**Drivers:**

Today the standard drivers offered in assembled clubs off the shelf are usually 45” to 46” long and the swing weights are in the C-5 to D-0 range. We fitters who work with equipment daily know that the longer the club the more likely you are to swing it outside to inside and the shorter the club the more likely you are to swing it inside to outside. In short, if you pull your driver more often than not you probably have a club that is too long. If you pull hook its probably in the C5 range and if you pull slice probably D0 or heavier.

Many of the shafts are in the 45 gram to 65 gram range and shaft flexes are measured as L, A, R, S and X. These represent Ladies, Amateur or Senior, Regular, Stiff and Extra Stiff. Unfortunately there are no industry standards for flex so one company may have the same flex in their A as another company does in an R. There is no way at all to determine if two R flex drivers are indeed the same flex by looking at a shaft label or asking a clerk in a golf store. The clerk is not going to tell you that the weight of shaft is the key element in how light or how heavy the total weight of the club is and that is possible the most critical element in fitting a driver. Some golfers actually swing faster with a heavier club than a lighter one because he can control it better. Want to prove this one? Go outside and take a baseball with you and take a table tennis (Ping Pong) ball with you. Try throwing both of them. Which one went farther and faster? Even a golf club can be too light to be effective.

Most of these drivers will be in the 9° to 10.5° range in loft with a few lower and a few higher. The faster you swing the more likely these lofts will work for you, but if you are a Senior that is an 80% chance you need more loft to hit the ball longer off the tee. The air has less resistance than the ground so the more you carry the shot the longer it will go. If on the other hand you stay on your right side and release early it doesn’t matter a lot what you loft is you are going to hit the ball too high.

**Irons:**

Irons come in many designs from forged muscle backs to cast deep undercut cavity backs. Perimeter weighting and not with perimeter weighting. Some are soft 303 carbon steel and some are hard 17-4 stainless steel and many variations of steels are used for iron heads. Some head are smallish and some are what we call shovels and very large. Some designs are offset some are not so much. Some have very thick top lines and some very small top lines. Some with 4° to 6° more or less loft on the same numbered clubs than others. I was in college in the mid 1960s and a Pitching Wedge back then had 52° of loft. Today that is called a gap wedge and most Pitching wedges have 48° loft and some even as little as 44° of loft. Some companies have already started making PW and W and 52° in the same sets. All of this to fool you into thinking you can still hit that old 7 iron as far as you did 30 years ago. That isn’t technology, that’s propaganda. A 52° club is a 52° regardless of what its branded. PW or GW or ???

Why is this important? Because we need to know just how high up we can go before we need to get into hybrids to be able to get the ball in the air. The reason we have hybrids is because when we jack up a 3 iron 8 degrees from my era at 26° to match up with today’s lofts it will be 18° and that is a difficult iron to get airborne, no matter who is swinging it. Shoot It was hard enough back in the day when it was 26°

**Wedges:**

There are now 4 wedges we can put in our bag. The gap wedge, the pitching wedge, the sand wedge and the lob wedge. The gap wedge is typically 52° and fills the missing loft between the modern pitching wedge and the sand wedge. The pitching wedge is typically about 48° and the sand wedge is 56°. The Sand wedge can’t be made stronger or you will not be able to clear the lip of a deep bunker but the pitching wedge has been made stronger over the years so you can hit it farther. It used to be 52° but the manufacturers want to sell clubs that go farther so they made them on club stronger. Yep, if you go back to the 1960s the pitching wedge is 52° and the nine is 48° but today the PW is 48° and the nine is 44°. That is why you can now hit a PW where you once hit a 9 iron. All that is well and good, but what do you use for that distance between the 9 & the PW? They invented a gap wedge to fill the “gap” in lofts. Which brings us to hybrids…

**Hybrids:**

When they kicked the lofts up to make it seem like technology is making you hit the ball farther it also pushed the long irons stronger. Thus the 2 iron became a 1 iron and so on. Remember Lee Trevino’s quote from years ago “Not even God can hit a 1 iron”. Well the increase loft doomed the 2 iron and today a set is 3 through PW when it used to be 2 through 9 iron. With that 3 iron now being a 2 iron loft and the 4 a 3 iron loft the long irons became more difficult to hit. So they invented the mini-fairway, or the Hybrid irons. The hybrids work because they have an extended head depth and the farther away from the face the center of gravity is the higher you will hit the club. So now we have hybrids on one end and extra wedges on the other.

OK, are you thoroughly confused now? I hope not. The point is that along with fairways and hybrids and extra wedges we now have way more than 14 options to put in the bag. There are companies now making complete hybrid sets and fairways down to the 13 wood. Shoot depending on when you are reading this there may be even more now. So you have a choice of woods from 1 to 13, hybrids from 1 to SW, irons from 2 to Lob Wedge and putters from standard to belly to long putters. Wow! decisions, decisions, decisions…

Fortunately the USGA doesn’t specify what 14 clubs you have to have in your bag so you are free to arrange your bag anyway you want. That is where the custom fitter comes in. With a custom clubfitter you are not locked into a “standard set off the rack” any more. You don’t have to buy 3 – PW or any group of clubs at all. I allow you all the choices available to put the best combination of 14 clubs in your bag to make the game easier for you to play. Do you hit fairways better than hybrids? I’ll give you as many fairways as you can usefully play in combination with irons. Do you hit hybrids better than fairways? I’ll give you more hybrids with your irons. Do you hit a combination of fairways and hybrids better? I’ll give you a combination.

By testing you for all of these we will determine just what clubs your game needs and build you a custom matched set with all of those clubs matched to your golf swing so that you will have the best performing 14 clubs in your bag that it is possible to build.

The point of all of this is: You need to have the most effective 14 clubs in your bag we can possibly get in there so that you can score as low as your ability will allow you to score. The game is difficult enough with the right tools!