



by Brian Wilkes
Brian's Custom Clubs

FROM THE Club FITTING BENCH

The Really Hot List

For this first installment of our column for 2014, it is appropriate to look at what's hot – and what's not. The March 2014 issue of *Golf Digest* takes up a lot of space featuring new and “hot” golf equipment. But the really hot item in that issue was on page 22 when the Editor in Chief made a reference to the secret he doesn't want to talk about. Then he talks about it anyway.

The secret? Custom fitting! His equipment judges say that it doesn't matter what brand or type of clubs you use, what matters is that they fit you properly. This is, of course, what we've been saying through this column and everywhere else for years, but it could be astounding to the folks who insist on brand loyalty no matter what.

Just to repeat for emphasis: it doesn't matter what brand or type of clubs you use, what matters is that they fit you properly.

The judges, two guys called Mike, say that golfer's, “...are crazy if they don't get their clubs custom fit.” They go on to say that Titleist has 46 players on its Tour Staff, yet none of them have the same clubs as any other – they are all customized to fit the swing and physical characteristics of each individual Tour player. They then go on to say that all these fitting options are available to the golfing public. (Through club fitters like us!)

Golf Digest is arguably the #1 golf magazine in North America, largely because its contributors are credible. So pay attention. Our guess is that only about 10 to 15 percent of golfers bother to get fitted. The reasons for this are multiple, and I hear them a lot. Many golfers feel that they aren't good enough to benefit from custom fitting. However, our experience is that all skill levels of golfers can benefit from being properly fitted. A key concern of ours is that beginner or occasional golfers are

using gear that is simply wrong for them, with the result that they are developing bad swing habits to make clubs that don't fit work better. That's *not* hot!

Another reason people may not get fitted is a concern about the cost. True, it's less costly to buy your clubs from the discount bin. Maybe they will work for you and maybe not. Or maybe you just develop swing habits that help make them work. Getting a fitting costs about the same as a round of golf. And the clubs you already own may be adjustable to make them fit better. It may not be necessary to buy new customized clubs. At Brian's Custom Clubs, our goal is to improve your game, not to sell you clubs you don't need.

It takes a long time to educate the golfing public. We still get new customers who wrongly insist that graphite shafts are, “too whippy”. The truth is that graphite shafts are available in the full range of flexes. We still get new customers who insist that a certain brand of club head is better than another. It's true that head design, offset and type of steel have a role in how well a golfer will play, but it's hard for the average golfer to work that out without a fitting. We believe that brand loyalty has more to do with habit, and with the confidence a player has when they look down the shaft at address.

So it's not surprising that golfers are taking their time to understand the benefits of custom fitting. We just hope that as understanding spreads, more people will be lining up to have this done. Of course, we are always ready to help golfers improve their game through the use of clubs that fit them properly.

For custom repairs or custom fitting, Brian Wilkes can be reached at brian@briansclubs.com, by telephone at 250-516-3392, or you can visit his website at www.briansclubs.com.