

Swing Like a Lady

LPGA Tour players can teach us a few things that will lead to longer tee shots BY BILL CHOUNG

For all you guys out there, if your driver clubhead speed is less than 100 miles per hour, you need to get fit like the ladies ... as in the LPGA Tour ladies.

In working with over a dozen top LPGA Tour players at the North Texas Shootout in May, I learned some things from the ladies that might help us guys maximize our distance off the tee.

The major difference between the men and women is quite obvious when it comes to hitting the driver. PGA Tour players try to create as much speed as possible by overpowering the ball high into the air with a high launch angle (12 to 14 degrees) and low spin (2200 to 2600 revolutions per minute). The average Tour player's driver clubhead speed is 113 to 116 miles per hour, producing 290 yards.

Yet for the women, the driver clubhead speed is 92 to 95 mph, producing 250 yards. When we compare the launch conditions to the men, the women's ideal launch angle is higher and the spin rate is lower. The optimal launch angle for the LPGA is 13 to 15 degrees with backspin of 2000 to 2200 rpm. Therefore, the women's launch angle is higher and the spin is lower relative to the men.

The key factor is the lower spin. Women depend on maximizing the roll after the ball lands. We observed that some LPGA Tour players only fly the ball 215 yards but roll the ball 35 to 40 yards to maximize their distance. We also observed that when these players try to swing faster, the backspin increased, resulting in longer carry but loss of total distance due to significant decrease in the roll.



Inbee Park

What should you do to increase driver distance?

1. Swing like a lady.

- a. Only swing 100 percent of your capacity if the backspin doesn't go up
- b. Create more leverage in your swing
- c. Use your lower body as the power source
- d. Don't hit the ball with your arms and hands
- e. Men have greater forearm strength than women. Thus, men use too much of their arms, which creates more backspin.

2. The ground is your friend in North Texas.

- a. Maximize the distance by using the hard surface conditions to your advantage
- b. Find out the spin number that gives you the most roll
- c. Experiment with an adjustable driver to find the optimal spin number
- d. A lower spin will help you against a headwind.

Just like the LPGA Tour players, the average amateur male swings the driver at 95 mph. Thus, the next time you are trying to buy a new driver, it might be smart to see what Stacy Lewis and Inbee Park have in their bags rather than trying to buy what Tiger and Phil have in theirs. Also, find an instructor/fitter to help you hit it straight and long.

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- ▶ The average Tour player driver clubhead speed is 113 to 116 miles per hour, producing 290 yards.
- ▶ For the women, the driver clubhead speed is 92 to 95 mph, producing 250 yards.
- ▶ To get maximum distance, try swinging easier, using your lower body as a power source and using the hard North Texas soil to your advantage.



Bill Choung is the founder of CompuGolfCenter 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.