

Payne offers 'Precision' made golf clubs

Have you ever been shopping for something and been stumped because you could not find all of the features you wanted in one model?

Maybe it was a car. You liked the exterior of the Ford but preferred the interior of the Buick, the performance of the Honda, and the price of the Hyundai. Unfortunately, you could not find anyone who offered the combination of all of those things.

Golfers encounter the same frustration in their search for new clubs. Some brands have the clubhead they like but not the shaft. Others have the right shafts but the grips aren't comfortable.

Although we don't have an auto dealership that will allow you to select all of the features you want, we do have a place where golfers can select all of the

parts of their clubs before they are assembled.

Don Payne is a graduate of the Golfsmith club fitting and assembly program in Austin, Texas and now operates Precision Golf, a custom clubmaking and repair shop on Highway 25 just south of Acton.

Precision Golf specializes in making clubs which are designed and built to fit the individual and his or her swing. Don takes about an hour to talk to you about your preferences and what you want the clubs to do for you and measures variables such as swing speed, tempo, grip size, and hand height.

This information is used to narrow the range of options available to you. He also explains the advantages of clubheads, shafts, and grips which are best for you.

Only then are the clubs assembled.

While you may think that custom-fit clubs, like custom-made suits, are more expensive than those off the rack, the reverse is actually true.

Although only top-line components are used at Precision Golf, prices are lower. Clubheads are all original designs (not imitations or "knock-offs") from Golfsmith, shafts come from suppliers such as True Temper, Aldila, Grafalloy, and grips are from Golf Pride. The lower is the result of lower advertising budgets than those of the major club manufacturers.

Don also helps players who like most (but not all) things about their current clubs make adjustments. This may be as simple as the replacement of worn grips or it may be the selection of new shafts from the 1800 models available and installation of these on the present clubheads.

If you are in the market for new clubs, Don offers this advice:

1. Remember that equipment can not overcome the problems of a faulty swing. If the swing is the problem, see a CPGA pro.

2. Before you do anything, think about your game and your priorities: Are you looking for more distance? Improved accuracy? Greater consistency? Higher or lower trajectory? More backspin?

(Sorry, you can't have them all!)

3. Ask questions about clubs you are considering. Find out about the lofts and the types of shafts. If possible, have your swing speeds (different with irons and woods) measured and only buy clubs with shafts that are suited to your swing speed. (Be careful if the salesman can not tell you the speed for which the shaft is suited, and don't rely on the flexibility ratings on shafts. These are not standardized and the regular flex in one model may indeed be stiffer than the Stiff flex in another.)

4. Think of new irons and new woods as two separate buying decisions. Go through all of the same questions for each (your answers will be different in many cases) and select equipment that meets your needs and preferences in each area. Don't worry if your irons and woods come from different suppliers.

5. When trying new clubs, hit balls with them, even if it is just on an indoor range. Get the feel of the clubs in action.

6. Avoid radical designs or clubs that promise to cure your slice or hook. If you are considering something wild, go back to Point 1.

Precision Golf offers a full range of custom clubmaking and repair services on the west side of Highway 25, one kilometre south of Acton. Don can be reached at 853-2577.

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