



Elite Insider Circle Monthly Handicap Improver November 2015



Hello Fellow Golf Enthusiast,

This is **Jacob Bowden**.

To recap last month, we included a CD of my interview with **Ryan Steenberg**, who is a **3-time World Long Drive Championship finalist**, has a max Trackman swing speed of **148 mph (161 mph on an SSR)**, and owns his own training facility in Rochester, NY.

We had a **Long Drive Q&A** with former professional baseball player in the New York Mets organization who is also the **2014**

World Long Drive Champion Jeff Flagg.

Some things from **Jeff's Q&A** that I think are worth pointing out are:

- Jeff doesn't use any training aids to work on his speed and power, per say. However, **he does train really hard in the gym** to develop those things.
- **He works on his swing mechanics** so that he can be efficient.



- He **tries to hit a straight ball** in competition (**which gets you the best energy transfer** since it is not a glancing blow).
- He didn't mention whether or not he has been **fit for his equipment** to maximize distance, but I assume he has been since he is sponsored by Callaway and he also uses a head loft and driver setup similar to other guys that generate his club head speed.

Nutrition, practice, and general golf expert Adam Young wrote about how **shifting your focus from more internal to that of being more external** can help get you **better shot and game results** relatively quickly.

Equipment and club fitting expert Tom Wishon told us about **whether or not today's iron designs are actually better**. The short answer is **yes**.

Distance-wise, clubs are going farther because the **lofts have been strengthened**. That doesn't necessarily make them better, but it does make them go farther. They are also going farther because of **high COR faced irons**, which can make iron heads with those face types springier like a driver face.

Forgiveness-wise, **cavity back designs** certainly helped as well with things like **variable face thickness**, **slots on the sides of the faces**, and **better sole design** to help with improving turf interaction.

I also answered some Monthly Handicap Improver member questions about things like **what exercises help the most with increasing club head speed**, **why you might hit your driver shorter relative to your irons**, **recommendations for arthritis and back surgery**, etc.

This Month

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

- We've got a **Long Drive Q&A** with **professional long driver Tyler Kellett**. Tyler has finished as high as **3rd at the World Long Drive Championships** and has a maximum **driver swing speed on Trackman of 148 mph...and he's only 5'11"**.
- **Expert Adam Young** has an article for us about **random training versus block training**.
- **Equipment specialist Tom Wishon** will help figure out what the **best driver length** is for us.
- **Putting expert Geoff Mangum** talks a bit of math in regard to **determining break on putts inside of 10 feet**.

- 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...Cory Gauvreau**, who is an authority on **golf simulators** from **Edmonton, Canada**.

We've been saving his interview for this month because with the season finishing up for a lot of us, questions start coming in about **how to maintain or improve golf games in the winter**.

One of the solutions is to **build your own in-home simulator**. This doesn't have to be an expensive thing. Cory told us how you can build your own **budget setup for around \$1,000**. Of course, if money is not a problem, **you could also spend upwards of \$100,000**.

Cory and I talked about the **different products** out there, **price ranges**, **technology**, and more. We hope you'll enjoy it.

Anyway, let's get started!

Long Drive Q&A with Tyler Kellett



Age: 35

Height: 5'11

Weight: 209

Driver Specs: 3-degree Krank Golf F5 custom

Sponsors: Krank Golf, Sligo, Tornado Tee, Champ Spikes, Pure Grips

Special Accomplishments:

- 2nd - 1996 Canadian junior long drive RCGA
- 3rd - 2008 Desert launch (Palms)
- 2nd - 2012 Desert Launch (2nd to Winther by 2 yards)
- 3rd - 2013 World Long Drive Championships
- 7 earned qualifying exemptions of last 9 world championship appearances

What is your longest drive in competition?

462 yards, 2008 Warner Springs Team Championships (grid record)

What were the conditions of the drive?

5-10 mph tail wind, level tee area, firm grid, 4-foot weeds at 450...

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

- Swing Radar – 163 mph (driver)
- Speed Whoosh – 194 mph
- Trackman – 148 mph
- Flightscope 146 mph

What lead you to choose your particular equipment specifications?

Years and years of research and testing.

Flightscope analysis.

Phantom Camera testing (100,000 frames/sec).

Krank Golf has also given me the tools to study myself, and their products, and develop a perfect setup for my swing to function as efficiently as possible with their equipment. Not too mention, they have 16 World Long Drive Championship titles and make the fastest most durable high-speed drivers in the World (the current Guinness World ball speed record 217mph was set by Ryan Winther using a Krank Golf driver). Krank has dominated

long drive for the last half dozen years, 4 consecutive Open Men's World Championships 2010-11-12-2013. (Longest manufacturer streak in history - this will never be broken)



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

Power draw or power fade, depending on the conditions.

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

The Speed Whoosh, believe it or not, just getting your

muscles to wake up and move faster than you could ever swing a driver, it will actually help you to swing a driver faster too by using more "awake" muscles, and their small fast twitch muscles that give you speed.

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

I lift regularly. Olympic lifting for speed and power.

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

Get in the gym!

Lift heavy, lift hard, do yoga, stretch, anytime your moving weight at speed, your developing power through your body. The golf swing is the most athletic move in sports and demands the highest physical training to reach peak limitations. Everybody is different but most people have 10+ mph in club head speed waiting for them at the gym.

So...Get in the gym!

Where can people contact you or learn more about you?

Twitter works great: @tylerlongdrive

Why You Are Wasting Your Time – Random Vs Block Training

By Adam Young

One guy stands on the range; he has a 7 iron in his hand, an alignment stick on the ground and a bunch of balls next to him. He fires them off with amazing precision,



flighting the ball towards his target like a heat seeking missile. He has a crowd watching in awe, as he repeats this in a robot like fashion.

Next to him, is another guy. His shots are ok, but nothing impressive. He hits the occasional really poor one...and even his best seem to be lacking. He is standing back after each shot, changing clubs up, and

going to different targets each time. No one is watching. No one is in awe.

Tee time

It turns out that our two guys are best buddies, and they were warming up for a match play event together. They had been practicing for this occasion in the same way as above, for over a month now.

Later, at the 19th hole, our unimpressive practicer walks in victorious – he had won 6 and 4.

“But how could that be?” claims the cigar smoking country club members.

Block versus Random

You have just witnessed what motor learning researchers have known for a long time.

1. Performance is not learning (retention of performance under the correct context)
2. Block practice sucks

Block practice is essentially standing in the same place, with the same club, going to the same target. It is the same as asking yourself “What is 8 x 7” over and over again. After the first answer, you are rapidly firing the right answer back, but what are you learning by asking the same question over and over like a madman?

Random practice is where you vary the club, or shot (fade/draw), or target, or vary all of those elements every time. It is similar to asking a different math question each time. It forces your brain to do some calculating and constructing. As a result, you may not be firing out the right answer quickly – in fact you may be firing out more incorrect answers – but you will see the benefits in the future as your ability to compute and access information improves.

This is as true of movement theory as it is of mathematical skills – your ability to access motor patterns that fit the situation will be greatly improved if you do random practice.

But don’t throw the baby out with the bathwater

This does not mean block practice doesn’t serve a purpose. We still do block practice when learning our multiplication tables as a child. It can help to get a good basis for progression. But, once they are learned to a reasonable level, we need to transition to random practice. Reciting something by rote like a poem is not learning how to calculate.

There is an inherent problem with golf though – we never get our golf to a reasonable level. And, when you do, your expectations of what is reasonable rise. For that reason, golfers are often constantly plugging away at block practice, trying to hit ‘their best’ shots, and using block practice as a vehicle to fake their way there.

I use block practice as a tool when someone is not progressing. For example, say we see a little stagnation in a certain skill. I will use a form of practice which may be less contextual (game specific), such as sticking with the same club. But once they have got to a reasonable level with that, it is back to random practice to see if they are really learning it.

But I’m different

So, which golfer are you?

Are you the first guy with the crowd around you? Or are you the guy doing random practice? Why is this? Are you simply fuelling your ego by drawing in a crowd and hitting the ball to the best of your capabilities on the range?

Sure, you may feel like you are different.

“But I play better when I do block practice”, I hear you say.

Who are you kidding?

It is likely that you simply perform better during the practice. Hey, it might even have a short-term positive benefit on your golf performance. I do know some people who perform better when they do block practice.

But, you may perform better still by doing random, even though your range performance may be a little worse. And the longer-term benefits can severely surpass and short term performance gains from block practice.

We call this retention.

What is your goal when you practice? Is it to have fun by hitting good shots? If so, then go ahead – do block practice.

But if your goal is to learn and retain as much of that learning as possible so it transfers to the golf course, you need to switch it up. Quit being like the rest of the guys on the range, practicing and never improving.

It’s time to do something different. It’s time to do something better.

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 his book and find out how to improve your game beyond recognition by visiting this link:

<http://tinyurl.com/adamyounggolf>



What is the Best Driver Length For Me?

By Tom Wishon

While I will be sure to explain this in enough detail so you know what to do for your game, the short answer to this question is...

“...at least an inch to inch and a half shorter than the drivers being displayed on the rack in golf shops.”



There's an old adage in club fitting research that goes, “the longer the length, the lower the loft, the heavier the weight, the stiffer the shaft, the more difficult the club will be to hit consistently well.”

With the driver, you have two of these warnings in the club fitting credo working against you. The driver is the longest length club in your bag. It also happens to be the lowest loft club as well. So that right there means that from the get-go, golfers are at a bit of a disadvantage when it comes to finding a driver that offers the highest level of shot consistency, accuracy and distance that is possible for each golfer.

Not to worry...as there are several ways to use club fitting technology to put a driver in your bag that performs better and allows you to hit the tee ball more consistently well than you do now.

First thing first is the length.

Prior to the 1980s going all the way back into the early decades of the 20th century, the men's standard driver length from every company in the game was 43" while women's driver length was an inch shorter at 42". Today, the average driver length for men is between 45-46"...and for women the average is at 44 to 44 ½".

What happened over the past 30 years to cause companies to increase the length of their drivers by some 2 inches or more?

Did golfers all of a sudden get a lot taller over the past 30 years?

No, what happened, sad to say, was a desire for more sales on behalf of the golf equipment companies that was greater than their desire to provide golfers with drivers that would allow the golfers to play to the best of their ability. Or rather, fierce competition for sales between the companies forced them to pull out all the stops to come up with ways to get golfers to buy their clubs. Distance sells more golf clubs than any other perceived benefit. Who doesn't want to hit the ball longer?

In the 1980s, companies began to increase the length of their drivers (and fairway woods) to try to play off the belief that the longer the length, the higher the club head speed and the farther one would hit the ball. Problem is, that credo only holds true for a small percentage of golfers. Namely those who possess a late to very late unhinging of the wrist cock angle in the downswing, coupled with a smooth, easy tempo to ensure hitting the ball on center a high percentage of the time.

Swing traits that may apply to not more than 10% of all golfers who play the game, in other words.

To the rest of us, the move into 45-46" long drivers has been a total disaster.

Want proof?

For well more than a decade and a half, the average driver length on the PGA TOUR has been 44 ½". Not the 45-46" length the golf companies tell golfers they should play by putting that length on all the drivers they stock in every golf store and pro shop. With the average WOMEN'S driver length at 44 to 44 ½" this means that the average tour player is using a driver with a standard women's length!

Whaaaat?

And we are talking the best players on the planet. If there were any group of players who had the skills and control to play with a longer length driver, it would be PGA TOUR players. PGA TOUR pros play with a driver length that is up to 1 ½" shorter than what the golf companies tell golfers to use because that is the longest length they feel they can control to get the best overall performance from their driver.

If you struggle with the driver, if you suffer from bouts of inconsistency with the driver, bet the farm if you got fit into a shorter length driver you would improve your tee shot game.

But how much shorter?

Let's put it this way. If your handicap is over 18 and you really struggle with the driver, do not try to play a driver length more than 43" for men, 41 ½ to 42" for women. If you are somewhat inconsistent with your off the rack driver, if your swing path is close to square to inside out and not outside in, if you have a later to somewhat late release, and if you shoot mid 80s and lower, then you can go with 44" for men, 43" for women.

ONLY if you have a very smooth tempo, inside out to square swing path, later to very late release, and shoot in the low 80s or below should you think about trying a length of 45" or longer. These are the swing characteristics that could have the best chance to control a longer length driver and get more distance from that length.

One last word. If this is making you think about whacking 2" off your current driver, you can do that...but you better add some weight in the form of lead tape on the head after the length reduction to restore a reasonable semblance of head weight feel. To whack a length and do nothing to the head weight most typically results in more off center hits and worse accuracy from the club feeling too head light during the swing.

Better yet?

Put your off the rack driver up for sale on eBay and take the money to go get properly fit for a new driver that not only has your best length, but your best loft, face angle, shaft, total weight, swing weight, grip size and head model type for you and your swing.

As always, to find a good club fitter with whom you can work, use these resources:

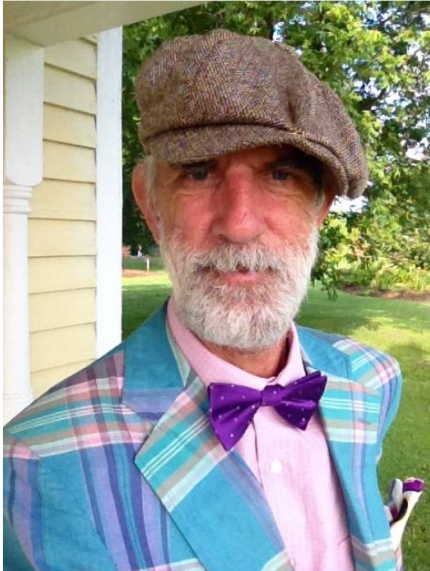
The AGCP (Association of Golf Clubfitting Professionals) -
<http://www.agcpgolf.com/locator/>

The ICG (International Clubmakers' Guild) -
<http://www.clubmakersguild.com/index.php/membership-directory/guild-google-map>

The TWGT Clubmaker Locator at - <http://wishongolf.com/find-a-clubfitter/>

Best wishes in this great game!

Putting Zone Basic Math



Quick and easy math for determining the break and target (spot above center of cup X inches or centimeters straight up the fall line) get golfers nicely ball-parked for putts inside 10' or 3 meters, where there is typically one flat, same slope from ball to hole.

ENGLISH

In ENGLISH units, a 1% Slope breaks 1/24th the distance (0.5" per 12-inch foot). So any Slope divided by 2 gives the basic unit of break per foot of putt distance.

A. Simple formula (assumes flat slope at "usual" green speed Stimp 10' and "smart" ball speed):

$\text{Slope} / 2 = \text{inches of break per foot of distance.}$

$\text{Distance (feet)} \times \text{Slope} / 2 = \text{inches of break for any distance.}$

Example: 5 foot putt on 3% slope, $3\% / 2 = 1.5''$ per foot, so $5' \times 1.5'' = 7.5''$ of break measured from center of hole up fall line.

B. More exact formula that does not assume green speed is "usual":

$\text{Slope} \times (\text{Stimp} / 20) = \text{inches of break per foot.}$

$\text{Distance (feet)} \times \text{Slope} \times \text{Stimp} / 20 = \text{inches of break for that distance.}$

Example: Slope 3%, Stimp 9', Distance 8': $\text{play } 8' \times 3\% \times 9 \text{ Stimp} / 20 = 316 / 20 = 10.8'' \text{ break}$

Both formulae measure Slope only with the side hill putt, so the Slope is always down the fall line. The target is the same no matter what the ball position, because the Slope assumes the same FLAT surface for the side hill putt and any other putt around the clock.

METRIC

In METRIC terms, a 1% Slope breaks 1/24th each meter, which is 4.19 cm of break per meter ($100 \text{ cm} / 24 = 4.16 \text{ cm}$). So the metric formula is:

A. Assuming usual green speed of Stimp 10' and "smart" ball delivery pace and same flatness from ball to hole:

$\text{Slope} \times 4.19 \text{ cm} = \text{cm of break to play per meter.}$

$\text{Slope} \times \text{Meters} \times 4.19 \text{ cm} = \text{cm of break for that distance.}$

B. Assuming "smart" delivery pace and same flatness from ball to hole but adjusting for any green speed:

$\text{Slope} \times (\text{Stimp} / 10) = \text{number of 4.19 cm units to play for any green speed.}$

$\text{Slope} \times \text{Meters} \times (\text{Stimp} / 10) \times 4.19 \text{ cm} = \text{break cm to play for any distance and any green speed.}$

The unit of break 4.19 cm is 1/6th the length of a standard 10" (25 cm) putter handle. The number of units to play is simply Slope times Meters. A 2% Slope with the ball 2.5 meters out plays 5 units of 4.19 cm (6 units is one putter handle), or 21 cm. (It's ok to round 4.19 to 4.2.)

Adjustments for green speed come in 10% "tips" (faster) or 10% "discounts" (slower) from the usual Stimp 10' green speed. Add a 10% "tip" to the usual break if the green speed is faster at Stimp 11' (which is 10% faster and more break than the usual Stimp 10'). Similarly, "discount" the break 10% if the green is 10% slower at Stimp 9'.

Using these adjustments avoids having to use the more complex "B" formulae above.

So long as the green slope is the same from ball to hole -- the same "flatness" -- these simple formulae apply when the numbers are pretty accurate for Slope% and Distance.

Your Questions Answered

Member Question:

Hello Jaacob,

Can you please tell me of your thoughts you have on the " Hand Speed Trainer " for golf?

Also, if you have any thoughts on the "Ultimate Swing Trainer" by Mike Bauman, I would be glad to hear them.

All the best, Ray S, 67 years old, 24 handicap, United Kingdom

Jaacob's Answer:

Personally, I've never tried the Hand Speed Trainer (<https://www.handspeedtrainer.com>).

However, near as I can tell it would fit in to the general category of heavy training aids...where you add weight to whatever you are swinging. It looks similar to the Weighted Agility Gloves.

If you end up using this, make sure to use it for swinging fast. You don't want to build strength but have it be slow-twitch muscle strength and thus offset any power gains you might otherwise get by getting stronger.

With the Ultimate Swing Trainer, I must also say that I've never tried one, however, I don't think I would ever get one based on their main video. It looks like it's only one band, so there doesn't seem to be any way to gauge improvements or increase strength.

I much prefer the bands at Bodylastics (<http://tinyurl.com/bodylasticsbands>) because the bands come in varying resistances, they are numbered, they have clips for easily adding or subtracting resistance, and they don't snap because there's actually a rope in the band preventing you from stretching it too far. The Max Tension XT set is usually sufficient for most people. I was actually using these bands a few hours ago to tune up my speed!

Member Question:

I do have a question or two.

I have been playing golf about 15 years but only a few times a year. I took 4 years off from shoulder injuries from boxing. Anyway, all is as well as it can be now. I have a box set from Sports Authority Tour something (about \$200 for box.) I want to play a little more. My son plays often so I can spend time with him. I have an iron swing 6 of 81-85 mph and hit it 160 on simulator at Dicks, Golf Galaxy and Sports Authority.

So now to the irons SA rec commends Wilson Black Jack \$250, or Cobra Baffler \$300, Galaxy rec TaylorMade Rocketblades lite flex (senior), \$600, Dicks rec, Callaway x n14 @ \$399 regular.

Any suggestions regular flex or senior, steel or graphite, one set of these irons over another?

-Allen N, 60 years old, 15 handicap

Jaacob's Answer:

Almost any well-known company these days is going to make a decent set of irons. Choices now are more coming down to things like price, aesthetics, and brand association.

What I'd really recommend whatever you choose is to be custom fit for the irons. It's sort of like wearing the right size shoe or being tailored for a suit. A good club fitter can fit for things like the length, lofts, lie angles, shaft flex, shaft weight, etc. They also have the benefit of seeing you swing in person and can better recommend between regular/senior, steel/graphite, etc.

Ask if the people at your local Dicks, Golf Galaxy, or Sports Authority can offer this service.

Alternatively, consult with a custom club fitter to give you an even better fitting. You can find lists of them in the member area as well as on the AGCP, ICG, and Wishon Golf websites.

Member of the Month

"I really liked your instruction, and it's the first time in a long time I took a lesson and saw immediate improvement on the long swing and can't wait to try out the sand setup you like to use. It really makes sense!"

- James Y, 54 years old, 14 handicap

Finishing Up With Fun



A retiree was given a set of golf clubs by his co-workers. Thinking he'd try the game, he asked the local pro for lessons, explaining that he knew nothing whatever of the game.

The pro showed him the stance and swing, then said, "Just hit the ball toward the flag on the first green."

The novice teed up and smacked the ball straight down the fairway and onto the green, where it stopped inches from the hole.

"Now what?" the fellow asked the speechless pro.

"Uh... you're supposed to hit the ball into the cup." the pro finally said, after he was able to speak again.

"Oh great! So NOW you tell me!" said the beginner in a disgusted tone.

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!