

United States Golf Association

QUALITATIVE INSIGHTS:
TRACKMAN AND FACE TAPE-ROUGH
PENALTY ELITE PLAYER TESTING

August 2021



USGA[®]

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USGA DISTANCE INSIGHTS 2021

Objectives and Research Goals

Objectives and Research Goals

Assessing the Hypothesis:

If the penalty for a rough lie is substantially increased, then highly skilled golfers will take greater care in striking the ball from the tee in order to avoid the rough. In so doing, the conjecture is that they will reduce their club speed, and therefore, their hitting distance.

Building off of Historical Testing

- Identify whether increased difficulty of approach shots from the rough result in slower swing speeds and greater accuracy.
- Refine and replicate the historical data collection structures to allow for distinct phases of range testing under controlled experimental conditions
- Amplify with qualitative deep dives to understand motivations and perceptions driving behaviors

Objectives and Research Goals

Key Areas of Qualitative Inquiry



Deep dive into player decisions on the Tee made by an individual golfer

- General strategies given parameters set for both on-course and range testing
- Assess primacy of driver usage in a variety of penal scenarios
- The impact of rough and course set-up on individual course management
- The impact of limiting the ability to impart spin on approach shots from the rough on club selection off of the tee:
 - Motivations and Rationale
- Delve into perspectives on creating the appropriate levels of challenge in course set-up and equipment standards

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Methodological Overview

Methodological Overview

A Qualitative Deep Dive



77 Elite Players

4 U.S. Markets

75+ Hours of Field
Work

Methodological Overview

Two Distinct Research Phases

77 Trackman Tests and Depth Interviews

- 30 Minutes in Length
- All past three year attempted qualifiers and championship proper participants across four markets:
 - Central New Jersey
 - Nashville, Tennessee
 - Denver, Colorado
 - Southern, California
- Players each hit 20 tee shots measured by Trackman
 - Varying reward and penalty payouts provided for distance/accuracy outcomes
 - Qualitative Debrief follows range session

Players Given Face Tape and Briefed on Phase Two Testing

- Each plays two rounds, applying face tape for all full shots hit from rough
- Scores, club selection and course data entered into custom reporting tool and scorecard
- Each player then participated in a 30 Minute follow-up Depth Interview with SLRG researchers



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Range Test Insights

Range Test Insights

Two Different Rationales for Hitting Driver Almost Exclusively:

- **1.** The bigger hitters generally wanted to be as close to the green as possible to facilitate a better opportunity to put approaches close.
 - Some were just more comfortable with their drivers than a 3W or iron off the tee, and most figured that if they were going to miss a fairway, they'd be as likely to do so with the higher lofted club...so might as well leave less of an approach.
 - A number of our respondents are disciples of the Decade Golf system developed by Scott Fawcett and embraced by many college coaches.
 - They want to have 130yds or in on every approach and that typically predicates driver off the tee for all but the shortest par fours...regardless of the presence of rough. This supersedes any other decision drivers.
 - The decision tree espoused by Fawcett basically says that if there are more than 60 yards between penalty areas/ hazards on either side, (rough not in that mix), you will hit driver no matter what.



Range Test Insights

Two Different Rationales for Hitting Driver Almost Exclusively:



- **2.** The relatively shorter hitters felt that if they lost distance, they'd be faced with a much tougher approach, even if in the fairway. They just didn't want to sacrifice distance, given that they already perceived their average length to be a disadvantage.
 - A shorter club might preclude the possibility of hitting greens in regulation.
 - The best defense for course set-up, according to our respondents seems to be hazards more than 270yds off the tee, dog legs, the uncontrollable impact of weather , turf conditions (ie...a hard and fast set-up, blind shots, sloped fairways and challenging pin placements. The decision tree espoused by Fawcett basically says that if there are more than 60 yards between penalty areas/ hazards on either side, (rough not in that mix), you will hit driver no matter what.

In Their Own Words:

Two Different Rationales for Hitting Driver Almost Exclusively:

“I’m coming in with hybrids and 5 iron; they are coming in with 9 iron.” BB Tenn.

“If they are going to hit the 320+ and be able to spin it out of the rough from 120, I can’t afford to be hitting in from 160.”—AF—New Jersey

“The guy I hit with [during the range test] was a big guy and was hitting 285 carry and I asked him about bomb and gouge and if fairway narrowed up and he said everything depends on the width of the fairway because if it’s narrow, I can’t even hit 3I ...Not any more confident with a 3W or 3I so might as well hit driver and get within 100 yds and get some loft on it. If hit 3I and have 170 in, and miss the fairway, I’m in trouble. I’d rather hit PW in than 6I. It made a lot of sense. I totally agree with that.”—WH—New Jersey

Range Test Insights

Most players felt that the reward potential coupled with the lesser penalty was sufficient to encourage using driver throughout all test phases.



- Players are just as confident if not more so with their drivers than with 3W or 2I, so it didn't make sense to go to higher lofted clubs, particularly given the incentive and penalty structure.
- For those with the ability to hit the upper distance tiers, the rewards are worth pursuing, particularly because the penalties are more severe laying up.. and virtually no one feels that they will be dramatically more consistent hitting 3W or 2I than with driver, yet they would need to swing out of their shoes to achieve the distances required by the test with those clubs.

In Their Own Words:

Most players felt that the reward potential coupled with the lesser penalty was sufficient to encourage using driver throughout all test phases

“At end of the day, you got more points hitting it farther, and that’s the summation unless there are major penalties with water or trees...You get more points with more lofted club from rough...especially tournament golf.” —DG—Tennessee

“My philosophy is I am going to hit the ball as far as I can unless I feel like I would have to hack the ball out of the rough.” SG Colorado

“If I can have wedge instead of iron I’ll go driver.” DB Colorado

“I’m still going to pull driver out of my bag 8 times out of 10, that is a confidence thing.” JB Tennessee

Range Test Insights

Generally speaking, our participants are not intimidated by the rough



- The "bomb and gouge" mentality of emphasizing distance off the tee regardless of the cost, is prevalent, even among the older, slower swing speed players, who are still trying to maximize distance, when faced with a 30 yard fairway width.
- Hazards or narrower fairways are more likely to raise caution for these players.
- Most rough just isn't that difficult to hit out of, so that also prompted a desire to get as close to the green as possible, with minimal downside.

In Their Own Words:

Generally speaking, our participants are not intimidated by the rough



“Rough today is really not much of a penalty” MT Colorado

“Extra yardage is worth the risk of missing the spot.” SC, So Cal

“If I were to play a course where rough is extremely punishing, I would play safer” CW, So Cal



Range Test Insights

A smaller segment plays for position:



- Some participants have their "happy zones" (typically 150--100 yds) that they seek to hit approaches from. The test doesn't factor that in, so they are also encouraged to let it rip.
- When faced with the choice of higher likelihood of a better angle for their approach shots with less club versus added distance and a tougher angle with driver, the bigger hitters consistently select driver.

Range Test Insights

Course Design and Set-up as the Potential Great Equalizer

- Courses set up to make golfers think more about how they will approach the round can potentially work to the benefit of those who are not longer hitters.
- Courses that have 2-3 “sucker holes”—holes that tempt longer hitters to go for it are seen as equalizers among those who may not hit the ball as far but see themselves as playing the course smarter.
- Perhaps one shortcoming of the test as configured, is that it doesn't necessarily factor in course design and set-up aspects that can force the driver out of players' hands. Doglegs, presence of hazards or trees appear to have more effect on tee shot club selection than typical rough.



In Their Own Words:

Course Design and Set-up as the Potential Great Equalizer

“I prefer playing courses that make me think through each hole” SB, California

“There is something wrong with the design if you just hit it as far as you can. SG Colorado

“I am not the longest guy. I am always playing like I’m playing the game of chess.” TC So Cal

“I’ve suffered enough to learn how to approach certain holes...what I love about USGA events is decision making...I have a mental advantage over people on sucker holes.” GS NJ

“There is something to be said for course management.” KS SoCal

Range Test Insights

Drive for Show:



- Some longer hitters, who play more recreational golf, are more likely to hit driver in situations against their better judgment, simply for entertainment value, both for their own satisfaction as well as for the “benefit” of their playing partners.
- *“It’s fun to hit driver.” JS Tennessee*
- *“It’s just more fun for me for several reasons...I would rather shoot 76 nine rounds and shoot a 65 one round...I am a risk-loving type of person. I feel like it gives me more on the line... You play with mid-handicappers, important people and you can shoot 80 and still come off the course and they would say OMG that [hitting long drives] was so impressive.” WW Colorado*

USGA DISTANCE INSIGHTS 2021

Face Tape Rounds Insights

Face Tape Rounds Insights

The Tape does Not really Alter players' "Driver First" Mentality



- Many of respondents are of the Bomb and Gouge/Hit it and find it mindset
 - Bryson DeChambeau has had a profound impact on strategy off the tee for many of the younger elite players, as does the Decade system
- Others are of the mindset that typical fairways are wide enough and rough not penal enough to warrant any other adjustments
 - They would rather be closer to the green and risk being in rough, than having a longer approach that could also wind up off the fairway
- Confidence in driver accuracy is generally at parity with shorter alternatives
- **Adjustments were readily and easily made to compensate for the inability to spin ball out of the rough with most having a pretty good idea of what the tape-effect will be even before their first tape-shot**
- The shorter the approach, the better
- Shot shaping adjustments from the tee can optimize accuracy
- Long hitters don't necessarily sacrifice the ability to hit wedge or 9I even when executing cuts and fades

In Their Own Words:

The Tape does Not really Alter players' "Driver First" Mentality

"Guys should be able to separate themselves with driver." --AG—Tennessee

"I knew it [shots from the rough] would come out hot like a flyer lie and it was more like a flyer lie times two. It came out hot. I played with two other guys who did this, and saw a guy on first hole hit a 200yd 7 iron so I immediately knew what to expect."—DH-- --Tennessee

"[We're] always trying to move the envelope... Bobby Jones and Hogan and Nicklaus all played different games...Tiger and then Bryson and athleticism and money has changed it with guys pushing it to get better.—DG-Tennessee

"It's generally more favorable to hit driver, unless there's a super tight fairway. You aren't necessarily going to hit fairway any more even if you drop down a club off the tee."—BH- New Jersey

In Their Own Words:

The Tape does Not really Alter players' "Driver First" Mentality

"It depends on the course and in Summer a lot of courses don't grow the rough very long, so that doesn't change the dynamic ... but if there's U.S. Open style rough it's a bigger penalty, and as long as the course isn't super long, I'll hit 4I and be in the fairway 80% of the time and play to the strength of my game which is my short game. Of course, I don't want to give up the distance to get to those spots, so you have to weigh it out."—DW--Tennessee

"I rarely deviate from driver...it would have to be a really short hole. Rough is not concerning."—SS-SoCal

"I play a lot based on feel. Unless the hole is extremely short or tight..Under 375 yards and I'm going to hit driver every time. I can't dial back because these other guys can hit hybrid wedge and I'm going to come in with 8 iron and am forced to hit driver unless the hole doesn't meet my eye. I could always hit a stinger or a cut and be just as straight."—AF—New Jersey

In Their Own Words:

The Tape does Not really Alter players' "Driver First" Mentality

"I didn't change clubs, and hit a low a bullet cut to hit fairways all day. I will hit a medium flighted cut in a tournament unless it is high rough..[From the rough] the spin was down and it made the rough a little tougher to manage but it wasn't too bad in general...I Played more to the front of the green, took more club and hit a knock down, to run it up."—CN—SoCal

"I'm a relatively straight driver, so I don't take it out of my hands."—JS---Colorado

"If you are going to be so far back, you are losing strokes in my opinion. I'd rather be in the rough and know that I won't get spin and then adjust how I land it than to be 50 yards back...The basic rule is if I can hit driver and 7 iron or less, then I hit driver." --AW--SoCal

"I'd always opt to fly the bunkers to get that extra 30 yds and have an easy wedge in vs hitting a 7 iron which are less easy to control. The DeChambeau way is the way to go."—DS--SoCal

In Their Own Words:

The Tape does Not really Alter players' "Driver First" Mentality

"My strength is driving the golf ball. I hit a lot of fairways." JS Tennessee

"For the most part I am going to hit driver anywhere." KB—Tennessee

"It's not that I'm gung ho swinging for fences...But I can hit my driver just as straight and if I can get it all the way up around the green, great. But if it's 40-60 yds and a tough pin, then I may switch. Its either a really long course where you have to hit driver or a short course where you can attack and be around the green."---AM---Colorado

In Their Own Words:

The Tape does Not really Alter players' "Driver First" Mentality

"I don't have a specific number that I need to be each time. I lean to the closest I can get unless there's more trouble close to the hole or the pin is in a tricky spot and I won't be able to spin it even if I'm in the fairway. Generally get it down there as close as I can unless there's trouble 300 yds out...But I also don't want to lay up with a six or seven iron in, either..I'm not as practiced with those types of shots."—BR—Southern California

"In today's game, it feels almost required to hit drivers. Like the exercise on the range, the risk with hitting a driver...it's better than hitting less for less money, cause I felt I was just as likely to hit the fairway grid with a driver. It still made sense to hit driver as much as you can, cause even with the tape, you can control the ball out of the rough, just as much with loft. " —AI—Colorado

Face Tape Rounds Insights

Course Set Up and Conditions Can Take a Driver out of Elite Players' Hands



- Dog legs
- Hazards, especially those that come into play unexpectedly
- Fairway bunkers in play
- Extremely thick, “U.S. Open style” rough—which is rare
- Graduated rough
- Protected pins/playing for position
- Firm and fast conditions
- Tightly mowed aprons or difficult rough around the green
- Severe undulations/elevation changes that narrow the viable landing area to set up the proper approach shot
 - Augusta National cited multiple times as a prime example
- Varying wind conditions
- Challenging tee placements that necessitate careful decision making
- Multiple hazards

In Their Own Words:

Course Set Up and Conditions Can Take a Driver out of Elite Players' Hands

"#3 has a hazard on both sides and it falls off if you miss fairway...So I'll lay back.—" AG—Tennessee

"...Dog legs where it runs out straight ahead (He'll take driver out) and I know driver doesn't cut and straight puts me in jail I'll draw or cut 3W or if there's a hazard that driver can get to and 3W can't...When Tiger was dominating earlier, Earl said you don't lengthen it but put more stuff out there and make him hit 31 off tee instead of as hard and high over anything"—DH-- TENNESSEE

"To level out bomb and gougers you have to grow the rough...not necessarily U.S. Open levels, but mitigate that there is no premium to hitting fairways. Nine out of ten times on TOUR, its getting as close to green as you can... If you put me 250 in fairway vs 310 in rough, I'll take 310 on the majority of courses we play...other than Bethpage Black"—AF—New Jersey

In Their Own Words:

Course Set Up and Conditions Can Take a Driver out of Elite Players' Hands

“On the fifth hole...a big dogleg left around a corner...You can drive over all the trees and land 20 yds short...but you’re dead if pulled in trees...or lay back with 3W, 5W or 7W.... All season, I’ve hit driver and this time laid back with 7W into fairway and had 115 yds instead of 30 and was still able to hit PW” —MB--Tennessee

“You mitigate [bomb and gouge] by making brutally firm fairways and greens and make guys run shots up...or make everything fairway like Augusta does it. Accuracy still matters there because green design impacts where you are coming in from and missing on one side can be par and other side a chance for birdie. Thinking backwards...more about course design. —KN—New Jersey

I can’t stand these 20 under events. That’s just ridiculous. A par 5 shouldn't be a 9 iron in...the essence of the game is artistry and not just being able to shape shots but to HAVE to shape shots. Shaping shots and being creative and there should be a penalty for not thinking and saying I have to put it on the right side of the fairway cause pin is on the left. The U.S. Open is always so good at that.”---KW--Tennessee

In Their Own Words:

Course Set Up and Conditions Can Take a Driver out of Elite Players' Hands

“High rough is going to be a deterrent. So it would deter me as it gets thicker and longer, but if I can hit out of rough with a relatively short iron, I wouldn't be deterred as much..It depends on the layout of hole and if greens are firm or soft, as well as yardage. If greens are firm and rough was thicker and I needed an 8 or 7 iron, the rough would deter me and I'd lay back and not use driver and get something that gets me into the fairway first.”—GT (Female)- SoCal

“From our standpoint in a course set up, the firmness and speed of greens can neutralize any long hitter and also if you are on the wrong side of the fairway, you won't be able to attack the flagstick..like they do at Augusta. You could add rough to that, if you want. We don't because our membership won't like that. We could make it very difficult for everyone.”---JS--Colorado

In Their Own Words:

Course Set Up and Conditions Can Take a Driver out of Elite Players' Hands

Having hard greens and aprons is helpful in identifying good golfers who use their creativity in how to run it up there vs. flying it in and stopping it and spinning it. But at the same time, there are also courses that identify great golfers by requiring perfect distance control...hit it 170 and stop it on a dime...I would also say fast greens. 12 or 13 on the stimpmeter takes someone who just plays good to get in in a qualifier, then you are like whoah that's different...from aggressively trying to make putts on a 10 or 11 and you go to playing defense.” –WM Colorado

“I’ve played in U.S. Open qualifiers and it’s insane to see the type of shots that you have to hit...the challenge of different shot shapes and carries over bunkers and hazards and different approach lengths. If you build a 7500 yd course that’s driver, 6I it becomes very redundant..and mixing it up is better.” —AF—Colorado

Face Tape Rounds Insights

Penal Rough can be more debilitating for the women



- Particularly given lower swing speeds and less overall distance
- The women in our study placed a premium on accuracy and it showed with their positive outcomes in the range test

“For us on the girls side, it’s not as easy to get out of the rough....with different distances. Not only are [men] hitting a lesser club, but their attack angle and swing speed is so much greater that it doesn’t penalize them as much. For us it will penalize us more like two strokes. Lexi Thompson at The Open in San Francisco could barely advance it 50 yards and that was way too much. And She’s a strong girl. It shouldn’t come to the point where it looks like really bad amateur golf. We are pros.”—GT—SoCal

“Rough is still very penal to me.” SI--Tennessee

Face Tape Rounds Insights

Solving the distance control dilemma when applying face tape from the rough

- **Generally means playing less club and allowing the ball to run up and roll out**
- Preparing for “knuckleballs” and 7-8 more yards of carry
- Hitting punch shots, when necessary

BOUNCE IS YOUR FRIEND

Adding one high bounce and one mid bounce wedge to your set will create more versatility and improve your shotmaking for various lies and turf conditions. Use our guide to help identify which bounce works best in common greenside situations.



In Their Own Words:

Solving the distance control dilemma when applying face tape from the rough

“The inability to spin it creates a disadvantage...Having to hit a different yardage to account for the release of that ball...Instead of a 70 yd shot with a 58 degree wedge..will take two hops and stops or hit it past it and spin back. If you do that, now you hit a PW or something that puts less spin on it” —JM (Female)-Tennessee

“I just made a mental note of how much farther the ball traveled and adjusted accordingly” —BH—So Cal

“Around the greens I knew there wouldn't be as much spin ... But I just opened it up and used pitch to stop the ball.” —DG—Tennessee

In Their Own Words:

Solving the distance control dilemma when applying face tape from the rough

“The biggest thing for me was distance control. It’s not as bad on 60 degree and 56 degree wedges but as I got into 7 or 8 and up you had no idea where it would stop.”—AF—Colorado

“I had an 8 iron and hit a good shot.. and flew it just short of the pin. It takes a goofy hop and ran out over the green. It was a jumper lie and I hit my yardage but it was long. So I learned to play to that front yardage.”—AM--Colorado

“The face tape almost helped...cause I like to be in the rough and have it release a bit particularly if the pin is in the back. I like running it up. I like the ability to take that first putt with your approach shot If you can let it release, you get a good sense of how it rolls. It’s like a free putt.”—MS—New Jersey

Face Tape Rounds Insights

Some Like to “Play to a Spot” and place a premium on accuracy



- A more challenging and enjoyable test that requires players to think their way around a golf course rather than just bomb it out there
- Control fairway misses and approach the pin from the most favorable angle
- Directionally is embraced more so by the women in the study—who interestingly fared disproportionately better in the range exercise.
- A small group of “accuracy-centric” players will make adjustments and always forego the driver to avoid rough, if it still allows for a wedge or 9 iron approach
- There are several players who hone in on being within 100-150 yards from the pin, and are uncomfortable with a 50-70 yard approach for which they do not have a shot

In Their Own Words:

Some Like to “Play to a Spot” and place a premium on accuracy

“The more I see that (hitting to a spot), makes someone a better golfer, because they can think through different scenarios and add weather and terrain into it. The thought process of thinking way around a golf course...Those folks are better golfers, rather than hitting it with no regard. People in their 20s approach it so much differently than others in their 40s and 50s. They have no fear...which is great but it may ultimately put them in a tough spot.” ” —JM (Female)-Tennessee

“[This study] heightened my awareness to be more accurate. Experience has helped me see that accuracy is more important than the Brysons...He has already made \$40mm and it doesn't matter if he misses a cut. That's the difference between being a good amateur and if we want to win as a team we have to be accurate. He misses a cut at the Open, no one will care in four weeks if he wins Fed Ex cup. But if my girl misses right and we don't win a tournament, that sucks. Sometimes we have to be smarter...You'll never have a problem hitting out of the fairway vs. trying to find it in the trees. It never gets old hitting the fairway.” --JL (female)--Tennessee

In Their Own Words:

Some Like to “Play to a Spot” and place a premium on accuracy

“I went at it the way I normally would. My game is keep it in the fairway. I’m long enough for my age though not the longest guy. I played my fairways and greens game and try to make putts..and I’ve been playing so much that I am pretty dialed in. So business as usual.”—GA--Colorado

“I’ve thrived as a 34 year old golf professional in keeping the ball in play and hitting greens in regulation. I haven’t lost a big competitive edge...Guys hit it past me but they make bigger mistakes and they don't putt as well as me...So that evens things out with me.”—JS--Colorado

“If my approach shot can be under 160 then that’s a nine iron for me and 9 iron and wedges is all I’m trying to do. Methodology off the tee is anything that can get me inside 160 and still hit the fairway.”—WM--Colorado

In Their Own Words:

Some Like to “Play to a Spot” and place a premium on accuracy

“It’s better for me to lay back to 120 yds where I can hit a full swing...an uphill hole with pin on front and you have to stop it quicker...I don’t like that shot...I’m not as comfortable if I have 50 yds left.” AM—Colorado

“I think I just looked at yardage and wanted a full club going into each green. I’d rather stay back and rather have 140 than 80 in and I did the math backwards.”—MS—New Jersey

Face Tape Rounds Insights

The Concept of “Bogey Avoidance” Predicates Strategy for Some

HOLE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	OUT
MAROON <small>M 74.2/139</small>	404	185	408	565	427	350	186	384	541	3450
BLACK <small>M 72.1/135</small>	385	167	387	555	375	339	170	375	523	3276
WHITE <small>M 70.5/130</small>	364	151	349	506	358	320	160	358	509	3075
HANDICAP	15	11	3	5	1	13	17	7	9	
<i>Bob</i>	4	3	6	7	4	5				
PAR	4	3	4	5	4	4	3	4	5	36
GOLD <small>M 68.0/125 W 71.9/130</small>	332	137	340	495	317	283	145	320	451	2820
GREEN <small>M 64.8/112 W 69.3/122</small>	302	129	331	405	273	246	122	310	405	2523
TARGET TIME	:14	:25	:39	:56	1:10	1:24	1:35	1:49	2:08	11:25

- Avoid the big numbers
- Elite Amateur players make lots of pars and few “others”

In Their Own Words:

The Concept of “Bogey Avoidance” Predicates Strategy for Some

“This past year, I’ve changed my whole approach to golf and this exercise emphasizes less attacking the pin and more of a go to the center of the green approach and two putt for pars.—KN—New Jersey

“It’s interesting. I just played a tree lined classic course with heavier rough and my partner was a 36 year old who hits it hard and a bunch of young guys who can really launch it. I was well behind those guys and not withstanding that, I scored as well as they did with my approach to hit it solid in fairway and knock it on the green. It really underscores my philosophy which means keep it in the fairway even if it means hitting less club”—GA—Colorado

“For me as a player, I strategize to limit my miss to a safe zone. Let me be safe away from that bunker that’s in play Even if I don't hit driver I’ll be within 150 yds, my game is about position management and leveraging my short game”—DW—New Jersey

In Their Own Words:

The Concept of “Bogey Avoidance” Predicates Strategy for Some

*“Its been my experience that the key to scoring is making fewer bogeys rather than making more birdies. The key to scoring is hitting GIR and making pars and seeing where birdies come. Younger guys some get focused on making more birdies and think that leads to lower scores. So they push on the golf course more aggressively than an approach of taking what the course gives you in terms of landing area.”---
BF Tennessee*

“I really like David McLay-Kidd’s philosophy of defending birdie rather than defending par...Open entry but a crazy green....crazy ridges. You are not going to one putt unless you set yourself up to be really close. That would mean tough hole locations, tucked pins at edges of greens...but not elongating rough from tee boxes or making courses longer.” –TW Colorado

Face Tape Rounds Insights

Several question the impact of reigning in equipment

- Better players will adapt
- The concern for the non-elite players raises questions about universal changes
- Advocacy for creating more challenging course set-ups as proven alternatives
- Inconsistency/Tolerancing issues complicate things further
- Concerns about creating further disadvantages for shorter hitters
 - Zach Johnson vs Dustin Johnson



In Their Own Words:

Several question the impact of reigning in equipment

“If you get a standardized ball and [those with] 125 mph clubhead speed are still going to hit it further. I’m not sure if that lessens the advantage...Lots of variables and other stakeholders involved. A club could still be hot but if 300 could be a long drive, that might be interesting.” DG—Tennessee

“For the recreational player you have to make them fun and friendly courses...Ample wide fairways and playable rough but some penalization. My dad, the 15 handicapper is hitting driver off every tee.”-AF—New Jersey

“The tape takes away from the creativity of the game...Part of the fun is having the eye and hands to be able to pull something off.—MB-Tennessee

“At every level there’s a work around and the longest guys are always going to have an advantage and a benefit over the shorter hitters unless you are playing courses that only allow you to drive a certain distance without getting into hazards. The best players will continue to be the best players and longest guys will always have an advantage regardless of the technology.”—RG-Colorado

In Their Own Words:

Several question the impact of reigning in equipment

“I feel like the grooves and the ball have been much more advantageous for elite level men and guys with crazy high swing speed. For me the ball goes further but not as exponentially... You saw it at Torrey Pines, with Bryson as strong as he was hitting it 60 yds from rough. A lot of these young guys never played in those kind of conditions. Good luck at Merion when the Greens are stimping 13.”—KW (Female)—Tennessee

“I frankly don’t have a problem with it and don’t see a need to make changes. There’s a certain amount of skill to do it the way Bryson does it. And history shows that there are courses that can be defended against that like Merion and Harding Park. I have a hard time with bifurcation...it loses the ability to relate and compare. I play a lot with a guy who’s a little older than me...He’s a five...I’m about 15-20 yds shorter and hitting same iron into the green. So I looked at his specs...His 7 iron was lower loft and loft isn’t really the same with every 7 iron.” —GA Colorado

In Their Own Words:

Several question the impact of reigning in equipment

“At the end of the day, the only thing you could do is to reduce loft allowed by players and that might make a drastic difference...or make the grooves smaller. If you took 60 degrees out of players’ hands that could have drastic differences. Players are relying on loft.”—AI--Colorado

“While I personally believe that restricting distance through equipment is something that should happen, and would be in best interest of the game and keeping courses relevant, I think that course set up is more impactful. If a course is firm and fast, the more intrigue and randomness that is introduced to it...though pros won’t like that. But I think in the long run, that really does identify the best player and it’s enticing and never gets old. If you just focus on equipment, players will figure out how to master that and it becomes one dimensional. Course set up allows for more random chance and creativity on how to attack it. Driving range, launch monitor stats should only take you so far.”—TW--Colorado