



Elite Insider Circle Monthly Handicap Improver March 2017



Hello Fellow Golf Enthusiast,

This is Jacob Bowden.

Last Month

To recap last month, golf expert Adam Young had something for us that he titled “The 80/20 Rule of Golf” in which he suggested spending less time obsessing over your body movements and more time working on how the club works through the impact interval.

Golf equipment design legend Tom Wishon answered the questions of whether or not today’s sweet spots on drivers are really getting bigger.

While there is one true “sweet spot” per say that hasn’t really gotten any hotter for conforming drivers for a number of years, what has changed is that drivers are more forgiving on off-center hits due to designs that incorporate things like high MOI and variable face thickness designs.

As long as you are still getting smash factors that get more than 1.45 smash factors on slight off-center hits, that is about as good as can be for minimizing distance loss when you miss the sweet spot under the existing legal equipment limitations. Pretty much all drivers from major manufacturers do this these days.

We had a Long Drive Q&A with Jim Waldron who works for the Tour Striker Golf Academy in Phoenix, Arizona.

Some of the key points I think to take away from Jim are:

- The length of his back swing helps him with his power
- He works on his equipment to optimize his launch conditions
- He practices swinging fast
- He works on his technique and sequencing
- He advises working on hitting the center of the face

We included a CD of my interview with golf professional David Leadbetter, the same one who has taught Nick Faldo, Ernie Els, Michelle Wie, Lydia Ko, and many more champions.

I also brought up a few side notes, including my presentation on the Celebrity Stage at the Washington Golf & Travel Show at Dulles Expo Center, my attendance at the PGA Teaching & Coaching Summit, and getting to go to the PGA Merchandise Show in Orlando.

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 and big bomber Dan Konyk from England. Dan has hit a ball 449 yards in competition and has qualified for the World Long Drive Championships 12 times.
- Do you have an issue with taking your golf game from the range to the golf course? If so, expert Adam Young has something for us entitled "Transferring Your Game". I wonder what that's about!
- I'll publicly respond to a message for you from one of our members whose goal it is to win the World Long Drive Championships this year.
- We'll have our usual "Member of the Month" and golf joke.



And as part of your Monthly Handicap Improver Insider Circle, we've included a CD of my audio interview with David Edel of Edel Golf. David is a super interesting guy and we talked about:

- How breaking his elbow was one of the most fortunate things to happen to him
- How to direct attention with putter design
- How "The Golfing Machine" helped him improve his game and lead to designing his first putter
- What he learned from the MIT "Better Golf Through Science" project
- Why only 3% of golfers aim their putter directly at the hole
- Why geometric stimulus can have an inverse effect on some golfers
- And much more!

Side Notes

A few side notes...

- We had lots more great new testimonials come in for Sterling Irons® single length irons. If you haven't gotten a set yet, you're missing out. Read about what everyone is saying at <http://www.sterlingirons.com/testimonials>.
- Jim Achenbach wrote a "Single Length Irons" story for Senior Golf Insider. You may know Jim from his long time role writing for GolfWeek Magazine. It was actually published last Fall, but we missed telling you about it. Anyway, the link for that is here:

<http://seniorgolfinsider.com/2016/09/15/single-length-irons>

- If you want to hear Tom Wishon and I talking about the Sterling Irons® single length irons, we posted a few videos that you can watch.
 1. https://youtu.be/dqyfo5IY_24 - Process of Going From Concept to Creation
 2. <https://youtu.be/QwS9yggpVAc> - Distance Gapping and Trajectories
 3. https://youtu.be/dYsSu_qlGMs - Tom Wishon Grinds Away on a Sand Wedge
- Some of our YouTube friends (Rick Shiels, Peter Finch, James Pickard, and Seb Carmichael-Broen) posted a 4-part video series in which they used single length irons at The Shire Golf Club in England.

If you want to check those out, here are the links:

1. <https://youtu.be/DhNbm9ctnnI> - Matchplay on Rick's channel
2. <https://youtu.be/G2vrzI7YMS8> - Seb on Golf's channel
3. <https://youtu.be/PhPXhTxMy3c> - Greensomes on Pete's channel
4. <https://youtu.be/-ZKXsTCPT6Q> – Buzza Golf via James Pickard

Okay...let's get going!



Long Drive Q&A with Dan Konyk

Age: 39

Height: 6 feet 3 inches

Weight: 16 stone 9 (233 pounds)

Driver Specs:

4.5-degree Krank F5 with XXX-flex
UST/XPHEXX Shaft

Sponsors:

Krank, Hirzl, Golf Pride, Champ, Max
Golf Protein, 5 Hour Energy, Garmin

Special Accomplishments:

- Owner of UK Powergolf Academy
- 3-time UK LONGDRIVE champ
- First ever European to compete at World Championships!
- 12 World Championship appearances (Top-10 in 2010)
- 14 European Tour wins

What is your longest drive in competition?

449 yards in Mesquite, Nevada

What were the conditions of the drive?

Hot & down wind



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

148 mph on a Flightscope

What lead you to choose your particular equipment specifications?

Best head out there bar none

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

Big draw

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

Swing Fan, sledge hammer, broom! Swing that Broom!!!

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

I swim and do yoga

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

Improve your basic golf technique!!

Learn to hit long 2-irons!!

Where can people contact you or learn more about you?

Twitter: @dankonykldpro @ukpowergolf

<http://www.woodlandsdrivingrange.co.uk>



Transferring Your Game

By Adam Young

Wow, what a warm up session you just had on the range. Your last 10 balls were all flushed. You walk off the practice area as confident as Tiger in 2001 – this is going to be your round of golf.

You step up to the first tee and eye up your first shot – all you can see is the middle of the fairway. As you hold the grip of the club, it feels as if it is a part of your body. You swing back smoother than Barry White’s voice and...out of bounds!

What the hell happened?

Happens to the Best of Us

It is one of the most common stories – “Why can’t I take my game from the range to the course?”

Even Tiger Woods is currently going through this, with onlookers claiming his “range-game” is as good as ever.

In this post, we look at some of the reasons why this phenomenon is so common.

Attention

On the range, what were you thinking of?

Maybe your mind was quiet?

Perhaps you were zoned in on a specific swing feeling?



Are you thinking about the flag? Or do you have a yardage in your head?

What were you NOT thinking of? Perhaps the target didn't enter your mind on the range – you were so focused on what you were doing.

Where did your attention go on the course? I often see players practice with a process focus, such as a swing thought or more internal thought, only to let their mind wander and become 'target obsessed' on the course.

While target obsession is not necessarily a bad thing, we must practice like we play and play like we practice – that means controlling our attention during practice and play onto similar things.

Change your attention and watch your swing change.

Blocked

How many times do you hit 30 7-irons in a row on the course?

Never – so why would you do it on the range?

Sure, grooving a swing is fine for a while, but you will never ever get your swing where you want it (proof in point, professionals only hit 60% of their targets).

There has to be a point where you train like you play – which means switching up targets and clubs and shot types as you would on the course.

Don't fool yourself that you are learning quickly by beating the same shot over and over to the same target with the same club – that's like a child repeating 2x2 over and over in preparation for a math test.

Pressure

The range is wide open. If you miss a shot, you can just rake over another. There's no pressure on the range.



Pressure changes us – I have seen people go from nice little draws on the range to full blown slices when put under the gun. If you don't train it, you won't get better at it.

In my group coaching classes, we often pair up during practice. This allows a player to be watched (peer pressure) while hitting one shot at a time (pressure of having only one chance). Also, we play games where scores are kept (pressure to improve).

For example, try this game:

- Start 3 feet away from the hole with a putter
- You have 2 shots
- If you get both balls in the hole, move back a foot
- If you only get one ball in, stay there
- If you miss both balls, move closer by one foot

This game means that every single shot is pressurized because every single ball means something. The player can then compete against others and themselves to see how far back they can get.

Simulate

Hogan was said to play mental rounds of golf on the range – essentially simulating the course and play.



Why not try and imagine the first hole at your course?

Hit the same club you would normally, and figure out where it would have landed. Play your next shot as if it were from the next position on that hole. Keep going for the full 9 or 18 holes, totaling up how many fairways you hit in regulation, how many greens you hit, and what you may have scored.

This is great because it uses your imagination, forces you out of “blocked practice” mode, and even creates a game you can use to track progression.

Summary

How you train and warm up will be vital to whether your game transfers to the course or not. Using the same focus of attention, simulating pressure and using more random practice (changing clubs, targets, etc) is not only going to improve transference to the course, but learning retention tends to increase also.

About Adam

Adam Young is an expert on practice design for golfers and is the 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.

You can read more about his theories in his 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.

Your Questions Answered

Member Question:

Hi Jaacob,

My name is Sean and I'm from Dublin.

I'm a 20 handicap and as you refer to a lot is that it's easier to score with shorter clubs. I've recently bought a new driver and in the testing area Trackman showed I had a swing speed around 102 mph and around 220-230 carry. I've bought a Nike Vapor 420cc Tiger Woods driver with an X-stiff shaft.

I'm 6ft and 70 kg and I wonder is there room for improvement?

Thanks!

Jaacob's Answer:

With a 102 club head speed, you could get in the low 250s for carry. So I'm guessing you either don't hit the sweet spot consistently or perhaps don't have an optimal launch angle and spin rate for 102.

To check your contact, get some Dr. Scholl's foot powder spray and spray a little on your driver face and then hit a few balls. It wipes off easily but it's a neat trick for seeing your strike pattern.

At 102, I would try to get you at 14-15 launch and 2500 spin. For that, I'd recommend visiting someone locally who has a launch monitor and can check to see if you need to hit it higher/lower or with more/less spin.

Then there is swing speed training. The fastest long drive guys can swing in the low 150s. So with that, if you're willing to work at it a little, you could

certainly pick up more speed. Gaining 12-16 mph is really feasible just with the basic speed training you see in the member area.

Member Question:

Jaacob,

Greetings from the Catskills.

I just ran across your material, and just purchased the program. Very very excited. In that, you mentioned it may be good to reach out to you for advice on what falls under the custom programs.

So, here is my situation:

I want to win the World Long Drive competition.

You probably get many people making bold claims to you, but I am serious.

I do not know what my current swing speed is (my radar is on the way), but I do recall 135 mph at a GolfSmith in Austin. That was about 15 years ago.

Why I think I can compete at age 40...

I did play professional baseball. Royals system. I was terrible. Unfortunately, like most pitchers, you have to pick one or the other when you go pro. I chose pitching as it was a logical decision due to chances of making it. However, in my career I never felt that any position players that I played with had faster bat speed than me, and I that I often dwell on making the wrong choice. Especially from the left side, it wild how much faster it is than the right side (no, I've never tried to harness that in a left handed golf swing).

I just moved to the USA after 10+ years in China. I've since decided to move to upstate New York.

More info:

- 6'3"
- 200 lb currently > goal to be 220 lb w/ 10% or less body fat by competition date

- Estimate 15% body fat now
- Regularly do light exercises: pull ups, pushups, and I have 10 acres of trees that I aim to hand fell when this weather breaks (I friggin love swinging the axe).

Also practice Wim Hof method. Hard to explain, you would have to Google him up. Essentially, I haven't taken a hot or warm shower in over a year, Even when its 8 degrees here :)

I have paid for and committed to The Bash for Cash qualifying event in Ontario July 15th, 2017.

So that's my target Jaacob.

I want to be competitive in almost exactly 4 months.

Initially my thoughts were to just enter and not have any expectations the first season. I was thinking more along the lines of just getting out there and see how all of this works. But after coming across your training program, you've made me think otherwise.

Whatever the current swing speed record is, that will be my training goal.

I'm not a bad golfer when I remove anything above a 3-iron out of my bag. That is due to the amplified inconsistencies off the tee box. When I get baseball-y with it, I hook the bejesus out of the ball. And I can conversely squirt them hard right on any given drive as well. I've yet to play with someone I can't outdrive, but consistently is the name of the game in golf. And of course, I can't resist swinging big every time like the amateur golfer that I am. Well, for now that is.

I welcome any advice or direction you may have for me Jaacob.

Jaacob's Answer

I always enjoy hearing about people who have the courage to do something ambitious. Not everyone does that...so kudos to you.

Here's a few thoughts that hopefully can help you along the way.

1. It's great that you're not letting age be a deciding factor. These days there's oodles of articles and videos of people who defy conventional beliefs about athletic achievement.

One time my wife and I ran the Greifenseelauf Half Marathon in Switzerland in our 30s and we were getting passed by runners in their 70s and even 80s.

There's a 70+ year old guy on YouTube named Sonny Bryant who deadlifts over 400 pounds and has the physique of someone in his 20s.

There's a guy in long drive named Eddie Fernandes who is now 46 and can swing in the mid 140s.

If you believe you can do it and are willing to put in the work, the sky is the limit.

2. Outside of the extremes, I haven't noticed any difference in club head speed by changing body fat from 15 to 10%. You can certainly do this, but I don't believe it will be a critical factor to competing and/or winning.
3. Pullups and pushups are fine for fitness, so feel free to do them as well. However, again, I don't think those are critical to success in this particular venture.

Chopping wood, on the other hand, that could help. Make it like your golf swing though in that you chop diagonally down across your body...and make the reps that you do put in be full bore and perhaps at the same cadence as you would do in competition.

4. I'm aware of Wim Hof. I've never specifically tested this specifically as far as swing speed training goes. However, I have tested other types of body work and have seen benefit. I would put this in the category of it would be neutral at worst and may help. Trust your gut in this regard as far as using it in your training.
5. Having played professional baseball can definitely be an asset to you in this journey. There are a number of former baseball players who have success in long drive.

6. On the range, hit 8 ball sets in 3 minutes in to a virtual grid on the range. This will help mimic what you have to do in competition.
7. When it comes to distance, there are three key things to work on.

First, is your strike. It's super important to hit the sweet spot. A can of Dr. Scholl's Odor X Foot Powder Spray works well for this. Just spray a bit on your driver face, hit a few balls, and you'll see where your strike pattern is located. Wipes off easy with a towel.

Second, is club fitting. Typically, long drive guys use between 1.5* to 6* drivers with 46-48" shafts. It will take a little testing, but it's worth it to get your launch conditions dialed in. Using a stock driver off the shelf simply won't allow you to hit your greatest distances. Sellinger's Power Golf has a pretty good selection of long drive equipment from the popular long drive brands.

Third, is speed. The average guy at World's swings in the mid-130s. The guys that make the TV rounds average in the 140-142 range. The typical winner is mid 140s. A handful of guys can swing in competition over 150 (I recall the Finals record is 155.6 by Connor Powers). Glenn Wilson Jr was the fastest last year with multiple swings in the low 150s and ball speeds in the mid 220s during the TV rounds (you can watch them on YouTube).

I should note that these speeds are Trackman speeds. So at some point, it would be beneficial to hit 10 balls or so in practice using a Trackman (or Flightscope) and Swing Speed Radar at the same time. Depending on how you move the club head through impact, the SSRs usually reads about 5-10% faster. So if you get your personal average difference, you'll know what numbers you need to hit on your SSR to achieve the ones you want on a Trackman.

8. In my experience with making dramatic transformations, you are well on your way already.

In my mind, it comes down to:

- Deciding what you want to do and believing hit's possible
- Measuring where you are
- Making a plan that will connect the dots in your desired timeframe with milestones that need to be hit at certain points

- Putting your plan in to action
 - Measuring yourself along the way and making adjustments if you aren't hitting your milestones
 - Being persistent and staying with it
9. Be sure to check out the Monthly Handicap Improve in the member area for May 2014 and November 2014.

The May one talks about key things to understand about ball flight. If you know what creates certain shot shapes, often times you can fix things on your own.

The November has a couple case studies where some regular workouts are tweaked to make them more conducive towards picking up club head speed.

Anyway, go through the Swing Speed Training section in the member area...and that combined with the above should be enough to get you going.

Good luck and keep me posted!

Member of the Month

"I received my irons on Saturday and drove from NC to FL for a week vacation. Instead of bringing my old familiar clubs I brought my new Sterling Irons. Today was range day and tomorrow on the course. I used the exercise suggested in the tips email.

All I can say is wow! The ball explodes off the club face. I hit draws and fades. It's only day one with these clubs but what a day.

One thing I know is I have to trust my single set up. It's not easy when I have the 5-hybrid but by the end of my session when I trusted it I was hitting exactly where I wanted. I'm 6'7" and having a single swing plane is amazingly easy compared to traditional irons.

Thank you, thank you, thank you!!!

Next week I've got a session with my club guy using a launch monitor to dial in yardages. I'm a 20+ handicapper but not much longer. It's a hard

game but even harder for tall guys. I'm also 52 and the graphite shafts you provided were also brilliant!

You've made the game enjoyable for me to play!!

Thanks, George B"



Finishing Up With Fun

Sid and Barney head out for a quick round of golf. Since they are short on time, they decide to play only 9 holes.

Sid says to Barney, "Let's say we make the time worth the while, at least for one of us, and spot \$5 on the lowest score for the day."

Barney agrees and they enjoy a great game. After the 8th hole, Barney is ahead by 1 stroke, but cuts his ball into the rough on the 9th.

"Help me find my ball; you look over there," he says to Sid.

After 5 minutes, neither has had any luck, and since a lost ball carries a four-point penalty, Barney pulls a ball from his pocket and tosses it to the ground. "I've found my ball!" he announces triumphantly.

Sid looks at him forlornly, "After all the years we've been friends, you'd cheat me on golf for a measly five bucks?"

"What do you mean cheat? I found my ball sitting right here!"

"And a liar, too!" Sid says with amazement. "I'll have you know I've been standing on your ball for the last five minutes!"

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!