



What to Know

About Putters

Make demo putters available by the practice green; offer fitting sessions; place displays in high-traffic area of your golf shop

By Scott Kramer

Through the past year, PGA Professionals have offered us a lot of suggestions on how to sell more putters in the golf shop. We sifted through dozens of tips, and picked out the more commonly mentioned, creative and timeless ideas—including some that were even suggested prior to 2017.



Maybe this brainstorming will help putters become one of your hottest sellers in the year ahead.

GREEN-FRIENDLY

Far and away, the most common suggestion we hear is to keep a rack of brand new putter demo models out by the practice green. Have a knowledgeable PGA Professional nearby to answer questions, offer an alignment tip or two, and even videotape someone's stroke with a current and potential putter. You'll be amazed at how this will increase sales. Many golfers are clueless as to why they miss putts. Perhaps they've just used the same model for years and don't know any better. Encourage players to take a fresh model on the course with them. Odds are in your favor that they will buy it on the spot. In fact, if they don't, they will likely ask for another putter to test or a putting lesson.

A BETTER FIT

Some golfers struggle with their putter because it's not the proper weight, length or lie angle for their stroke. Or maybe the grip size or shape is off. As a result, they may be mis-aligning it or taking a stroke that doesn't optimize the shape of the putter head. When golfers are shown what difference the right putter in their hand can make in their score, they're much more apt to buy it. If you offer putter fitting sessions, you will differentiate yourself from much of the competition. Find a staff member who understands putters, and assign him or her to the task. Then let customers know that you offer the service.

DISPLAYS MATTER

While a good, accessible putter display is important, some PGA Professionals have multiple putter displays throughout the shop – always in high-traffic areas where customers will frequently encounter them. In some ways, putters are considered impulse buys. So even having a display by the cash register won't hurt.

"When putters are placed in a case anywhere in your shop, nobody is going to ask to see them," says Erik Johnson, PGA Director of Golf Operations at JC Resorts in San Diego. "But when they're sitting out in a bag or a rack that's approachable, customers will naturally come and pick it up, start wagging it, and say how they saw Jon Rahm or whoever using a putter like this last week. Then they say: 'You know what? I think I'll take it.'"

A GOOD READ

We constantly hear from PGA Professionals touting the merits of conducting green-reading seminars on their practice greens. You don't need to use some of the more popular systems for this, but rather some simple alignment aids plus one-on-one personal help. Or take videos from behind the golfer, with the camera low to the ground – to show them where they are aiming in relation to where they should be aiming. These sessions will pay huge dividends in terms of putting lessons and putter fitting sessions.

GROUP CLINICS

Partner up with a club company and offer group putting clinics. Some facilities find this as a surprisingly easy way to sell lessons. The manufacturer may bring giveaway putters to paying attendees, and then golfers often schedule private lessons for another day.

"Students and guests need to touch, feel and test them out," says Brady Wilson, PGA General Manager at Ak-Chin Southern Dunes Golf Club in Maricopa, Arizona. "We find that including them in the fee for a putting clinic allows the customer to get some instruction, professional fitting advice, and make a selection they feel great about." ■

What's popular in putters

- Bettinardi's **BB56** (\$300) is new for 2018. It sports a high center of gravity and high MOI to help putts get rolling immediately toward the target, and feel more solid at impact. Weighing 350 grams, the head is made of aluminum and stainless steel.
- Bloodline's milled aluminum **RJ-1** blade (\$500) is weighted so that once you line it up, you can let go of the putter and it stands on its own. Then you can adjust the aim from behind. It's adjustable for lie and length, and has an ultralight grip and carbon fiber shaft for an ultra-low balance point.
- Cleveland Golf's updated **Tfi 2135 Satin Elevado** putter (\$150-\$180, depending on grip) sports fresh high-contrast alignment lines, color scheme and speed control technology. Its milled polymer TPU face insert dampens vibration and enhances feel.
- Edel Golf's **E-1 Torque Balanced** putter (\$330) reduces the negative effects of torque, for a smooth, consistent motion that lets the head return to square at impact.
- Miura's **MGP – NM1** (\$599) is a mallet made of a fully CNC-milled stainless steel head. Its total weight is adjustable by +/- 8 grams from the stock 368 grams.
- **MLA Golf's Black Tour XDream mallet (\$349) is fully milled. Featuring a black PV finish, the satin top reduces glare and the sole is mostly mirrored. Comes with three sets of interchangeable weights. A blue option is also now available.**
- Odyssey's **O-Works Red** putter (\$199-\$219/depending on grip) is offered in three head styles. Its stainless steel Microhinge face insert is co-molded into a thermoplastic elastomer layer to enhance feel and impart topspin.
- Ping's **Sigma G series Craze-E** mallet (\$215) includes a multi-piece face made with a material used in athletic-shoe soles that yields a soft, responsive feel. A ball-wide center sight line helps alignment on this high-MOI model.
- Scotty Cameron by Titleist's **Futura 5.5M** (\$410) is a high-MOI mallet with enhanced toe flow. It combines a mallet's forgiveness with a blade's feel.
- SeeMore's **mini Giant Stealth DF** (\$395) has a deep flange and four sets of non-adjustable copper weights in the extreme toe and heel, plus the sole perimeter.
- TaylorMade's **TP Red Chaska** (\$219) is a large, face-balanced, semi-rounded mallet bearing three top sightlines. It has interchangeable sole weights, a 355-gram head weight, and a Pure Roll insert that optimizes forward roll with a firm feel.