

# Secret to good golf's in the bag

Most players I come across could be playing better golf right now.

At least 80% of the golf bags I see are filled with less-than-ideal equipment. Substandard clubs will inhibit your potential and make golf a lot less fun.

Today's technology makes hitting the ball so much easier, but that won't help if you have inexpensive or older equipment.

Also, many players are building their sets poorly. Even if they have top brands, they either have the wrong set makeup or the clubs are fitted poorly for them.

Here are eight equipment keys to help you play your best:

## Buy quality

Top golf companies employ teams of engineers to make their clubs as forgivable as possible. You're also paying for quality control and top materials when you buy a brand name. Clones and no-name clubs are only meant to look like the real thing, not play like the real thing. You're better off buying top brand-name used equipment than shiny new junk.

## Get fitted

Test clubs outside before you buy them. All clubs feel and react a little differently and there is no replacement for ball flight when doing



your testing. Also, get fitted by a CPGA pro, who not only understands golf equipment, but also how a swing works and how the two affect each other.

## Mix and match your set

The days of a matching full set of clubs are long gone. Your driver doesn't need to match your fairway woods and today's great hybrids make the iron set a thing of the past. Depending on where you play, you may need different wedges to make different shots.

## Find a driver

When it comes to hitting a golf ball, the most important club in your bag is your driver. Golf's not a lot of fun if you can't get your ball off the tee and in play. Selecting the best driver can seem intimidating. Finding a location with a launch monitor can really help you out when choosing a driver. As a general rule, I tell players to consider more loft on their club. If you're a slicer, consider an offset option. Also, make sure you test many different graphite shafts to find the one that really suits your swing.

## Get the right fairway wood(s)

As with every club in your bag, you need to test a fairway wood before you buy it. Pay attention to the loft on the bottom of the club, not the number stamped on the sole. I hit my Ping Rapture 4 wood longer than many 3 woods I have tried. Some of you will even hit 5 woods farther than anything else because of modern head designs, lightweight materials and different graphite shafts.

## It's all about the hybrid

Plain and simple, you're making a mistake if you don't replace your longest irons with hybrid clubs. A 3 or 4 hybrid is much easier to hit than a 3 or 4 iron. You'll hit the ball higher and hit it well more often. If you've tried a hybrid and don't like it, try another one. There is one out there for you.

## Wedge play

I really don't like almost any wedges that match iron sets. Specialty wedges are much more versatile in rough conditions and in the sand. You really should have at least two lofted wedges besides your pitching wedge in your golf bag. With today's green speeds and elevated green complexes, a 60-degree wedge is virtually a must to be included in every player's golf bag.



FILE PHOTO

Y.E. Yang celebrates his victory in the PGA championship earlier this month by hoisting his clubs. Yang took advantage of today's top club technology to hit the shot of his life with a hybrid on the final hole to beat Tiger Woods.

## Don't forget the short strokes

You hit at least 30% of your shots with your putter, so make sure you buy one that

matches you and your putting stroke. A putter is no place to cheap out. Stick to a top brand and make sure a pro fits one to you. No other club in your bag can affect your scores more

than your putter.

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# Sergio, Riley share lead in soggy North Carolina

At Greensboro, N.C., Sergio Garcia followed through on a fairway shot when he heard a noise that has become all too familiar this weekend at Sedgefield Country Club.

The air horn sounded once again, signifying yet another weather delay at a Wyndham Championship — where most of the movement on "Moving Day" involved scurrying to the clubhouse to beat the waves of showers.

Garcia and Chris Riley were both 13-under through 10 holes to share the clubhouse lead last night when play was

## GOLF Roundup

Tournament notes

stopped midway through the third round of the rain-plagued tournament.

Steve Marino, Fred Couples, Kevin Stadler and Justin Rose were 12-under and Brandt Snedeker and Bill Haas were 11-under through varying stages of their rounds when play was suspended due to darkness.

Tournament officials said the round was scheduled to resume this morning at 7:30

a.m., with a second cut and the final round to begin at roughly 11 a.m.

"These are tough weeks," Riley said.

"Seems like we've been doing this all year but, you know, going to bed at 10 (p.m.) and waking up at 5 (a.m.) to play golf ... we're athletes. So I guess we can do it."

Marino, who started the round six strokes off the pace, had seven birdies to vault up the leaderboard — including one on the par-3 No. 16 in which his tee shot landed seven inches from the flag-

stick. He shot 63 to move to 198, and was one of 24 players to finish the round.

"We were talking about it when we went back out on (No. 14), if we were going to make it or not," Marino said. "We knew it was going to be close. The guys in front of us motored and we made it. I'm really thrilled about that."

## Wie leads way for U.S.

At Sugar Grove, Ill., **Cristie Kerr** and **Michelle Wie** overcame two ragged final holes to salvage a 1-up foursome win at the Solheim Cup yesterday

afternoon, keeping the Americans tied with Europe going into today's all-important singles matches.

The way the Americans have played in singles, that's almost like

having the lead.

The U.S. has a .602 winning percentage in singles over the course of the tournament, and has lost only three times in

singles. The last time? In 2003, also the last time Europe won the Solheim Cup.

The Americans need 14 points to win a third straight Solheim Cup, while Europe needs 14½ points to claim it on U.S. soil for the first time.

## Bryant tops at Tradition

At Sunriver, Ore., **Brad Bryant** shot a 5-under 67 yesterday to take a two-stroke advantage over **Mike Reid** into the final round of the Champions Tour's Jeld-Wen Tradition.

— Sun wire services



WIE  
Big win