



Elite Insider Circle Monthly Handicap Improver August 2016



Hello Fellow Golf Enthusiast,

This is **Jaacob Bowden**.

Last Month

To recap last month, we had a piece from golf expert **Adam Young** called “**Performance Versus Learning**” in which he contrasted **blocked practice** (hitting your 7-iron over and over on the driving range to the same target) and **random practice** (mixing it up).

While there is a time for both and you may perform better on the range with blocked practice, spending some time to do **random practice is good too for improving your ability to play better on the course in the long run.**

We had something from **equipment expert Tom Wishon**, in which Tom answered the question “**What are the Most Important Fitting Elements in Golf Clubs?**”.

There are **12 of them**. For example, length, loft, lie angle, face angle, and more. Tom argued that the **most important is set makeup**. While the best particular set makeup depends on the individual, most people would do well with:

- A **higher lofted shorter length driver**
- **No 3-wood**
- Woods at either **4 or 7-wood...or 5 and 9-wood for slower swingers**
- **Hybrids for the 4 and 5...and 6 for slower swingers**
- **High MOI irons**
- A **sand wedge that fits your sand swing** (steep swingers need wider soles and more bounce)
- A **high MOI putter** that you like how it **looks**, you can **line up well**, and that is **properly fit for length, lie, and grip comfort**

Tom's article came at a perfect time for me personally. In early August, I was in Michigan for a couple **golf outings with my father-in-law Lloyd** (In photo on right: Me, Lloyd, Dennis, Barry).

Lloyd is 62 and shoots 88-96 from tees that are about **5740 yards**. After getting to play with him for a couple of rounds as well as go to the range, it was really apparent to me that **his golf clubs were a poor fit for him**.



His **driver club length was too long and, even at 11 degrees, was too low lofted**. He hit **low slices all over the face**. His **3-wood** actually went **farther off the tee than his driver** because the launch conditions were more suited to distance at his club head speed. He **couldn't hit it well off the fairway**, though. His **irons were too heavy and his lie angles were way off**. The only thing that fit him pretty well and that he didn't fight was his putter.

His birthday is coming up, so my wife, mother-in-law, and some other family members decided to all go in on **a new set for him**. We basically came up with an **11 club set for him (he doesn't need 14)** that was right in line with what Tom mentioned in his article.

We got a **13-degree 43.5" driver with a closed face angle**. We're dumping his 3-wood for an **18-degree 5-wood with closed face angle**. We got him a **23-degree 4-hybrid with closed face angle**. For his irons, we went with **6-SW in the new Sterling Irons™ single length irons**. With all the clubs, we picked out **shafts that were not as heavy and stiff...and the lie angles are all appropriate** for his personal swing.

Of course, he hasn't hit them yet, but I know all of **these are really going to help his golf game.**

We had a **Long Drive Q&A with 5-time World Long Drive Championship qualifier Kari Hyokki.** Some of the things I think that are worth pointing out about Kari's Q&A are:



- **He uses drivers that maximize his launch conditions**
- **At a Trackman peak of 147 mph, he swings sufficiently fast enough to compete in long drive**
- **He tries to hit a straight ball with low spin (those get the best energy transfer)**
- **He works out on the gym to make his body more powerful and stronger**

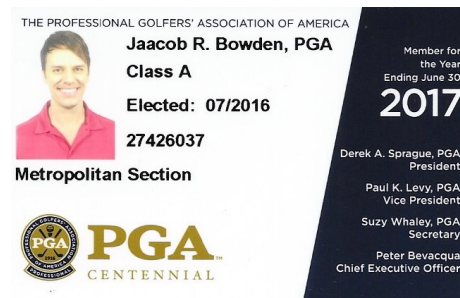
As I've said before, **no one swings that fast naturally. It's mostly body work.** This means that for anyone willing to work on their body, the **speed is there for the taking...at any age or skill level.**

We included a **CD interview** in which **Tony Wright, a Level 10 Certified Professional Clubfitter through the AGCP,** hosted me on his **Golf Improvement Podcast** out of Tennessee.



I also let you know that **I got my PGA of America Membership** and what a lengthy process it is to obtain it. Perhaps you have heard of someone **getting their "card"** in professional golf. **These are literally just that...ID cards.** There are different ones for various playing tours as well as some teaching organizations.

In case you are curious what one looks like...**here is my teaching card** for the PGA of America.



This Month

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

- We've got a **Long Drive Q&A** with **4-time Women's World Long Drive Champion Sandra Carlborg**. Sandra has hit a **391-yard drive** and has been clocked at **119 mph on a Flightscope** launch monitor.
- **Expert Adam Young** has something for us entitled **"Take Control of Your Game"**.
- 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 interview with long driver Jeff Crittenden, PGA.**

PGA Championship

Speaking of the PGA of America, we had the final major of the year...the **PGA Championship at Baltusrol** in New Jersey.

One of the **perks to being a PGA member is getting to go** and I ended up going on **Sunday**.



Here are a few of **my in-person observations**:

- Baltusrol is in a small neighborhood. There was no big public parking lot, so people had to commute in on buses or pay **high prices to park** in someone's driveway that was within walking distance. I ended up doing the latter and it cost **\$40**.
- Due to the amount of rain, the **course was really wet and muddy**. They tried putting down straw in places. That helped with the sloppiness but it also brought in pockets of a **farm manure type smell**.
- The **high ball hitters with long carry distances** seemed to have the **greatest advantage**. Drives were landing and were **lucky to roll more than a yard or two**. This made the **golf course play very long**. They had a **lift-clean-and-place** rule in effect for the fairways. So **it also helped to put the ball in play**.
- I got access to a **PGA of America member tent**. They had **nice portable bathrooms, air-conditioning, TVs, and discounted food**.
- **Daniel Summerhays stiffed some kids on high 5s** when he was walking between holes. Perhaps he didn't see the kids, was in a state of deep concentration, or something else...but it didn't go off well with the fans standing right there.
- **23-year old Justin Thomas showed his age** after he made a bogey on 16. People were trying to encourage him but he just muttered angrily to himself and was slapping his yardage book really hard. He didn't get out of that state of mind and proceeded to hook his next tee shot. Some mental work with do him well.
- On the flip side, **Andrew "Beef" Johnson had large crowds** following him around. He really seemed to enjoy it and he engaged with people whenever possible. Everyone would yell "Beeeeeeef" and "Beef for President" after every shot.
- On the 18th hole, **Ernie Els hit one of the worst tee shots I've ever seen a tour player hit. It must've sliced 60 yards offline**. Not long after, I bumped in to him at the edge of the parking lot. He was **carefree** as could be as if that shot had never happened and was **signing autographs and taking selfies with anyone who asked**.
- **Padraig Harrington takes more practice swings than I've ever seen** anyone take. He must go through a lot of energy in a round.
- Speaking of which, on the 18th tee **Justin Rose and Charl Schwartzel looked completely exhausted** and as if they didn't want to be playing. Who knows what was going on, though. Perhaps they were sick, had played a few weeks in a row and needed rest, didn't sleep well the night before, etc. It had been raining too so the weather could have played in to it. Tournament golf can be exhausting as well.
- **Phil Mickelson, Jordan Spieth, Ricky Fowler, and Jason Day have Beatles-like crowds** following them.

- The **media doesn't always portray Patrick Reed the greatest** and some might say he comes off as arrogant. However, I saw him play a trouble shot from a gallery in which he had to hit a low hook out of the rough around trees to get on the green. It was an **impressive shot** but I was also impressed with his energy amongst the crowd. **Came across as a nice guy.**
- I **couldn't believe the techniques** that some of the players use. Some are in no way anything I would ever teach anyone. The most obvious things were how much the **timing** that is required from some of the **club face rolling, too wide of stances** that are espoused as being for balance but ironically it made them out of balance, and their **front foots not being open enough** which exposes them to balance problems and potential injury.
- However, I did really like **Ryan Palmer's and Scott Hend's golf swings. Those looked fantastic.**
- Lastly, the **most fun guy to watch** in my opinion was **Bubba**. The way he acts sometimes doesn't always come across as ideal. However, instead of plodding his way around with a stock shot like lots of other players, **he hits all sorts of shots...**low bump and runs, big slices, high draws, etc. His creativity is great. Not to mention, his club head speed is in the 120s. So when he goes after one, **he hits it really far.** On a back to back holes, I bet he was 40 yards past his similarly-sized playing partner, Cameron Tringale. This would make sense if Cameron mishit one and Bubba really connected because their season averages are 284.6 yards versus 309.9 yards. If Bubba drives it well, he's got such an advantage.



Jim Furyk

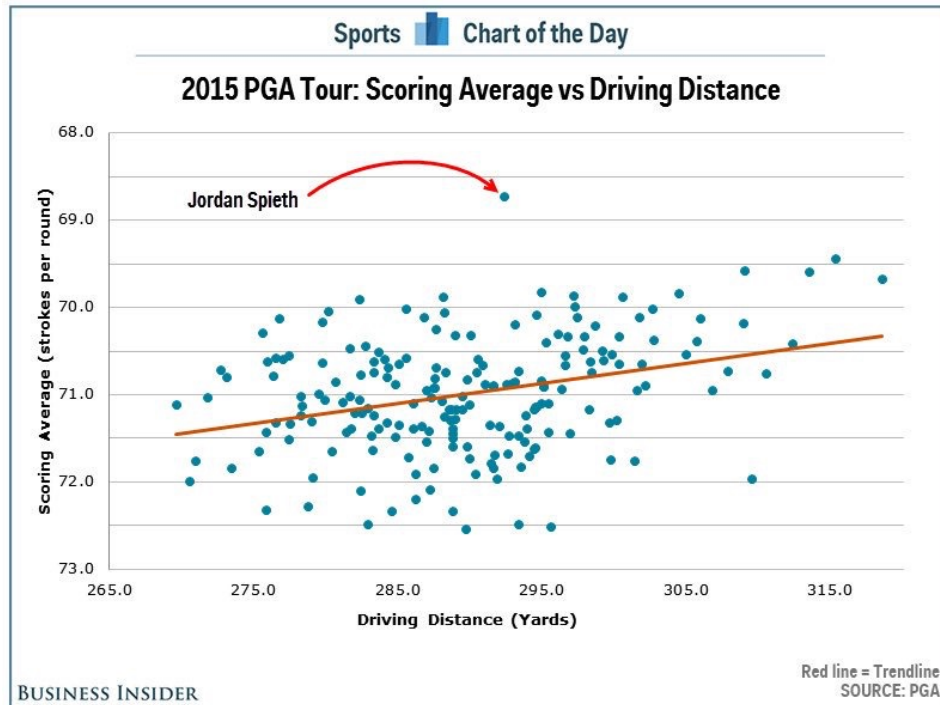
On August 7th, **Jim Furyk fired a 12-under par 58.** That means that he has **shot in the 50s twice** on the PGA TOUR.

This made me think about **what it takes to score low.**

Most of the time when a low score like this happens, the player **is hitting it pretty long and in the fairway** a lot off the tee. Jim only missed one fairway in this round. I believe one of the keys to his accuracy is that he **doesn't rotate the club face much through impact.** Look at the picture on the left. His club face is already almost pointing back to the ball at this point in the down swing. Conversely, a lot of other

players have it more open in this stage of the downswing. **If only he did some swing speed training** to hit the ball a bit farther, I think he would be even better.

Driving distance has a correlation to scoring as you can see here.



His approaches are where he really picked up the strokes. He hit all 18 greens and was 14'11" closer to the hole versus the field. This is why I believe so strongly in single length irons and developed the Sterling Irons™ with Tom Wishon.

Since he hit all 18 greens, he didn't have to chip. Then it was just a matter of making putts, which was in his favor too since he was hitting the ball so much closer to the flag than his opponents.

My point is do swing speed training to hit it far, don't rotate the club face down in the hitting zone to hit it straighter, and use single length irons to help you get the ball close.

My First Tournament Back

Last month I mentioned I was thinking about getting back in to tournaments again.

Well, I played in a **multi-day qualifier for next year's PGA Championship**. That's one of the **perks of now being a PGA of America member**.

Unfortunately, I **missed the cut** thanks to a high score on the first day. After the first 27 holes, I suddenly realized what was going on. I had a **subtle amount of internal clenching** going on. As soon as I had that ah-ha moment, I relaxed it and I ended up **shooting -1 on the final 9 holes**.

So I think I just **needed to shake off some tournament rust and remember a few things about how to manage myself internally** as well as on the golf course (I haven't played much for the last 3 years either). Just getting more practice in will help too. I've practiced more in the last few weeks than I have all year.

Anyway, I was reminded about this video that I made back in 2008 about **a drill that you can use to release tension**.

You can watch it here: <https://youtu.be/KBqDJcPkA2Q>

Sterling Irons™

In single length irons news, the **testimonials continue to roll in**. You can check those out on <http://sterlingirons.com/testimonials>.

The first samples of the **19-degree 4-iron** should be arriving for us to inspect in early September. Assuming nothing further needs to be tweaked on them, we can then put in a purchase order from our manufacturer. This would have them **ready for public consumption around mid-November**.

Director of Instruction at Plugged in Golf Matt Saturnus published his review of the clubs.



<http://pluggedingolf.com/sterling-irons-single-length-irons-review/>

Today's Golfer in the UK also came out with their **review** of the clubs at the Belfry. You can find that here:

<http://www.todaysgolfer.co.uk/news-and-events/equipment-news/2016/august/does-size-matter-wishon-golfs-new-sterling-single-length-irons-tested-/>

The **review** also included a **video**. That's here:

<https://youtu.be/da2-UJO2MsA>.

I was featured in a Missouri newspaper in an article by Sports Editor Gordon Bess entitled "**Bowden stoking revolution in a tradition-bound game of golf**".

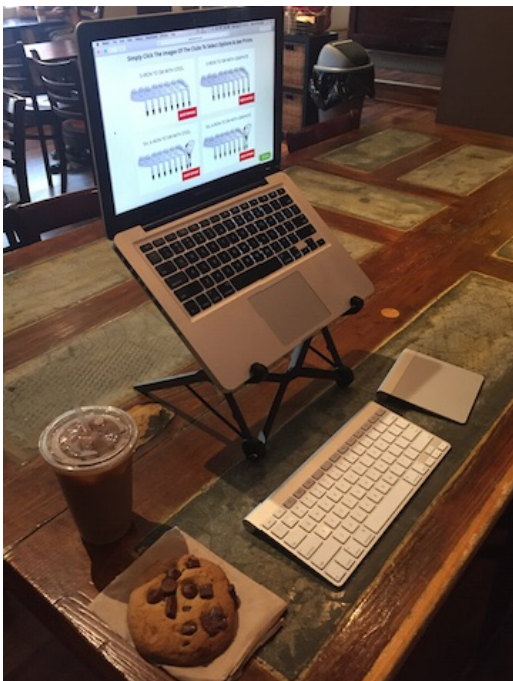
The link to that article is here:

http://www.myleaderpaper.com/eedition/jefferson_county_leader/page/page_6679fbef-d0b6-5ce0-b0ed-9c1dd3de7d37.html



Bowden stoking revolution in tradition-bound game of golf

The Roost



Lastly, **after spending so much time at my laptop the last 3 years**, I started to get a little **mid-upper back discomfort** from leaning over to view my screen at home, in coffee shops, and on the road for my usual once a month trips.

I found that funny. **I didn't get back issues from golf, rather from "office" work.**

Anyway, it's **getting better** as I've made a **few trips to the chiropractor**. I've also bought this thing called "**The Roost**". It's basically a **light-weight ruler-sized contraption that opens up in to a laptop stand**. It's great and **my back is thanking me already**.

If you want one, you can get one here: <http://amzn.to/2b61YN6>

Long Drive Q&A with Sandra Carlborg

Age: 32 Height: 5'9", 175 cm

Driver Specs: 6.5-8 lofted Callaway XR Driver, Speeder X-flex shaft

Sponsors:

Callaway, High Definition Golf, Flightscope, Crosssportswear, Ecco, Par Skincare, Carlborg konsult, inkassokontroll, Bolagsstiftarna, Kema, Audi, Borjessonsbil, Kpskylt

Special Accomplishments:

- 4-time World Long Drive Champion - 2011, 2012, 2014, 2015
- World International Long Drive Champion 2009
- World Record: 391.3 yards



What is your longest drive in competition?

391.2 yards (357.7 m) – World Record

What were the conditions of the drive?

Good! 25-degrees Celsius (77 Fahrenheit) and nice wind. It was in Sweden at a competition in Orresta in 2009.

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

117.5 mph on Trackman last year at the world championship. It was the first time they have measure at a competition! 119 mph in Flightscope when I practice a few weeks ago.

What lead you to choose your particular equipment specifications?

I have played Geek Golf since I start with long driving in 2008. Last year I switch to Callaway.

Now I have my own Flightscope. That makes it easy to see which setup is the best!

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

I just hit as hard as a can. :)

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

I work out at the gym so I don't get any injuries. It's important also to work on flexibility so you don't get stiff! I would say, it's perfect to do a little bit of everything, gym, yoga and running!



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

I focus to hold my body strong so I can have a controlled and healthy swing. I also hit in my HD simulator and use my Flightscope, they are two very good tools when I practice!

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

Have a strong stance. Slow down the back swing. Most of the golfers lose their power in the back swing! If you are slow back with a big turn and get time to catch the power, then you can hit as hard as you can! You start with the hips and the legs and then comes the body and arms!



Where can people contact you or learn more about you?

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Take Control of Your Game

By Adam Young

When I first started coaching, I thought I was great.

I was lucky enough to figure out a few things very early on which gave amazing results instantly. Most of these things I still use today. I could tell a player “Just do X” and it would have an immediate positive effect on their strike and dispersion.

Due to this ability, I would get a lot of repeat customers – a player would come in with an issue, and I would correct it for them and they would go off happy.

However, I always want to get better as a coach. Due to this, I often critique myself and the lessons I give, simply to look for areas of improvement. This led me to the realization that, although I was making players better in front of me, it wasn't long lasting enough.

We are variable

As humans, we change from day to day. Our biology simply won't allow consistency, hence why we even see top professionals go off the boil occasionally. The more I researched into motor learning, the more I saw this was the case.

What I also realized was that, although players were getting better, it was ME who was creating the change. I was able to do this because I could:

- Identify the issue causing the ball flight problems
- Implement a change which would correct this
- Give feedback to the player on whether they need to do this ‘new change’ to a greater or lesser degree

Unfortunately, due to our movements varying from day to day, the fix implemented in the lesson would often be over-done or under-done the next day – or a new problem would pop up.

The change

While repeat custom did wonders for the business, I wanted more. I wanted my players to take ownership of their own games.

I wanted them to be able to do exactly what I was doing for them. I wanted to become obsolete.

While this doesn't make good business sense, I felt I had to do this morally. Amazingly, what I found was that players still kept coming back – and they got better. More importantly, as they improved their process, this improvement stuck.

What changed

Rather than be in charge of the process myself, I started to teach the process to my pupils.

It's like the old saying;

“Feed a man a fish and he will eat for a day. Teach a man to fish and he will feed for a lifetime.”

I was now teaching my golfers how to fish. The process was relatively simple

What

First, I had to teach players how to identify what they were doing. This involved using feedback, such as Dr. Scholl's Odor X Foot Powder Spray to identify face strike, greater understanding of ball flight last to identify path and clubface at impact, and divot location to represent ground interaction.

We then go through the process of identifying which area is causing the most problems, and then isolating that area to improve it. This is a process I called “calibration training” in my book, *The Practice Manual – The Ultimate Guide for Golfers*.

How

When we identify the issue, we then built a repertoire of fixes we could implement for that error, both mechanical and mental. This offers the players some flexibility in how they fix the issues.

We also test their fixes to see which ones actually improve their performance the most. I deemed this phase “performance training”, and it is very similar to your own mini-scientific self-study.

How much

The final part is to improve the player’s ability to implement the correct dosage of a fix. This is facilitated largely by a feedback loop, but also by me letting the player explore outside of their comfort zones.

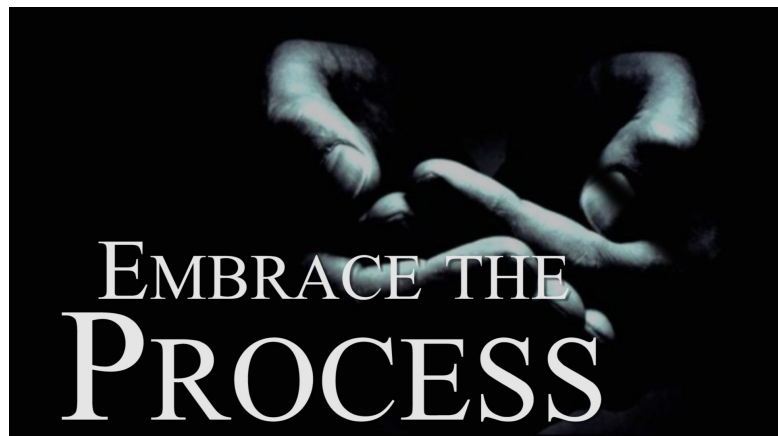
Differential practice is a methodology where we practice extremes of a skill – even beyond what we are actually looking for. As an easy example, if you were hitting the heel constantly, we might spend a few minutes trying to toe-shank the ball.

While this sounds counter-intuitive, it is actually one of the best ways to speed up learning. I see this as the case every day on my lesson tee, and the science is also supporting it.

Take charge

Now the player is in charge of their own learning and performance. No longer do they get ‘lost’ on the golf course when things go sour, but they can quickly rectify themselves even without me there to guide them.

To me, this is the ultimate in coaching. No longer do I base a lesson on whether or not a player has walked out hitting it better (they do most of the time, but....) I rather base a quality lesson on whether a player is mastering the process.



Ultimately, in the long term, this is what will have the greatest benefit. Otherwise, a player will move from one quick-fix to the next.

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.

You can learn more from Adam about ball flight laws, the most important factors in creating a good shot, as well as the learning process by visiting <http://tinyurl.com/adamyounggolf>.



Member of the Month

"My SS was probably down to the low 90's.

My swing speed the other day was averaging around 110 with my high of 122 and a low of 105. I had a dozen or more swings at 115.

I really didn't think that it was going to be possible but, without even much work, there it is.

Thanks for all the great advice."

–Tom C, 6 handicap, Cancer Survivor, California

Finishing Up With Fun



As he was walking his dog one weekday afternoon, Big Al, the bookie the punters loved to hate, noticed a young lad upon the local links. Big Al stopped for a moment to watch him tee off and stayed for longer when he saw that the boy had talent.

Indeed he had holed his tee shot. He was about to call out his congratulations when the lad teed up again and once more holed in one.

Now Big Al, never one to let an opportunity pass, walked up to the youngster, congratulated him and asked: "How old are you, son?"

"Eleven, sir," the young person replied.

"Anyone else here seen you play?" Big Al enquired.

Having received the assurance that no one had, Big Al proposed a match the very next day with the club champion lined up against the young tyro.

The odds were handsome - 10 to 1 against the new young player.

The lad, however, took 11 at the first hole and went on around the course in much the same way. Of course he lost badly. Big Al was furious.

"You've made me look a right fool my boy. What's the idea of pretending you can't play?"

"Listen, dope," the youngster whispered, "next week you'll get 100 to 1."

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!