



Elite Insider Circle Monthly Handicap Improver May 2017



Hello Fellow Golf Enthusiast,

This is Jacob Bowden.

Last Month

To recap last month, golf expert Adam Young had something for us describing different types of practice modes: blocked, broken, variability, and differential.

Perhaps you've been stuck lately in your improvement. If you haven't done so already, log back in to the member area, go through the different types again, and then head out to the range to try each one.

It may be able to break you out of your improvement plateau and you might find it fun to spice things up a bit.

Golf equipment guru Tom Wishon answered a couple member questions about wedges.

I let you know about some Sterling Irons single length iron updates, two articles and one video that featured the clubs, and my golf trip to Switzerland and Italy in which I met up with one of our members and also played golf with European Senior Tour Player Andre Bossert.

We had a Speedgolf Q&A with top-ranked speedgolfer Scott Dawley. Like me, Scott has shot the championship record for golf score of par-72 with only 6 clubs, but he did it in 48 minutes to my 55 minutes. Amazing!

Not all of you will play speedgolf, however, that doesn't mean that there aren't things that you can't take away and apply to your own game to help lower your regular golf handicap.



Interestingly, when you play speedgolf you also actually incorporate several of the different types of practice that Adam Young mentioned.

We included a CD of my audio interview with Orange Whip founder and creator Jim Hackenberg, whom MyGolfSpy.com website visitors rated as one of the top training aids of all time. Jim is an interesting guy who played college golf with Phil Mickelson and caddied for Patrick Moore. Log in and have a listen if you missed it.

This Month

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

- I'm going to comment on this baseball video I came across of home run hitter Barry Bonds. There are some interesting things to observe that we can take away as golfers looking for more power.
- We're going to keep up with the spirit of speedgolf and do one more Speedgolf Q&A instead of our normal Long Drive Q&A. This one is with the 2014 World Champion, Eri Crum, who played golf with Tiger Woods at Stanford.
- Golf expert Adam Young will come at us with a piece about playing aggressive versus playing more conservative. Which works better?
- Equipment expert Tom Wishon will tell us the good, the bad, the truths, the myths and how to ensure you end up with the best fit for your golf clubs.

- 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 Shawn Clement. Shawn was one of the original stars of YouTube. He's got over 67,000 subscribers to his channel and is the founder of WisdomInGolf.com.



Side Notes

A few side notes...

- 1) The reviews and feedback has been so amazing, if you've been on the fence about getting a set of Sterling Irons single length irons, we've implemented a 90-day money back guarantee. Visit <http://SterlingIrons.com> to learn more.
- 2) Speaking of Sterling Irons, the left-handed sets should be in stock towards the end of the month...and new SW and LW available mid-June.
- 3) We got another mention in Golf Digest. If you don't get the paper version of Golf Digest delivered to your home, here is a link to the digital version: <http://glfdig.st/OJBvKIk>.
- 4) I missed the cut at my US Open qualifier.

I believe 9,485 professionals and amateurs with handicaps better than 1.4 were registered to compete.

The conditions were fair but very challenging with a field scoring average of



close to 79. There were chilly swirling winds, thick rough, firm sloped greens, and tucked pins on the 7,326 yard course. I believe only 1 player broke par. It was truly a test similar to what US Open's are perceived to be.

I wasn't really sure what to expect since I haven't played or practiced much in the last 5 years or so to focus on Swing Man Golf and Sterling Irons, but I had 3 birdies and hit 10/14 fairways, so there were certainly some things to build on.

Okay...let's get going!

The Swing Mechanics of Barry Bonds

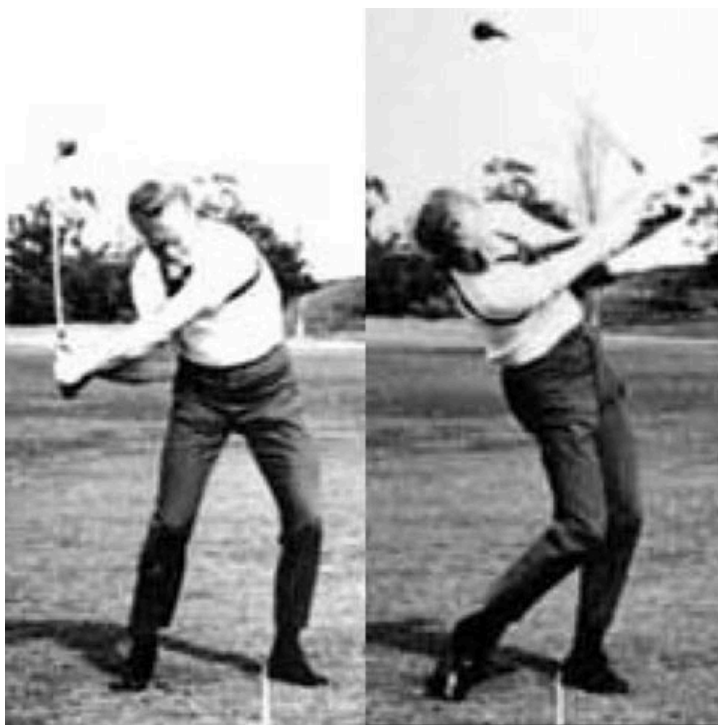
By Jaacob Bowden

One of our members sent in a message to me on behalf of his friend who is recovering from shoulder surgery. His friend was looking for a way to change his swing to be able to still have a reasonable amount of power yet minimizing the strain on his shoulder.

Along with some minor things, there were two primary things I suggested.

First, was using his legs a little bit more in an old-style way, sort of like Sam Snead, Mike Austin, etc...in which he would allow his trail leg to straighten in the back swing. This would have the effect of lengthening his back swing (which is associated with more power) without having to use his shoulders.

Second, was using his hands more. Guys that tend to hit the ball far in golf without looking like they are swinging hard often exhibit a similar motion.



In the previous picture of long driver Mike Austin, look at how far the club has traveled (over 360 degrees) relative to his straight arms (about 180 degrees).

That's a lot of hand whip through impact!

Anyway, for some reason or another, around the same time I also across this neat video of Barry Bonds working on his swing.

Have a look here: <https://www.instagram.com/p/xqVDfRul05/>



It's post-surgery and after his retirement but I wanted to point out a few things about his swing mechanics because I think they can have great application to golf.

First, he's got a lot of club snap through the ball, like what I was describing above with the gentleman recovering from shoulder surgery.

Second, Barry's got a bit of a flying trail elbow at the top of his backswing. Stereotypically this is frowned upon in golf and some instructors would tell you it's important to keep your hands out in front of you, but you can use the flying elbow and getting your hands "behind you" to help generate club head speed on the downswing.

Third, he's got a collapsed lead arm at the top of his backswing. This is also often taught/perceived in golf as a no-no, because it "lacks extension and width".

However, this attribute can also be used as a source of power and speed in the downswing. So if your lead arm isn't straight at the top, don't worry about it so much, it may actually be helping your power.

Lastly, in golf a wide stance is often taught for power, but often stances get exaggerated and too wide, which can ironically slow down the swing, compromise balance, and expose the golfer to risk of injury. Many tour players and long drivers have too wide of stances. Be careful of this in your own swing.

Speedgolf Q&A with Eri Crum

Height: 5 foot 9 inches

Weight: 155 pounds

Sponsors:

None

Special Accomplishments:

- 2014 Speedgolf World Champion
- 2013 Speedgolf World Championships - Runner-up
- Captain Stanford Golf team
- 3-hour Boston Marathon



How did you first get involved in speedgolf?

I saw the 2012 World Championships on TV and thought that was the perfect sport for me.

What clubs do you have in your bag?

Driver, 6-iron, 9-iron, SW (54-degree), putter

Why did you pick out those particular clubs?

I like my driver more than my 3-wood; I use a 6-iron for the longer par 3s and 2nd shot on par 5's; good golf scores require a good short game - you

have to have a putter and SW at the very least, and a 9-iron is the usual club on the second shot of the par 4's.

With that few of clubs, there of course would be shots that are between full swing distances. How do you like to play those?

I like to swing hard and leave the ball a few yards short when possible. If I am going to be more than 10 yards short, I will go with the longer club and take 3/4 swing.

What do you do to work on your fitness?

I run 3-4 days a week, and I do some high intensity body weight training (pull-ups, push-ups, burpees, hill repeats). I also play ice hockey in the winters.



From left to right, 2-time Speedgolf World Champion Rob Hogan, New Zealand Olympic miler and speedgolfer Nick Willis, top-ranked speedgolfer and former collegiate runner Mack McLain, and Eri Crum go out for a run on the golf course.

Based on what you've learned from speedgolf, what advice or drills that you could give the regular golfer for them to apply to their normal golf game?

Go with your gut. Don't over-analyze shots.

Anything else you want to say or add?

What an awesome sport!!

Where can people contact you or learn more about you?

Email - ericrum@gmail.com

Business website: www.BoiseSpineCenter.com

Aggressive Tactics

By Adam Young

What if there was a way to knock shots off your game without touching your swing at all?

What if you could shoot consistently better scores and have a game plan for competitions which fills you with confidence?



Golf is chaotic - we never know which golfer is going to turn up on the day.

However, there are ways in which we can make sense of the chaos and find patterns which give us a statistical advantage. We can use simple statistics to A/B test our game and create our best golf ever.

Try this

Next time you are playing a practice round of golf, make it count. Use it as a form of information gathering to help you further your game for competition.

One of the ways you can do this is to play either an aggressive or a conservative strategy for the hole.

An aggressive strategy might be:

- Taking a driver off the tee
- Firing at the pin
- Going for the green in two

A conservative strategy might include:

- Laying up short of the bunkers on a tee shot
- Going for the middle of the green or safest part of the green
- Playing every par 5 as a 3-shotter

Do you go aggressive (red) or conservative (blue)?



Try alternating each hole, doing one as aggressively as you can, and the next with a more conservative strategy.

If the course is quiet, why not play 2 balls on each hole with the alternate strategies.

Now the clever part

Rather than just going on gut instinct, keep your scores on each hole with each strategy. Log them into a file somewhere, and keep building the database of scores up over the course of a season.

When you have enough scores logged, you may start to see that you have a lower average score on each hole with different strategies. For example, you may play the 8th hole 0.2 shots better on average when you play it conservatively.

While this doesn't sound like a lot, if you get that amount of benefit on each hole, you may score up to 4 shots better per round.

A/B test your whole game

This is just one area in which you can test your golf in order to squeeze every last shot off your handicap. I have had players make crazy leaps in performance by doing this philosophy in lots of areas, such as where they place their attention over a shot, or what shape of shot to play into a certain hole scenario.

Some other things you could test and keep track of are:

- Different technical thoughts
- Different shot shapes (draw or fade)
- Different routine timings

About Adam

Adam Young wrote about these ideas and more in his “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.

The Facts of Life About Fitting

The Good, The Bad, The Truths, The Myths and How to Ensure YOU End Up With the Best Fit

By Tom Wishon

It's no secret golfers are curious about custom fitting, whether it's worth pursuing, how much difference it could make for their game, and most of all, how to even know if you are in the hands of a good clubfitter undergoing a quality fitting experience.

To say that the subject of clubfitting is fraught with doubt, uncertainty, myths and misinformation is perhaps the biggest understatement in the game of golf. No one knows this better than me, a man who has spent more time researching and digging deeply into clubfitting technology than perhaps any person in the history of golf.

I sense your doubts.

I feel bad every time I read or hear of a golfer ending up with a person who is not qualified to custom fit golf clubs. But I also know that there have been many golfers who have experienced game improvement from a proper fitting and enjoyed their time working with a knowledgeable and experienced custom clubfitter.

What are the facts, the truths and the secret to finding a good clubfitter to ensure a quality fitting experience?



Who Benefits the Most from Professional Fitting and How Much?

If you the goal from the fitting is more distance, better accuracy, improved shot consistency, and yes, lower score, golfers who shoot from low 80s to 100 will experience more measurable game improvement from proper fitting than will single digit to scratch golfers.

Many golfers think the average to less skilled players are too inconsistent for fitting to matter.

The reason average golfers benefit more from a proper fitting is because of the adverse effect of many of the standard specifications on golf clubs sold off the rack in retail stores, pro shops and online. For golfers who score from the 80s to 100, the use of 45-46" long drivers, 43.5" long/14-15*loft 3-woods, and iron lofts based on a 23-25* #5-iron has made the game much more difficult for average golfers to play to the best of their ability.

Proper fitting that includes...

- a shorter/higher loft driver
- shorter length fairway woods
- face angles on the woods to reduce the golfer's slice or hook
- set make-ups that get rid of the 3-wood and replace the 3-, 4- and even 5-irons with high loft woods or hybrids
- club weighting matched to the golfer's strength and tempo
- grips that are comfortable to the hands

...will most certainly bring about visible game and score improvement for at least 75% of all golfers who shoot between 80-100 and who are currently playing with clubs they bought off the shelf.

Single digit to low handicap players certainly can benefit from proper fitting. However their improvements are more related to elements of feel, shot consistency or confidence than actual distance or accuracy improvements. The reason is because many low handicap players learn to self-fit themselves with clubs that perform reasonably well for their game.

Can You Be Properly Fit in a Retail Golf Store?

It's possible, but let's just say it's a one in a hundred chance for a golfer to get the best fit in a retail golf store today.

To gain the most benefit from fitting, all 12 of the key fitting specs must be fit and then built into each club in the bag to complement the golfer's size, strength, athletic ability and swing characteristics.

That means the...

- lengths
- lofts
- lies
- face angles
- shaft weight
- shaft flex
- shaft bend profile
- total weight
- swingweight (headweight feel)
- set makeup
- clubhead design
- grip style/size

...all fit correctly for all clubs in the set for each different golfer, then built to possess those determined specs for each club.

Unfortunately, retail golf stores are desperate for profit margin in their club sales because the golf companies do nothing to protect the store's profit margins. That means retail sales people are low paid, poorly trained, under pressure to make quick sales, and rarely motivated with any incentive programs other than to possibly get "spiff" payments for selling clubs of which the store may be over-stocked.

Is that where you want to spend hundreds to over a thousand dollars for a good performing set of golf clubs?

Or do you want to take the time to find a clubfitter with good knowledge and experience who will work with you one on one for the time it takes to determine your best fitting specs for all 12 of the key fitting specs for all clubs in the bag?

What Should a Good Clubfitting Cost?

Because the vast majority of good clubfitters are independent business people, the cost of the fitting can vary a lot.

Most clubfitters are one-person operations. Their time is a key part of their services from which they drive their income. The best clubfitters have studied and practiced their craft for years to gain their knowledge and experience.

Take it from me – there is no way a person can become a really good clubfitter in less than one to two years of ongoing study of the RIGHT technical information, coupled with fitting at least 50+ golfers to gain the practical experience required to be good in the craft.

Isn't that training and experience worth something in terms of payment for their time?

Think about what a good, experienced teaching pro charges for an hour-long lesson.

\$75? \$100?

Some of the top teachers make \$500-\$1000 for an hour lesson. Some even make more than that.

If a person has 2+ years of fitting experience and holds a Clubfitting accreditation certification from either the AGCP or ICG organizations, is he or she worth \$200 for a 90-minute to 2-hour fitting analysis with an launch monitor and many different fitting test clubs?

Absolutely.

Because Clubfitting is an independent “cottage industry”, there are good clubfitters who will roll the price of the fitting analysis into the price they charge for the custom fit clubs they build for the golfer. You don’t know until you take some time to talk to the clubfitter before you commit to a fitting analysis.

How DO You Find a Good, Knowledgeable, Experienced Clubfitter?

How do you find a good accountant, independent auto mechanic, plumber, or other skilled tradesperson?

For that matter how do you find a good teaching pro when you want to take lessons and work on your game?

You can first ask other experienced golfers for their opinion and recommendations. You can ask the golf pros in your area. Ask the better players in your area since many of them tend to experiment with different clubs and club specs.

Better yet, if you locate a clubfitter in your area you do not know, ask him/her to provide you with names of golfers they have fit. Contact these golfers to ask their opinion of their fitting experience. You say the fitter will just give you the names of the people he knows were happy with the fitting? If the fitter has several people who were happy with his work, isn’t that a form of positive statement about his/her ability?

Even better, go to the websites of the two professional clubfitter organizations, the AGCP (<https://aogcpa.wildapricot.org/Member-&-Sponsor-Directory-&-Locator>) and the ICG (<http://www.clubfittersguild.org/find-icg-members>).

Over the many years I have been involved in Clubfitting research and training, I have compiled a list of competent custom clubmakers you can search by location - <http://wishongolf.com/find-a-clubfitter/>.

Just because a Clubmaker in your area is not affiliated with one of these organizations does not mean he/she is not a good clubfitter.

Custom clubmaking and fitting is chiefly an INDEPENDENT industry. Independent clubmakers in general are not “joiners” – having worked with thousands of them over 30+ years I can testify to that.

In the end, you ask the clubfitter for names of golfers and you ask golfers for their opinions.

You do NOT go blindly into a fitting with someone about whom you have done no due diligence to investigate.

Would you do that when trying to find a good accountant, mechanic or tradesperson?

Member of the Month

Amazing that this happened in Sterling Heights, MI of all places!!!

Congratulations, Kevin!!!

“Was fitted for my Sterling Irons 5-SW last fall. At that time we filled the gap to my new 929 4-wood with a Wishon Golf 775 4H. Played it at the end of last year until last week.

Monday I went back to Gary Cottrell for a driver fitting; asked about the 4-iron as I like the idea of keeping as much of my bag as possible one length. After a bit of testing, Gary thought it might be a good fit; said it would be ready Saturday. I asked if he could get finished by Wednesday as my league is Thursday; he did.

Last night on the 176-yard 2nd hole of Rammler Golf Club, I got my first hole-in-one with that 4-iron picked up the night before!

I'm 51; have been playing since I was 14; my Sterling Irons are by far my favorite set of all time....; not just because of the ace (but that didn't hurt).

Thanks so much!”

- Kevin F, Sterling Heights, MI



Finishing Up With Fun

A couple of women were playing golf one sunny Saturday morning. The first of the twosome teed-off and watched in horror as the ball headed directly toward a foursome of men playing the next hole.

Indeed, the ball hit one of the men and he immediately clasped his hands together at his crotch, fell to the ground and proceeded to roll around in agony.

The woman rushed down to the man and immediately began to apologize. She then explained that she was a physical therapist and offered to help ease his "pain." "Please allow me to help, I am a physical therapist and I know I could relieve your pain if you'd just allow me!" She told him earnestly.

"Ummph, oooh, nnnoo, I'll be alright...I'll be fine in a few minutes," he replied as he remained in the fetal position still clasping his hands together at his crotch.

The woman takes it upon herself to begin to "ease his pain". She began to massage his groin.

After a few moments she asked, "does that feel better?"

The man looked up at her and replied, "yes, that feels pretty good...but my thumb still hurts like hell!"

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!