



BY MIKE STACHURA AND E. MICHAEL JOHNSON • PHOTO-ILLUSTRATION BY LISA SHEEHAN





**HOW CONFUSING ARE GOLF BALLS?**

Not as confusing as you might think. Balls are increasingly about addressing your individual needs, a dividing up of models to highlight specific performance traits. There even are personalized graphics that help with alignment while making self-affirming personal statements, essentially letting you tattoo your ball before, well, you tattoo your ball.

How do you find the right ball for your game? Start by defining what you want from a ball. For some it might be about price exclusively, but to us that's like choosing the cheapest neurosurgeon or plumber—better to go up in class to handle all the problems that might crop up later. Do you want straighter tee shots more than anything, or is flighting your approach shots more vital? How do you weigh high short-game spin versus less spin off the driver? If you miss a lot of greens, does having a ball that maximizes your short game matter more, or should you think about a ball that might yield more consistent approach-shot control?

It's a lot to consider. The following pages can help you determine which models might answer those demands best. (Plus, we've even got a multiple-choice quiz at [GolfDigest.com](http://GolfDigest.com) to help you narrow the field.) However, on-course testing is mandatory if you want the right answers. That's why our Hot List testing is driven by what happens with real golfers, not robots.

We break down the universe of golf balls into two categories based on the cover material. **Urethane** cover balls offer the most complete menu of performance characteristics. **Non-urethane** cover balls provide reliable full-shot performance for moderate-skill players. Within their respective categories, we judged balls in two criteria: Performance (65 percent) and Innovation (35 percent). Player testing was conducted at Marriott's Grande Vista resort in Orlando, and robot testing was conducted by Cool Clubs in Arizona. We've dug through the confusion to get you started. You might even come away thinking golf balls aren't such a mystery, especially when the right one improves your scorecard.

● **BRIDGESTONE TOUR B X/XS/RX/RXS**



TOUR B X



TOUR B XS



TOUR B RX



TOUR B RXS

**PERFORMANCE** ★★★★★  
**INNOVATION** ★★★★★

**FEEL RATING (SOFT TO FIRM)**  
TOUR B X ◀.....▶▶.....▶  
TOUR B XS ◀.....<<.....▶  
TOUR B RX ◀.....<<.....▶  
TOUR B RXS ◀.....<<.....▶

These four balls address two performance areas and two kinds of swing speeds. The dividing line between the X and XS and the RX and RXS is a driver swing speed of 105 miles per hour. If you're under that number, choose between the distance-focused RX and the higher-spinning RXS (Lexi Thompson and Fred Couples). If you swing faster than 105, then play the tour balls used by Tiger Woods (yes, he has played both the distance X and the spinner XS).

The urethane-cover compound in all four balls uses an additive that maximizes resiliency for high-speed driver impacts. When impact is slower, like on a wedge shot, the additive helps the urethane adhere to the face for control and spin. **\$50**

**IS IT FOR YOU?**

**X:** This model is for high-speed players who desire distance more than workability and softer short-game feel.

**XS:** The target audience here is fast-swing players whose games revolve around spin and control, even if it means giving up maximum distance.

**RX:** Slower-swing-speed players will like the soft feel yet greater resilience on driver shots. In our testing, this was the lowest-spinning ball of the four, but it still had plenty of spin on short shots.

**RXS:** The softest option of the four caters to average-swing-speed players who want to maximize their short-game spin.

● **CALLAWAY CHROME SOFT/X/X LS**



CHROME SOFT



CHROME SOFT X



CHROME SOFT X LS

**PERFORMANCE** ★★★★★  
**INNOVATION** ★★★★★

**FEEL RATING (SOFT TO FIRM)**  
CS ◀.....<<.....▶  
CS X ◀.....<<.....▶  
CS X LS ◀.....<<.....▶

Getting better at golf-ball manufacturing sounds about as exciting and relevant as getting better at hospital corners. But Callaway's multiyear commitment to pursuing precision golf-ball production—the tally by now is well over \$50 million in improvements to its manufacturing capabilities at its Chicopee, Mass., plant—was about one thing: making its golf balls exactly consistent for more potential distance and tighter dispersion. In short, better, tighter manufacturing opens up new areas of innovation. In this case, that meant a more efficiently explosive core and a sleeker aerodynamic pattern. **\$50**

**IS IT FOR YOU?**

**CS:** The softest in the family targets average golfers and their larger mis-hit patterns. It flies the highest with the least spin.

**CS X:** Played by most of Callaway's tour players, this ball is for fast swingers who covet control.

**CS X LS:** This firmer ball is for faster swingers who play straighter shots but need a little more short-game spin than the Chrome Soft.

● **PXG XTREME**



The high-end equipment brand's first entrée into the golf-ball market actually involved some of the company's first product research. The design team only recently decided to launch a golf ball and only a single model at that.

PXG's team wants to simplify your choice by suggesting that balls designed for slightly slower swing speeds are more similar to so-called "faster-speed" balls than they are different. That is, all players benefit from low spin off the tee and increased short-game spin. This three-layer ball combines a firmer mantle and higher-compression core (for distance) with a slightly thicker, softer urethane cover (for short-game spin). **\$40**

**PERFORMANCE** ★★★★★  
**INNOVATION** ★★★★★

**FEEL RATING (SOFT TO FIRM)**  
XTREME ◀.....<<.....▶

● **SRIXON Q-STAR TOUR**



This softer-compression ball still has the kind of cover played by tour players, so you can still get that same kind of greenside grab, but its overall softer construction (20 to 30 compression points less than the company's Z-Star models) is enhanced by a soft intermediate mantle layer and a core that gets progressively firmer from the center outward. It's designed to maximize distance potential and higher flight for non-tour-level swings (anyone north of 75 miles per hour).

The Q-Star Tour also uses the same cover coating as the tour-played model. This mixture creates a flexible urethane compound that's designed to stay on the face more consistently to improve spin on chips and pitches. **\$35**

**PERFORMANCE** ★★★★★  
**INNOVATION** ★★★★★

**FEEL RATING (SOFT TO FIRM)**  
Q-STAR TOUR ◀.....<<.....▶

**SHOULD I PLAY A LOW- OR HIGH-COMPRESSION BALL?**

● Golf balls with a higher-compression rating feel firmer and generate more ball speed than lower-compression models. Does this automatically mean that golfers seeking more distance should play only the highest-compression balls? Not necessarily. Today's low-compression balls feature more resilient rubber compounds that yield additional energy without feeling firmer. Say you're struggling with high-spin mis-hits, for instance. A low-compression ball that spins less might produce a tighter shot dispersion and more rollout in the fairway. In other words, straighter can mean longer, too.



VICTOR PRADO



● SRIXON Z-STAR/XV/DIAMOND



Z-STAR



Z-STAR XV



Z-STAR ◆

For 2023, Srixon focused on changes to the core to further enhance the differences among the three models. All three cores get progressively firmer from the center to the outer edges, but they progress at different levels and to different degrees.

One key change is that the XV no longer has a dual-core construction. The single core is a more efficient design yet still allows a firmer progression, which is intended to maximize distance. A compound in the urethane cover has also been reformulated to make the cover more pliable so that the urethane melds into the grooves of your wedges to maximize short-game spin. **\$50**

IS IT FOR YOU?

**Z-STAR:** A low-compression and 20-percent thicker cover help make it the best choice for players who want the most spin.

**Z-STAR XV:** With the thinnest cover and firmest compression, it targets the highest-speed players who want low-spin distance.

**Z-STAR ◆:** It's got the XV's firmness for distance but mixes a thicker cover for approach-shot spin.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
INNOVATION ★★★★★

FEEL RATING (SOFT TO FIRM)  
Z-STAR ◀.....<<.....▶  
Z-STAR XV ◀.....>>.....▶  
Z-STAR ◆ ◀.....>>.....▶

● TAYLORMADE TP5/X



TP5



TP5X

When you're trying to make improvements that golfers with the fastest swing speeds will notice, aerodynamics is important. The flatter-bottom dimple here helps initial launch speed and maintains flight at the slowest speeds downrange to optimize distance.

The other area that maximizes performance for better players on these five-layer designs is just beneath that cast-urethane cover. The fourth layer is especially firm and resilient, which does two things. First, it boosts speed for optimal distance. Second, it allows the softer cover to more effectively pinch on short shots to create extra spin on chips and pitches. **\$50**

IS IT FOR YOU?

**TP5:** The softer of the two models has added some speed with a larger core. The ball launches slightly lower but produces plenty of spin off the wedge.

**TP5X:** For golfers with fast swing speeds, this ball enhances distance and generates plenty of green-holding spin. Golfers with average swing speeds likely can't spin the X ball as much as they would like.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
INNOVATION ★★★★★

FEEL RATING (SOFT TO FIRM)  
TP5 ◀.....<<.....▶  
TP5X ◀.....>>.....▶

● TAYLORMADE TOUR RESPONSE



Typically when companies target average golfers with a "tour-level ball," it involves adding a similar urethane cover. TaylorMade's approach instead is to find a way to inject a little more of what average golfers really need: some tour-level long-game energy. These balls feature the intermediate mantle layer and drag-reducing "dual-radius" dimple pattern of the TP5/TP5x models to provide more distance off the tee. The option of the wide, 360-degree aiming stripe is designed to help with alignment. **\$43**

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★½  
INNOVATION ★★★★★½

FEEL RATING (SOFT TO FIRM)  
TOUR RESPONSE ◀.....<<.....▶





● TITLEIST AVX



The softer-feeling, lower-compression option among Titleist's urethane-cover balls caters to a distinctly different player than the tour-favorite Pro V1 family. That softer feel and lower flight help address the average golfer's problem of adding too much loft and spin on full swings from tee to green.

Titleist also has injected more energy into the core by changing the way the soft center progressively stiffens. This helps increase spin in the short game yet keeps driver spin low. Plus, it continues the AVX tradition of boosting distance on the longer and middle irons.

The urethane cover is a little softer than the original, too, for better greenside play. **\$55**

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★½

INNOVATION ★★★★★½

FEEL RATING (SOFT TO FIRM)

AVX ◀.....<<.....▶

● TITLEIST PRO V1/X/—



PRO V1



PRO V1X



—PRO V1X

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★

INNOVATION ★★★★★

FEEL RATING (SOFT TO FIRM)

PRO V1 ◀.....<<.....▶

PRO V1X ◀.....>>.....▶

—PRO V1X ◀.....>>.....▶

The 2023 versions of golf's top balls (—Pro V1x is unchanged) go inside to find improvement. Specifically, the cores of the Pro V1 and Pro V1x have been reengineered to squeeze a little more energy from impact for maximum distance.

This extra energy comes from a greater difference in the firmness of the outer part of the core compared to the soft center. This change makes the Pro V1 core react more like the dual-core Pro V1x, which now features a larger inner core to reduce driver spin. The spin reduction on longer shots will help tighten dispersion. **\$55**

IS IT FOR YOU?

**PRO V1:** The softest of the three has a flatter trajectory and less spin that enhances distance for high-spin players.

**PRO V1X:** This ball flies higher to help players whose natural ball flight tends to be lower. Expect more long-game spin to help with carry distance.

**—PRO V1X:** It's the firmest feeling of the three with significantly lower spin on full-swing shots. Ball flight will be high but slightly lower than Pro V1x.

● WILSON TRIAD



Wilson likes to say this is the ball for players trying to break 80. In practical terms, this means it has been designed to reduce spin on tee shots to give you a distance boost and improve accuracy.

Wilson also tweaked the cover and mantle interaction to yield higher approach-shot spin so that more shots stay on the green. Pushing some of the ball's weight to the extra-dense mantle layer creates a uniform density throughout the guts of the ball for more consistent spin, flight downrange and roll on the greens because there's less chance for the weight to be off-center.

The urethane cover has been designed for consistent spin control and soft feel. **\$40**

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★½

INNOVATION ★★★★★½

FEEL RATING (SOFT TO FIRM)

TRIAD ◀.....<<.....▶



A URETHANE COVER IS BEST ON SHORT SHOTS

● How much does a ball with a multilayer, urethane-cover construction matter? If you never miss a green or your short-game skills are non-existent, probably not much. A urethane-cover ball, however, could spin as much as 2,500 revolutions per minute more than a two-piece distance ball based on our robot testing of 40-yard pitch shots conducted by Cool Clubs. According to Foresight Sports ball-flight simulation software, that's the difference between finishing two feet from the cup and 15 feet. The best non-urethane balls (particularly balls with a mantle layer) have closed the gap, but the data suggests you might still be looking at a six-footer at best. So how's your putting?



● MAXFLI TOUR/S/X



TOUR



TOUR S



TOUR X

These three balls don't differentiate by swing speed as much as they do by feel. For the most part, each of these models features the same technology, starting with a new core formulation that is designed to boost initial ball speed. The intermediate mantle layer adds extra resiliency to reduce spin on tee shots, and a second mantle on the firmer Tour X increases spin on iron shots. Finally, all three balls use the company's balancing technology that indicates where each ball is perfectly centered. **\$40**

IS IT FOR YOU?

**TOUR:** It's in the middle in terms of softness among the three and produces a middle trajectory with mid-level iron spin.

**TOUR S:** The softest of the three is 15 compression points lower than the X. Off the irons, its flight and spin will be the lowest.

**TOUR X:** This is the firmest of the three. Flight and spin off the irons will be at the mid to high level. Fast swingers will gain the most benefit through the bag because of its dual-mantle construction.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
INNOVATION ★★★★★½

FEEL RATING (SOFT TO FIRM)  
TOUR ◀.....▶.....▶  
TOUR S ◀.....◀◀.....▶  
TOUR X ◀.....▶.....▶

● MIZUNO RB TOUR/X



TOUR



X

Mizuno has made two key changes to its urethane-cover tour balls. First, the design team sought more distance by designing both new balls with less spin on tee shots. Second, aerodynamics engineers figured out how to improve ball flight by designing a dimple that looks, well, off-kilter. It took some 99 prototypes to settle on the final design, but the radically reconfigured dimples shift the bottom of each at a slight angle and in a different orientation for each individual dimple. The intent is to change airflow around the ball so that faster swings (like driver shots) produce a more efficient and higher flight, and slower swings (wedge shots) produce a more penetrating, controlled flight. **\$43**

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
INNOVATION ★★★★★½

FEEL RATING (SOFT TO FIRM)  
RB TOUR ◀.....◀◀.....▶  
RB TOUR X ◀.....▶.....▶

IS IT FOR YOU?

**RB TOUR:** The softer of the two yields a slightly lower flight and slightly less spin off the driver. It's better for steeper swings.

**RB TOUR X:** This model is one of the higher-compression balls on the market, so expect a firmer feel. The ball should spin a little more, though.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
INNOVATION ★★★★★

FEEL RATING (SOFT TO FIRM)  
SEED ◀.....◀◀.....▶

● SUGAR PURE



Direct-to-consumer balls often seek to compare themselves to the best balls played by the best players in the world. Frankly, that's difficult to achieve. A better approach might be to say, "We've made a good-faith effort to include meaningful technology to help your game."

It's worth appreciating the sweeping effort here to improve Sugar's second-generation three-piece ball. This includes a commitment to more rigor in maintaining the consistency of its manufacturing process. Sugar also uses a reactive mantle layer and a faster core to improve ball speed. This mid-compression ball is higher launching, too. **\$70 (for 27)**

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
INNOVATION ★★★★★

FEEL RATING (SOFT TO FIRM)  
PURE ◀.....◀◀.....▶

● VICE PRO/SOFT/PLUS



PRO



PRO PLUS



PRO SOFT

Vice is the most colorful golf-ball brand. The company's distinctive use of finishes, drip patterns, neon colors, shade tones and even gold and black versions stands apart. Still, for all the non-conformity, this three-ball lineup is as complete as any company's offering. The larger cores are tailored to match three swing-speed levels, but in each case they benefit from a special chemical additive that increases the core's resiliency for more potential ball speed. Each ball's cast urethane cover includes stronger polymer connections to improve spin consistency and durability. **\$35**

IS IT FOR YOU?

**PRO:** Designed for swing speeds of 95 to 110 miles per hour, it features the highest spin around the green in the lineup.

**PRO SOFT:** It's got the lowest compression (30 points softer than Pro Plus), catering to swing speeds under 95 miles per hour, what Vice calls "the bulk of casual weekend golfers."

**PRO PLUS:** Two mantle layers control spin and increase resiliency for higher-swing-speed players (over 110 miles per hour).

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
INNOVATION ★★★★★½

FEEL RATING (SOFT TO FIRM)  
PRO ◀.....◀◀.....▶  
PRO SOFT ◀.....◀◀.....▶  
PRO PLUS ◀.....◀◀.....▶

● VOLVIK XT SOFT



This three-piece ball continues the company's focus on low-compression models to appeal to average golfers. However, the core on this updated model is now designed for more potential ball speed. The softer feel will appeal to average golfers, but that soft feeling isn't a guarantee of more greenside control. That's why the urethane cover has been reformulated to feature the same composition previously reserved for the company's elite tour models (the S3 and S4). The balls also feature a distinctive sidestamp with multiple parallel lines of differing thicknesses, along with a centered dot to help players better dial in their aim. **\$42**

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
INNOVATION ★★★★★

FEEL RATING (SOFT TO FIRM)  
XT SOFT ◀.....◀◀.....▶

● SEED SD-01



Seed sells its balls directly to consumers through its website. The company's R&D is helped by a relationship with a technical college near its Carlow, Ireland, headquarters. Seed uses the school's wind tunnel to help with aerodynamics for this ball's 336-dimple pattern. The three-piece model has been Seed's flagship, and this year's update features distance improvements that include a larger, more resilient core and a thinner urethane cover. The softer urethane formulation than past versions improves spin and feel on short-game shots. **\$35**

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
INNOVATION ★★★★★

FEEL RATING (SOFT TO FIRM)  
SEED ◀.....◀◀.....▶

● TITLEIST TOUR SPEED



This ball straddles a middle ground between the distance off the tee that Surlyn-covered balls typically produce and the possibility of more greenside spin that balls with a urethane cover usually have—all for \$15 less than a Pro V1. The urethane cover here is a thermoset process compared to the top-shelf cast process that saves cost. (If you notice a difference, you can always go up in class, but you probably won't.) More importantly, a reformulated high-compression core and a new ionomer mantle layer provide less spin on the longer shots for better flight. **\$42**

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
INNOVATION ★★★★★½

FEEL RATING (SOFT TO FIRM)  
TOUR SPEED ◀.....◀◀.....▶



## ● BRIDGESTONE E6



The e6 has been a staple of the company's ball line for nearly two decades because it addresses the needs of the majority of regular golfers.

About four years ago Bridgestone changed the e6's construction from three pieces to two pieces, which included a softer core and a cover made to maximize the distance and accuracy that the e6 has become known for.

The ball has a gradational core that is softer in the center for forgiveness and firmer on the outside to deliver needed speed. The core also is larger than Bridgestone's tour-caliber balls. This allows for a thinner cover. Having a larger core provides golfers with slower swing speeds the boost they need. The seamless Surlyn cover helps promote durability, too. **\$25**

### PERFORMANCE

★★★★★

### INNOVATION

★★★★★

### FEEL RATING (SOFT TO FIRM)



## ● BRIDGESTONE E12 CONTACT



The "Contact" in the ball's name refers to "contact science," or what happens when the ball meets the club. Specifically, it's about how rubber reacts in a high-heat, high-friction interaction much like the rubber on a tire meeting the road—something Bridgestone has expertise in.

The new version maintains a similar dimple design as the original with a raised area in the center that results in more contact area at impact. This results in an efficient transfer of energy that "activates" the core better for faster ball speeds and reduces sidespin off the longer clubs. Modifications were made to the depth and outer portion of the dimple to flatten the flight.

The cover features an additive that promotes friction at impact for more short-game spin. **\$35**

### PERFORMANCE

★★★★★

### INNOVATION

★★★★★

### FEEL RATING (SOFT TO FIRM)



## ● CALLAWAY ERC SOFT



The ball has three layers, but more than 100 different materials are used to create those components. Without getting too deep into the chemistry, Callaway found that some materials on their own aren't all that elastic. That's not great when you want to increase distance. In this ball, the core has been reformulated with a new technology that provides a higher cross-linked density. This leads to a little bit more speed at impact but maintains the ball's low compression.

Changes have been made to the cover, too. A urethane coating is applied that adds as much as 400 revolutions per minute on wedge and pitch shots without impacting other parts of the game. The price is on the high end of the category, but, hey, 100 materials don't come cheap. **\$40**

### PERFORMANCE

★★★★★

### INNOVATION

★★★★★

### FEEL RATING (SOFT TO FIRM)



## ● CALLAWAY SUPERSOFT



A ball named Supersoft needs to maintain a cushiony feel, but it can't do this at the expense of distance in this category. Callaway made sure this would not be an issue through a change to the core's formula that allows for slightly more speed without affecting the ball's compression. In addition to keeping the feel intact, maintaining a low compression has the benefit of helping reduce spin on long shots—the type that typically go crooked.

To help provide more control around the greens, Callaway has tweaked its cover material to improve how the ball interacts with the grooves on wedges.

More distance and greenside control at a palatable price? There's a reason the Supersoft ball has resonated with golfers for several years. **\$25**

### PERFORMANCE

★★★★½

### INNOVATION

★★★★½

### FEEL RATING (SOFT TO FIRM)



## ● MAXFLI SOFTFLI



As its name suggests, the Softfli emphasizes a pillow feel that Maxfli achieves through an unusually low 35 compression. Soft feel, however, is far from this ball's only positive attribute. Launching the ball high with less spin is often a great recipe for more driver distance. Maxfli has designed a new core formula to help create faster ball speeds by reducing spin, and the dimple pattern provides a higher flight, especially off driver strikes.

The Surlyn cover offers maximum durability (an important trait for cost-conscious everyday players) and uses a side stamp to help with alignment in which a pair of black lines frame the name of the ball. The price might be appealing for those who tend to go through a sleeve per round. **\$25**

### PERFORMANCE

★★★★½

### INNOVATION

★★★★

### FEEL RATING (SOFT TO FIRM)







● **SRIXON**  
**Q-STAR**



On the surface, Srixon's two-piece Q-Star appears to be a relatively basic ball. Its playing attributes, however, suggest far more. With a low overall compression compared to previous generations, the Q-Star delivers better distance off the tee and enhanced feel when approaching the green, particularly for most average golfers with moderate and below-average swing speeds. The benefit of lower compression is reduced spin on tee shots, which can lead to slightly straighter, slightly longer drives.

A new core is designed to increase launch angle, but the real hero is the cover coating that creates an elastic surface that allows the grooves on wedges and short irons to grab the ball because of enhanced friction, leading to higher short-game spin. **\$28**

**PERFORMANCE**

★★★★½

**INNOVATION**

★★★★½

**FEEL RATING (SOFT TO FIRM)**



● **TAYLORMADE**  
**SOFT RESPONSE**



TaylorMade shows it is in command of its multilayer technology with subtle but significant improvements to this ball. With soft, two-piece golf balls there are a couple of ways to increase speed. One is through a firmer cover, but that defeats the purpose of being soft. Instead, the company opted to make this model a three-piece construction and use a fast, resilient mantle layer to bring the heat and produce a ball with a 50 compression—10 points lower than the previous version.

The soft core and cover allow shots to be compressed more easily by non-tour-level swing speeds (which is the majority of the golf population). This creates a desirable combination of low spin and more ball speed that leads to extra yards while maintaining a soft feel. **\$30**

**PERFORMANCE**

★★★★

**INNOVATION**

★★★★

**FEEL RATING (SOFT TO FIRM)**



● **TITLEIST**  
**TOUR SOFT**



When enhancing one attribute, golf-ball designers often have to compromise performance in another, except when it comes to improving a ball's aerodynamics. If an aerodynamic pattern provides more distance, it's essentially free yards because it's not affecting anything else.

Using a "quadrilateral dipyramid pattern" with 346 dimples, the aerodynamic design is similar to that of the Tour Speed model but altered to provide more surface coverage to achieve a lower flight compared to the Tour Speed. This provides a distance boost. The large, (1.60 inches) soft-compression core is married to a thin proprietary ionomer blend cover that produces better greenside grab than typical non-urethane-cover balls. **\$37**

**PERFORMANCE**

★★★★

**INNOVATION**

★★★★½

**FEEL RATING (SOFT TO FIRM)**



● **WILSON**  
**DUO SOFT**



The Wilson Duo has been setting the standard for low-compression two-piece balls since it debuted in 2011. The latest model continues down that path with what the company claims is "the world's softest golf ball."

Though soft is terrific—and this ball is with a compression of 38—no golfer is willing to sacrifice significant yards to enjoy a soft feel. Wilson understands this and set out to make a ball with increased velocity, too. The secret sauce is the presence of additional Zinc pentachlorothiophenol in the core. For those without a degree in chemistry, in layman's terms using more of it in the core helps amplify the power of a player's swing, especially for those swinging in the 90-miles-per-hour range or slower. No lessons required. **\$23**

**PERFORMANCE**

★★★★½

**INNOVATION**

★★★★½

**FEEL RATING (SOFT TO FIRM)**



● **BRIDGESTONE**  
**E9 LONG DRIVE**



With balls in the non-urethane category shifting from being firm, distance-driven models to softer-feeling balls, Bridgestone saw an opportunity to create a new ball for maximum distance. Who better to advise them than those who participate in World Long Drive competitions? The result is a ball that works for those swinging at super-human speeds as well as for everyday players.

The core has a different gradient slope than other Bridgestone models. The outer region is firmer, and the center is softer to maximize velocity. The seamless, injection-molded cover features the 330-dimple pattern from the old B330 ball with altered radiuses and dimpled contours to produce less drag to further increase distance. **\$30**

**PERFORMANCE**

★★★★

**INNOVATION**

★★★★

**FEEL RATING (SOFT TO FIRM)**





## ● MAXFLI TRIFLI



Many everyday golfers tend to hit the ball offline to some degree. That's even more of an issue for golfers whose skill level is better suited for a scramble or best-ball event than a club championship.

Maxfli addresses this issue by revamping its cover with a new 374-dimple pattern with a combination of large and small dimples. That provides the kind of aerodynamics that help optimize launch and spin, thus leading to straighter shots, especially off the tee. Helping things is a 45-compression core that delivers a soft feel and a high-speed mantle layer that lowers spin on long shots.

Another cool feature is the large alignment aid that assists those who struggle with getting lined up on the greens. **\$35**

### PERFORMANCE

★★★★

### INNOVATION

★★★★½

### FEEL RATING (SOFT TO FIRM)



## ● SRIXON SOFT FEEL



Now in its 13th iteration, the Srixon Soft Feel is one of the most venerable ball models in the game. There's a reason for that: It delivers many desirable traits that golfers shopping in this category value. It delivers many desirable traits that golfers shopping in this category value.

Although Srixon says the core is one of its softest to date, it is still highly resilient, snapping back into shape quicker after impact thanks to being extremely soft in the center and getting gradually firmer toward the outer part. That delivers more distance and reduces spin on full swings.

For the cover, Srixon continues to use its 338-dimple pattern that is designed to allow the ball to cut through the air with less resistance. This ball is a viable option for a number of golfers seeking a soft feel with a soft touch on the wallet. **\$23**

### PERFORMANCE

★★★★

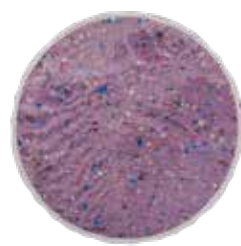
### INNOVATION

★★★★

### FEEL RATING (SOFT TO FIRM)



## ● TITLEIST TRUFEEL



There's no disputing a larger core in a two-piece ball typically leads to more distance. Making a large core in a soft-feeling, low-compression ball, however, is a manufacturing achievement. For this ball that meant re-writing software and upgrading equipment to control material flow. The result is a core that is larger (1.60 inches) to provide additional speed and keep the soft feel the ball is known for.

A reformulated spherically-tiled 376-dimple pattern achieves the proper spin to enhance distance and provide a touch of greenside control. Also noticeable is a new sidestamp design inspired by the most popular alignment aid chosen through the My Titleist customizer on Titleist.com since alignment options debuted in 2018. **\$25**

### PERFORMANCE

★★★★

### INNOVATION

★★★★

### FEEL RATING (SOFT TO FIRM)



## ● TITLEIST VELOCITY



Since its debut, Titleist's Velocity has made it clear this ball is for those seeking one thing: as many yards as possible off the tee and the ability to puff out your chest for hitting less club into the green than your opponent. To achieve this, the company made a change to a higher-compression, 1.55-inch core to give the ball more speed.

However, changing performance traits always has consequences. If one part is altered, it affects other areas. That's why an adjustment to the cover was needed. Although the 350-dimple pattern (made to foster a high trajectory) stays the same, the reformulated ionomer cover is designed to make sure spin doesn't get too high on tee shots, which could offset or outweigh the distance gains golfers want. **\$30**

### PERFORMANCE

★★★★

### INNOVATION

★★★★

### FEEL RATING (SOFT TO FIRM)



## ● XXIO REBOUND DRIVE



Maximizing ball speed for players who don't swing very fast has long been XXIO's strength. That mind-set extends to this ball designed for those swinging between 75 and 95 miles per hour. A firm mantle layer is sandwiched between a soft core and cover—the idea being the alternating soft/firm/soft layers creates the right amount of flex for each type of shot.

The core is soft but gets gradually firmer toward the perimeter to deliver a high launch and lower spin. The core also helps deliver the potential for more distance when combined with the firm mantle layer. On the cover, the 338-dimple pattern promotes a high trajectory. The cover has a sidestamp with four separate visual clues to improve aim, focus and putter position. **\$50**

### PERFORMANCE

★★★★

### INNOVATION

★★★★½

### FEEL RATING (SOFT TO FIRM)

