

# Want 20 More Yards?

Fix your swing and use properly fitted equipment to add distance By Bill Choung

How much are you willing to pay for 15-20 more yards off the tee? Are you willing to pay \$400 for a new driver? Are you willing to take golf lessons and practice?

If you are not willing to devote any time to practicing or spending money on new technology or lessons, please skip this article. But if you are willing to invest time and money, here is my buyer's guide to 20 extra yards.

Like us, every Tour player should do whatever is necessary to gain 20 more yards off the tee (assuming they will retain accuracy). Why? Twenty more yards will allow them to reach par 5s with irons and hybrids. The PGA Tour is all about making birdies and eagles on par 5s. Tour players love two-putting for birdies. Tiger Woods, in his prime, was the best at making two-putt birdies.



When I fitted and gave biomechanics evaluation to Ernie Els, Dustin Johnson and other Tour players at a FedEx Cup event, we had two goals: To make sure the current equipment was optimized for their current swing; and find a better equipment combination to reinforce a desired change in their swing.

Our research showed that with the Tour players, because the equipment manufacturers fit them so well, they rarely gain 20 yards from just changing their clubs. Players who change their swing and then use the fitted equipment as a reinforcement tool have a greater chance of increasing distance off the tee.

So basically, if you want to hit the ball further off the tee, *fix your swing and get fitted*. I realize that not everyone has the time or patience to change their swing. If this describes you, your solution to gaining 20 yards is to hope that your clubs are so poorly fitted for your swing that new technology will help you.

## The Buyer's Guide to 20 More Yards (Driver)

1. Find a qualified clubfitter with a launch monitor. Do research on the fitting process.
2. Make sure you bring your current driver to measure the relative performance difference.
3. Make sure that there is some kind of performance guarantee when you purchase a driver.
4. When it comes to real estate it's all about location, location, location. When it comes to drivers it's all about shaft, shaft, shaft.
5. The shaft can affect your tempo, clubhead speed and your overall swing. The wrong shaft could hurt your game. Remember that the shaft is the only thing that's dynamic in a golf swing.
6. Use interchangeable shaft drivers (TaylorMade R11s, RBZ; Callaway RazrFit).
7. Understand these launch monitor numbers: Optimal numbers for backspin is between 2300-2800 RPM; launch angle is between 12-14 degrees; Smash factor 1.35-1.5 (ball speed/clubhead speed).
8. If your current driver is producing similar launch monitor numbers as given above, you will not gain 20 yards. Don't waste your money on new clubs. Make your swing more efficient.

## The Buyer's Guide to 20 More Yards (Swing)

1. If you have been fitted for custom clubs and your backspin number is higher than 3700 RPM, launch angle is above 17 degrees and your smash factor is below 1.35, new clubs will not help.
2. If you hang back at impact or your heels are off the ground at impact, new clubs will not help.
3. Solution: Find help to get your swing sequence in order. When you learn to use your lower body in sequence with the upper body, you will swing the driver 5-10 miles per hour faster. One mile per hour increase equals three yards increase in carry. Last year I helped Danny Lee (PGA Tour player and U.S. Amateur winner) gain almost 30 yards off the tee by making his biomechanics more efficient and then fitting him to reinforce the biomechanics.

The best long-term solution to gaining significant yards off the tee is to fix your swing and use properly fitted equipment as a reinforcement tool to make your swing better. But you know it's always fun trying to find a magic stick to help us play the hardest game ever invented.



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