



THE THONG ADJUSTER



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A word from the editor

Happy New Year!

Here it is 2009 already. Another exciting competitive year has gone by for the Iron Thong, and what a year it was! Our membership has grown to a solid 38 players, 21-24 show up almost every week, giving us four-to-five foursomes each round. Our goal is to grow by another dozen players in 2009 and bump our membership to about 50 players. Keep pushing our great organization to all your golfing friends and grow with us.

Winners

The year 2008 saw Jesse Flores win our ITG Championship not once, but twice! Mike Fisk and Steve VanWert claimed the ITG Points Challenge trophies, and Mike also claimed the most low net wins in the group. We changed our home course from the Golf Club of Texas to The Hawk and are planning our first tournament there in March. Our players love the layout at the Hawk and are stomping at the bit to play our first tourney there.

New member

We welcome Scott "The Shot" Thompson to our group. He's already played a few times and actually still likes us!

Missing members

As our ranks grow, so do our no-shows. Where have you been Steve Moring and Rian Suihkonen (haven't played since September), John Neyland and Ed Sharpe (haven't played since October) and Jon Alvarez, Scott Fritts, Johnny Martinez, and Gary Muniz (haven't played since November)? I'm sure you have good reasons, but we miss your money, er, I mean, we miss your smiling faces!

That's all for now,
Steve





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Go to <http://www.IronThongGolf.com> to view the current issue.

Articles, including for sale items, can be submitted at any time. Send them to the editor at stevevanwert@hughes.net.

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Just 'fore' laughs



“Maybe you should take a drop on this one.”

New Ball Old Ball

A priest is playing a round of golf at the local public course when he arrives at the 15th tee. This hole is a 160 yard par three with a lake in the front of the green. It is also the padre's nemesis, no matter how well or how poorly he is playing. Upon arriving at the tee, the priest tees up his ball, gets ready to hit and, at the last minute, looks toward the heavens and says, "God, I have been a good and decent man. Please, just this once, let me hit a shot which will carry the lake and get onto the green."

As he is about to swing, a loud, deep voice booms from the heavens and says, "Use a new ball, they go farther."

The preacher steps back, thinks about the heavenly advice and goes to his bag and gets a brand new ball. He takes his stance and once again the heavenly voice booms, "Take a practice swing first."

The preacher is now awestruck by the heavenly advice, so he steps back from the ball and takes a practice swing.

He takes his stance and gets ready to hit and the heavenly voice booms, "Use the old ball."



FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions about Golf

Q. What are the Yardage Guidelines for Par-3s, 4s and Par-5s?

A. Most golfers know the usual par lengths instinctively; we've played enough holes that we can usually be told a hole's length and know whether it's a par-3, par-4 or par-5, or, rarely, a par-6.

The USGA has periodically issued guidelines for the par-ratings of holes based on their lengths; i.e., if a hole is 200 yards, it is a par-3. Those guidelines have changed over the years, and the way they are used has changed, too.

The current guidelines are these for men:

Par 3 - Up to 250 yards; Par 4 - 251 to 470 yards; Par 5 - 471 yards to 690 yards; Par 6 - 691 yards or more

And for women:

Par 3 - Up to 210 yards; Par 4 - 211 to 400 yards; Par 5 - 401 to 575 yards; Par 6 - 575 yards or more

It's important to note that the current USGA guidelines are not, in fact, based on actual yards, but on a hole's "effective playing length." Effective playing length is one of the factors taken into account when a course is given its USGA Course Rating and USGA Slope Rating.

Effective playing length, and why it's used in these guidelines, is pretty easy to understand.

Say a hole's actual yardage is 508 yards. That hole, by its actual yards, might be a par-5. But what if the hole plays downhill all the way? It's effective playing length - how long the hole actually plays like - might be closer to 450 yards. Therefore, a hole whose actual length might make some think it should be par-5 really only plays like a par-4. According to current guidelines, that hole would be a par-4 (the guidelines are not hard and fast rules, by the way, but simply ... well, guidelines).

Prior to the introduction of effective playing length into course ratings, the guidelines were based on actual yards. It's interesting to see how they've changed over the years. We have three examples below; in each case, the yardages listed are for men:

1911

Par 3 - Up to 225 yards
Par 4 - 225 to 425 yards
Par 5 - 426 to 600 yards
Par 6 - 601 yards or more

1917

Par 3 - Up to 250 yards
Par 4 - 251 to 445 yards
Par 5 - 446 to 600 yards
Par 6 - 601 yards or more

1956

Par 3 - Up to 250 yards
Par 4 - 251 to 470 yards
Par 5 - 471 yards or more



Iron Thong member profile

Paul Tenner

Average Handicap – 11.4

Nick Name – Never had one.

Average Drive Length - 245 yards

In the Bag – Driver: Callaway ERC Fusion (9 degree); 3-Wood - Callaway Hyper X (15 degree); Hybrid: Taylor Made Rescue – 3; Irons: Callaway X-20, 4-PW, 52 GW, 56 SW, 60 LW - steel; Putter: Heavy Putter (he ain't heavy, he's my "putter"); Preferred Golf Ball: Bridgestone e6+

My history of playing golf:

I was introduced to the game (not really the game, just the driving range) by my future brother-in-law when I was 10 years old. My future b-i-l, who was 20 at the time, had just started dating my sister and he must have thought that a good way to score points with her was to act like he liked me (it worked, they are still together).

So, occasionally, he'd take me out to the driving range and I'd get to smack a few. The funny thing is that I didn't know there was an actual game called golf with holes and scoring. I thought golf was simply hitting balls at the driving range. I was one of those kids who took things quite literally.

Once I discovered that there was more to it than the driving range, my love for the game really took hold and I was hooked. I'd use my allowance to buy one club at a time, taking the bus to the dry goods store downtown to buy a club each time I had saved enough money to purchase another club. Needless to say, I wasn't buying a matched set. I still have the first golf club I ever bought, a Spalding 7 iron.

The father of my of my friends actually introduced me to the game. He'd take me and his son (Jimmy) to the golf course at Ascarate Lake to play with his group. Jimmy and I would be allowed on the course after all the scheduled tee times. We'd be there from sun up to sunset each Saturday. During the summer, my mother and Jimmy's mother would take turns each morning dropping us off and picking us up at the end of the day. The pro out there took a liking to us and he'd let us fish the lake for golf balls that could be resold in exchange for green fees.

My first matched set of clubs (Dunlop Max Powers) was a gift from my parents on my 16th birthday. In my mid to late teens, golf began to get in the way of other important things, like cars and girls. Later on college, marriage, work, and my own kids got in golf's way. I try to hit a few balls during the week, but my playing of the game is mostly limited to Saturdays with my fellow iron thongers. Before I hooked on with this group, I'd just go out and hook in with a group as a single. That's how I met Steve Schlemmer, who told me about Iron Thong.

I am constantly tinkering with my swing and setup. I am not afraid to show up on one Saturday with a new swing and/or setup from one week to the next. My search for the Holy Grail of swings continues. I can have a narrow, Louis Menchaca style, stance one week and a Darren Howard, extra wide stance the next week. I have found success in golf to be fleeting. It comes and goes. What worked for me one week fails me miserably the next week. It used to bother the crap out of me, but now I think I have made peace with the fact that search and chase for the consistent "always works" swing may be as much to what the game is about for me than whether I ever actually achieve it. Who knows, if my swing ever becomes as consistent as the one possessed by Steve V., I might become bored with the game and quit.....NOT!

My greatest moment while playing golf

I am still waiting for it. My current greatest moment was years ago when I made a hole in one for a par. Yes, I'd knocked my first ball into the water hazard. I've been close many times, most recently at Pine Forest in Bastrop, but I have never made a legitimate hole in one. My more recent greatest moment was clearing the ocean on number 18 at Pebble Beach from the tips. As intimidating as it looks on tv, it is much more so when you are actually standing there and attempting to do it yourself.

My most memorable moment while playing golf

Actually, two stand out: The summer of 2006, when I played Pebble Beach, Poppy Hills, and

Spyglass on consecutive days.

The next was when I was a kid, my friend Jimmy and I were playing at Santa Teresa near El Paso. The course had just recently opened and they were giving away free rounds to encourage membership at the country club. The Merry Mex, Lee Trevino, had designed the course and had a house built for him in the neighborhood. I sliced off the tee box and the ball landed next to a worker who was planting a tree next to the right side of the fairway. I yelled "fore" when I saw the ball heading toward the guy, but he never looked up.

When I got to my ball the guy thanked me for having the courtesy to shout a warning. The worker planting the tree, Lee Trevino, himself. He took the time to talk to me and Jimmy and he signed our golf balls.

My worst moment while playing golf

I did not know it was my worst moment until this morning. When we played The Hawk on 11/22/08, I was on the 18th green in regulation and I lagged my birdie putt to within 6 inches. I wanted to finish out, which required me to take a contorted stance so as not to be standing in the lies of Ron B. and Johnny M. I knew I should have just marked the ball and waited to finish out, but I let the closeness of my ball to the cup and my impatience get the best of me. You know what's coming next. Yes, I missed the damn tap in.

The following Monday morning, I discovered that had I made the putt, I would have tied Paul G.'s low score and I would have split the money with him.

What I like best about being a Thonger

The absolute best part of being a thonger is the blend of ages and different personalities.

The best and worst parts of my game

Best: I am pretty good with chipping it close enough to give myself a chance to save par. I do it a lot since I don't frequently enough hit greens in regulation.

Worst: Unfortunately, while my chipping gets me close enough to save a lot of pars, I am usually undone by my poor putting.

Six things to spend money on in 2009

New equipment for 2009

Tour Edge Exotics XCG-V Driver



The Exotics line of woods and hybrids from Tour Edge incorporates a multi-material approach that leads to efficient repositioning of weight for a lower, deeper center of gravity. In the Exotics XCG-V driver, a titanium cup face is teamed with a magnesium crown and a steel soleplate. That brazing technique alone saves weight; so does the magnesium crown, which Tour Edge says weighs half as much as a titanium crown would. The weight saved through these materials and methods is redistributed to the heavy steel soleplate. The results is a driver that has 49-percent of its weight below the level of the ball and in its rearward corners. And, Tour Edge says, a driver that offers the lowest, deepest center of gravity of any Exotics driver to date.

The stock shafts are the Graphite Design Tour AD (L, A, R, S, X flexes) and Aldila Voodoo VS6 65-gram (R, S, X) shafts. Available lofts are 9, 10.5 and 12 degrees; the 10.5-lofted driver is available in left-hand. All the drivers come with 45-inch shafts and square face angles.

The MSRP for the Tour Edge Exotics XCG-V Driver is \$499. Visit www.touredge.com for more info.

Miura Series 1957 Putters



Miura Golf, the high-end Japanese club company, has a new line called Series 1957, so named because company founder Katsuhiro Miura began his career in the golf business in that year. Mr. Miura is now 66 years old, so you can do the math (he was young when he got into the business).

The first elements of Series 1957 are two putter models new for 2009 (each was released on Dec. 1, 2008). The Series 1957 putters were designed for players seeking the very best," Mr. Miura says in a company news release. The models are the KM 350 pictured here, a classic blade; and the MP 005 model, also a traditional design.

The MSRP for each in the United States is \$390. Visit www.miuragolf.com for more info.

BagBoy Revolver Pro Cart Bag

The BagBoy Revolver was introduced in 2006 as a golf bag with a rotating top - the tubing rotated 360 degrees for quick access to clubs.

The BagBoy Revolver Pro is a "deluxe version" of the original, a cart bag that also includes Clip-Lok technology. The clubs remain protected within the bag, despite that rotational ability, because of the 14 individual club clips incorporated into the molded top. These lock the club in place, plus the shafts are prevented



from twisting together during rotation through the use of full-length dividers.

New features in the Revolver Pro include a removable cooler pocket, two putter wells on the outside of the bag, and quick-access ball sleeve.

The BagBoy Revolver Pro cart bag carries an MSRP of \$199.95, which includes matching rain hood and umbrella sleeve. Visit www.bagboycompany.com for more info.

Sun Mountain WeatherShield Outerwear



The RainFlex fabric is water resistant, windproof and stretchable. Sun Mountain is also using the RainFlex fabric to create a new line called WeatherShield, in which the RainFlex shell is bonded to a soft fleece lining that provides warmth.

Sun Mountain's 2009 WeatherShield line includes a men's full-zip jacket in red/black, white/black and black color schemes; plus a reversible vest style that comes in color combos of charcoal/black, titanium/lava, red/black, black/charcoal and cactus/titanium.

The jacket has an MSRP of \$140 and the vest an MSRP of \$100. Visit www.sunmountain.com for more info.

Bushnell Tour V2 Laser Rangefinder

Bushnell's PinSeeker 1500 Slope Edition was the first "slope-enabled" laser rangefinder. Now comes the Tour V2 with Slope, the latest laser rangefinder from Bushnell. The Tour V2 has the ability to "interpret" inclines and declines between you and the hole, adjusting the yardage for you. For an uphill shot you'll need more club; for a downhill shot, less. The Tour V2 does this with a built-in "inclinometer" that measures the degree of the incline or decline.

The Bushnell Tour V2 with Slope laser rangefinder carries an MSRP of \$399. Visit www.bushnellgolf.com for more info.



Evolve Sweet Spot System for Golf Tees

Evolve Golf is the company behind the Sweet Spot System for its golf tees. Certain Evolve Golf tees are marked with four dots. These dots are "depth of insertion marks" - guides that help the golfer achieve consistent tee height. The Sweet Spot System is an online tool now available on the Evolve Golf Web site that tells golfers what that proper tee height is for specific makes and models of drivers.

How does it work? Visit evolvegolf.com/settings.php and click the "start now" button. Choose men's or women's drivers, then use the drop-down menus to select your driver make, model and year. The Sweet Spot System tool then shows you which tee depth marker (one of the four dots) to use as your target for tee height. The online tool is free to use. Tees with the "depth of insertion marks" are available on various models throughout the Evolve Golf catalog.



The Golfer's List of New Year's Resolutions - From a Maintenance Perspective!

By Larry Gilhuly
USGA

Okay, so you have read your share of New Year's resolution lists. Probably have had your fill of them, but there are certain New Year's resolutions that golfers should make to show the proper respect and care of their golf course that they may forget to do now and then. With the New Year in mind, the following list is offered to encourage all players to understand the positive and negative impact your presence has on your golf course.

1. **I resolve** to understand that a bunker should be left the way it was when I entered it by **properly** raking my footprints and blast mark, regardless of how good or inept my attempt has been.

2. **I resolve** to bend over when filling my divot with sand/seed to make sure the area is filled properly and to not damage the mowers.

3. **I resolve** to learn how to properly fix all of my ball marks by pushing and not lifting them up, thereby exposing soil and causing weeks of recovery.

4. **I resolve** to realize that any sign that has a directional arrow with the word "carts" on it means I should go in that direction when driving a power cart.

5. **I resolve** to avoid walking over ropes held up by stakes that are meant to move traffic away from a weakened area. When I trip over said rope I will take personal responsibility for my mistake.

6. **I resolve** to understand that those operating maintenance equipment can be injured by my attempts at striking a very hard white ball. A few seconds of patience is always the best policy.

7. **I resolve** to remember that cart paths are not like a road where parking is needed on the edges. I will park/drive my golf cart on the hard surface only to avoid wearing out the edges.

8. **I resolve** to understand that trees never grow smaller as they age and shade/roots sometimes mean tree removal is necessary.

9. **I resolve** to understand that all greens are different, thus green speed should not be the same from course-to-course as detecting and adapting to different course conditions is an inherent part of the challenge of the game.

10. **And finally, I resolve** to remember that the game is just that - a game. I will accept responsibility for my success or failure at this difficult game, even while sitting in the 19th hole!