

GO HIGHER

A celebrity's clubfitting analysis shows that a higher launch can add 25 yards to his tee shots By Bill Choung

I had the pleasure of meeting and working with one of my favorite actors, Morgan Freeman, at Derek Jeter's Celebrity Golf Classic. My experience with Freeman showed that no one is too old to improve their game. He was an avid golfer, and had a very athletic golf swing for someone who had been playing for less than a year.

At the time he told me he played every day and his only regret was that he didn't start this great game sooner. I was really impressed when he generated 100 mph clubhead speed with his driver. You just don't see too many 70-year-old beginners generating triple-digit clubhead speed. Then again, Freeman is not your typical 70-year-old.

Problem

Despite his fast clubhead speed, Freeman was only hitting the ball about 215 yards with a low pull hook. Given his clubhead speed, if the launch conditions were optimized, Freeman should be hitting the ball about 250 yards.

Why was he hitting low pull hooks? His poor swing fundamentals and ill-fitted clubs.

Current swing analysis

1. Set-up – His closed stance didn't allow Freeman to clear his lower body, which caused him to come over the top.
2. Coming over the top caused Freeman to pull hard with the left arm, which closed the clubface at impact and resulted in low hooks.

Current equipment analysis

1. His driver shaft was too weak for his clubhead speed.



2. He was fitted for his age and handicap.
3. Always got fitted based on clubhead speed and tempo.
4. Clubhead loft was only 9.5 degrees, too low for Freeman's swing.

Solution

Swing Recommendation:

1. Set-up – Square and narrow the stance.

SCORECARD

- ▶ Morgan Freeman shows that no one is too old to improve their game.
- ▶ Poor swing fundamentals and ill-fitted clubs can lead to major swing flaws, including the low pull hooks.
- ▶ Improving your swing and getting fitted for clubs reinforce an optimal swing and can add 25-30 yards to your drives with a straighter ball flight.

2. Swing path – Don't break the wrist going back. Practice a one-piece takeaway.
3. Downswing – To prevent the over-the-top move, start the downswing by shifting the weight to the instep of the right foot.
4. Impact position – Feel like the club is being thrown to right field.

Equipment Recommendation:

1. A 13-degree TaylorMade driver to increase the launch angle to 15 degrees with back spin of 2700 rpm.
2. Diamana white board shaft 63g stiff to match the quick tempo and 100 mph clubhead speed.
3. As Freeman's swing gets better, the driver loft should be reduced to 10.5 degrees.

Results

When Freeman made a fundamentally sound golf swing (new swing) with his new driver, he flew the ball 25-30 yards further with a straighter ball flight. When he made an average swing (old swing), he only gained 10-15 yards of carry with a pull or a hook ball flight.

Two lessons should be learned from Freeman's experience: 1) No one is too old to improve their swing; 2) if you are looking for extraordinary results, like hitting 25 yards further and straighter, you must improve your swing and get fitted for clubs to reinforce the optimal swing.



Bill Choung is the founder of CompuGolf Center in Carrollton. He is a PGA Tour instructor and Golf Digest Top 100 Fitter. He has done extensive swing and equipment research on the PGA Tour and currently works with K.J. Choi and Danny Lee. He has worked with more than 40 Tour players. www.compugolfcenter.com.