



by Brian Wilkes
Brian's Custom Clubs

FROM THE Club FITTING BENCH

Leaving Yards on the Table

I have written in these pages before about the importance of club fitting for achieving optimum ball flight and distance for your particular swing. When you buy off the rack, often you will get some of the key characteristics of the club wrong for your swing. For example, we spend some time during the fitting looking at the optimum length of a driver to help give you the best chance of an on-centre ball strike. But the drivers in the golf stores all come in about the same length shaft – 45 inches or more. Generally speaking, this is too long for most golfers, and being able to strike the ball well with them becomes a matter of luck. Or, you have to change your swing in subtle ways to enable you to strike the ball with it.

A better approach, and cheaper in the long run, is to get the driver properly fitted in the first place! Confirmation of this comes from a deeply credible source: **Golf Digest Magazine**. The March 2015 issue carries an article on page 77 entitled "Why a Driver Fitting Matters." They did a study that is very revealing. Using their own data and information from many club fitters, they concluded that the average golfer launches the ball too low, generates too much backspin, and doesn't make solid contact with the centre of the clubface. The result? They are not getting the optimum distance from their driver.

The Golf Digest article suggests that, based on their results, nine out of ten golfers hit the ball short of their potential. They claim a good guide for this is to estimate the distance you should be getting by multiplying your clubhead speed by 2.5 to 2.7. The average men's driver clubhead speed is said to be about 87 mph. Therefore, the optimum shot distance for the average male golfer with the correct driver, would be between 217 and 235 yards. There may be occasions when you do hit your

driver this far - when you make a perfect swing and catch the ball just so. How consistent is that? If you are like most golfers, it's not consistent at all. The reason for that is most likely you are not consistently hitting the ball on the centre of the clubface.

The Golf Digest article goes on to say that two-thirds of the golfers in their study weren't within 15-yards of their potential driving distance, and half of those were 30 or more yards short of the optimum. That's just astounding. But it helps point to some of the key reasons why golfers want to improve their game.

We always advocate that game improvement involves three elements: fitted clubs, lessons, and practice, practice, practice. So part of achieving your best distance with the driver has to do with being able to bring the clubhead into the ball with a reasonably repeatable swing. But we can achieve a lot with proper club fitting too.

For example, using our launch monitor, we assess clubhead and ball speed to determine the power transfer to the ball. The best score is 1.5 so if you are less than that, say about 1.46, you are leaving yards on the table; it means there needs to be improvement in power transfer. This is often a matter of adjusting your club length so that you can control the club better during your swing. Other options available for this include adjusting the face angle and adjusting the shaft flex.

Addressing other aspects of optimum ball flight may involve more loft on the driver's head, a softer flex shaft with a bit more torque at the tip, or making small adjustments to the ball position and tee height. And of course, we ensure that the grip is properly sized.

It's heartening to see that key golf magazines like Golf Digest are prominently featuring the importance of club fitting to optimum performance in playing the game. Of course, the starting point for this is a proper fitting in the studio. In that regard we offer a specific driver fitting session, and, until the end of May, we will **take 20% off if you mention that you read this article.**

Don't leave yards on the table this golf season. Please call for an appointment.

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.



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