

# It's Not You, It's Your Clubs

We have all been there before. You reached your favorite par 5 at your home course. The drive...couldn't have been placed more perfectly in the fairway. This is your "gozone". As you reach into your bag for the 3wood, the tree line on the left creeps into your

peripheral vision while the water hazard on the right triggers your PTSD from rounds past. Inevitably, you pull the 6-iron and lay-up as your playing partners groan at another wasted drive.

Some argue that hitting a consistent 3-wood off the deck is the most daunting shot in golf. But why is it so difficult? What if I told you that today's equipment technology can actually makes this shot more challenging than it needs to be?

### What makes a 3-wood so difficult to hit?

Before diving deeper into today's technology, some of the challenges of striking a 3-wood consistently are inherently obvious. First, the length of the club is the longest of all clubs generally hit without a tee. Combine the length with a lightweight shaft and it becomes increasingly difficult to control and deliver the clubface consistently at impact. Second, the loft of the club is low (generally between 13° and 16°) making it more difficult to achieve ideal launch conditions. Lastly, most 3-woods have a higher center of gravity than say, a 5 or 7-wood, which inhibits the player's ability to launch the ball.

### **Technological Advances – Helping or Hurting?**

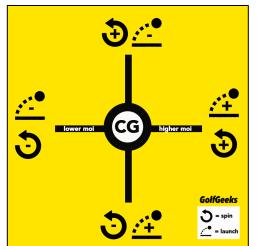
With all the advances in golf club and ball designs, why am I struggling to hit my 3-wood today but had no problem twenty years ago? When answering this question, it is important to understand the dynamics today versus the past. Club head design has come a long way and a key parameter that has been refined is spin. Your ability to launch a golf ball in the air is directly related to how much spin the club imparts on the golf ball. The higher the spin, the higher the shot. In decades past, clubs did not have the adjustability and sophisticated Written By Jeffrey Blank, Contributor 10 May 2022

manufacturing processes to move the center of gravity around in the club head in order to dial in spin levels. While it may have appeared as if you were more effective at striking a 3-wood years ago, you were actually launching it higher and straighter due to increased spin levels. What you probably don't remember is that you were also hitting the ball 20 yards shorter than clubs designed today.

Since the early 2000s when Tiger Woods exploded on the scene by dominating the PGA Tour with distance, the golf industry entered into the distance wars between OEMs. Distance gains became the number one priority, which could be at the detriment of your game.

#### **Chasing Distance Gains**

Golf manufacturers today primarily market based on a single feature – distance. Let's not kid ourselves...distance is sexy. Greg Maddux and Tom Glavine made "chicks dig the long ball" a part of pop culture during the late 90's and the golf industry has been chasing distance gains ever since. There is nothing wrong with trying to add 5-10 yards in your bag but understanding the tradeoffs and how design philosophies achieve increased distance is just as important. The main premise of adding distance is lowering the amount of spin imparted on the golf ball at impact. Design engineers



accomplish this by moving the center of gravity of the club forward (towards the face). This allows for a lower spinning golf ball and increased distance.

Unfortunately, by doing so, it inherently decreases the moment of inertia (MOI) of the club head.

In simple terms, MOI measures the club heads ability to resist twisting when impacting a golf ball. The higher the MOI, the less the club head twists which helps promote straighter shots. With lower spinning designs, it caters to golfers with higher swing speeds and consistent striking in order to launch the ball at the proper angle to maximize carry distance while maintaining a tighter dispersion. For the average golfer with slower swing speeds and inconsistent striking ability, it can also lead to errant shots, lower carry distances, and ultimately, less eagle putts.

## The Bottom Line

what's So the punchline? Should game а two Ι decades old 3wood? Not exactly. The key is understanding your strengths and weaknesses when



purchasing a golf club. Twenty years ago, golfers had minimal options when it came to club selection. It was a one size fits all proposition. Today, club manufacturers consistently offer two, three, and sometimes even four club designs each catering to different golfers needs. Now add in an infinite number of shaft options and it can cause your head to spin (no pun intended). But, if you're struggling to launch your 3-wood, your dispersion is too wide, and you lack the consistency to reach those par 5's in two, it might be time to look at fine tuning your equipment. When searching, consider the following:

- Beware of terms like "pro" or "tour" when describing the club. This can mean a low spinning design.
- Understand how the club weighting is positioned on the sole and how that could affect ball flight. Prioritize back weighting over front weighting.
- Make sure the shaft selection (including weight, stiffness, and ball flight tendencies) meets your particular swing.
- Remember, loft is your friend so gravitate towards a 16° of loft instead of 13°.

Most importantly, don't go into this purchase alone. Get fit! Contact our partner sponsors over at Woods to Wedges and schedule a fitting today.



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