matters. Tom Wishon is the master."

- Mitch B



Finishing Up With Fun

His wife was a new and nervous player but Jim persuaded her to play against a new customer of his and his wife.

"After all," he explained, "it will be a two-ball foursome.

I'll drive off and by the time you have to hit the ball the client and his spouse will be elsewhere on the fairway and not watching you."

It was agreed and the game started as Jim had said it would. He hit off with a fine drive, right down the fairway about 300 yards leaving about four yards to the green.

He handed his wife an iron and told her to aim for the green. She sliced it with vigor into the deep rough at the side of the fairway. Two!

His shot from the rough was magnificent and landed the ball back on the fairway - this time about half a yard from the green. Three!

She whacked it right over the green and into the sand trap on the other side. Four!

He was in brilliant form and he clipped it neatly from the sand onto the green about a yard from the hole. Five!

Her putt rolled off the green and into another sand trap. Six!

His recovery landed three inches from the hole. Seven!

Her putt stopped at the green's edge. Eight!

His putt of thirty-nine feet went in. Nine!

The customer and his wife holed out with four. Jim's reaction was nothing too dramatic. He merely tore up his score card and ate it, broke three clubs and bent the remainder, jumped up and down on his golfcart and finally, shaking his fist at his wife, he strode off to the clubhouse.

His wife emerged from the sandtrap whence she had watched the performance. "I don't know what he's so mad about," she said. "After all, he had five; I only had four!"

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!