

GETTING STARTED

It has been just over a month now that the cold and snow has left us and the golf courses have opened up. Many of you, anxious to hit the Links have now had an opportunity to dust off the clubs and enjoy the spring warmth either of the course and or on the driving range.

For the past six months, Alberta golfers' have to find different conduits to satisfy their golfing appetite. Some spend hours sitting on their favorite chair watching the PGA/LPGA tournaments cheering for their favorite players. Others spend their time tuning in to the golf channel picking up tips that will cure their golfing woes. Reading the Golf Digest magazines provides you with information on fixing faults in your swing but also provides information on the latest equipment available on today's market.

However you choose to spend your winter month's, every golfer dreams about playing with the latest and greatest clubs, hitting that perfect shot or just playing more than the year prior. Getting started on the right foot so that you can enjoy your golf season is critical for a successful golf season.

GOLF EQUIPMENT

Every spring, pro shops display new lines of golf equipment from all the manufacturers. Some models are the same as the year before and some have changed their design. For those of you that are interested in purchasing a new set of clubs there are a number of factors to consider. These factors include the shaft, the head design and the grip.

The shaft is the most important component of the club. Ensuring that you have the correct stiffness of shaft to fit your swing speed is critical. The different shaft flexes available are junior, ladies, senior, men's regular, stiff and extra stiff.

Purchasing a set of clubs with the wrong flex will directly influence the how you hit the ball. If you use a club that is too stiff, the flight will be lower than recommended and you will not hit the ball as far as you could. If you use a club with too flexible a shaft then the ball flight will be too high and direction inconsistent. Although, a more flexible shaft can create more distance, consistency is compromised.

The next consideration has to be the design of the head. The most common design is the cavity back club head. What this means is that most of the weight is taken out of the center of the club and distributed around the three edges (toe, heel and bottom). By moving the weight to the out perimeter of the club, off center hits will travel further and straighter than the traditional blade style club head.

The grip is the final component. There are many different styles of grips but what is most important is that you get the correct size of grip to fit your hand. If you have a grip that is too small, the tendency is to pull the ball and if you have a grip that is too large then the

tendency is to push the ball. Regardless of what type of grip you choose, you need to be sure that the size is correct for you.

Purchasing clubs off of the shelf is fine for the beginner golfer but for those of you that have been playing for a while, it is essential that you are properly fitted. Discuss your options with your local CPGA professional and ask them about being properly fitted for the clubs you are considering.

Many of you will not be in the market for a new set of clubs for this season. This does not mean that your clubs do not need some TLC. One of the most common swing flaws is grip pressure. Most golfers will grip the club too tight and as a result will send the ball off line. Holding the club with a relaxed grip is critical to good ball contact, increased distance and better direction. Grips need to be changed yearly to ensure that they are not dried out and become slippery. If they are not, then you will have to grip the club too tight, otherwise it will fly out of your hands. Proper club care is essential to improved play.

INSTRUCTION

Now that you have been playing for the past month some of you may notice that things are much the same as they were last season. What I mean is that you are hitting the ball and scoring the same. For many players they are comfortable with this. The idea is to get out on the course, enjoy the outdoors and the social aspect of what golf is all about. For others this may be frustrating.

Golfers are always looking for ways to hit the ball further, straighter and more consistent therefore lowering your scores so that you have bragging rights over your playing partners. Many hours are spent watching the golf channel, reading golf digest or hitting balls indoors preparing themselves for better play when spring hits.

If you find that when you are on the course you are hitting the ball as well as you would like too, and you are comfortable with your scores then you may not want to take a golf lesson. But if your game is not improving and or your scores are getting worse, and frustration has set in then you may want to consider consulting your local CPGA Golf Professional.

The fear when taking lessons is that your game will get worse before for it gets better. As a result, many players decide not to seek the advise of their local CPGA Golf Professional. I do not believe that this is the case. The CPGA Professionals are trained to assist you in improving your knowledge and swing technique and therefore help you achieve your golfing goals.

Finally, insanity is defined by doing the same thing, day after day and expecting different results! Continue doing the same thing as you always have if you are happy on the course or consider some of the above mentioned options if you are not. Happy golfing.

IF YOU HAVE A QUESTION OR SPECIFIC PROBLEM THAT YOU WOULD LIKE
ME TO WRITE ABOUT OR HAVE ANSWERED PLEASE E:MAIL ME AT
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