



# THE THONG ADJUSTER



Vol. 4 No. 6

June 2009



The unofficial online magazine of The Iron Thong Golf Gang



## Page 1

The Putter speaks

## Pages 2-3

Golf Tips:  
Analysis  
Paralysis

## Pages 4-5

Fix that fault!  
Fat, thin and  
the "S" word

## Page 6

What do the  
numbers on a  
golf ball mean?

## The Putter speaks

A word from the editor

Well, the month of May went by in a flash, at least the last week of it! Mike Fisk, Ron Boone, Richard Roberts and I spent the Memorial Day week at the National Retired Military Golf Classic in Myrtle Beach, S.C. We may have missed a couple of Saturdays here with the Thongers, but we played seven straight days of golf in the golf paradise of the United States. Not a bad trade-off, I think.

None of us won anything, in case you're wondering, at least not in the tournament. Mike won a \$100 gift certificate for the Myrtle Beach National golf shop and Ron won a \$250 gift certificate at Martin's Golf, one of the biggest golf merchandise stores you've ever seen – sorta Golfsmith on steroids! Mike's was a daily drawing winner and Ron won a Closest-to-the-Hole prize.

The tournament is a yearly event, and I urge any of you Thongers who are retired military to consider entering. It's four rounds of scramble golf over four days at four different courses, playing with a different team every day. There are daily drawings, mulligan drawings, four Closest-to-the-Pin contests every day, and the top 50 players win cash, which (as Yogi says) is just as good as money.

I know Louis Menchaca is considering playing next year. If any of you want more info, just ask one of us. What a week!

Just a note: if you haven't paid your dues, please do so. Also, your officers are meeting again this month, so expect another "State of the Thong" message from me soon.

See ya Saturday!  
Steve





The Thong Adjuster is published online monthly for The Iron Thong Golf Group members.

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](mailto:stevevanwert@hughes.net).

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# GOLF tips

## ‘Analysis Paralysis’ in golfers confirmed by study

*Researchers find thinking about mechanics between shots can harm golfer's game*

By Brent Kelley

Chi Chi Rodriguez has long lamented his poor putting. "If I could putt, you would've never heard of Arnold Palmer," he's been known to say. But Rodriguez wasn't always a poor putter. There was a time in his early career, he once told me, that he was a great putter. What happened?

"I never knew what I did putting," Rodriguez said. "I just knew that there was a hole, there was a ball, there was a putter, I was supposed to knock the ball in the hole. (But then) a magazine paid me \$50 to figure out what I did putting, and I haven't putted good since."

Ah, yes: Overthinking. Analysis paralysis.

Ralph Guldahl was a 16-time winner and 3-time major champion in the 1930s, on his way, perhaps, to being an all-time great, when his game deserted him. What happened? One theory is that when Guldahl, a feel player, wrote an instructional book, he overthought his swing and could never get back that *feel*. Analysis paralysis.

This sort of thing doesn't happen to great players all that often. But it's much more likely to happen to the rest of us. We overthink every little detail and wind up tying ourselves in knots. Our games suffer.

And it turns out that the "analysis paralysis" phenomenon has been studied by a group of American scientists and St. Andrews University scholars. And their finding is that golfers are definitely susceptible to thinking too much.



## Analysis Paralysis

Continued from page 2

The BBC reported the findings thusly:

Golfers who think too much about their technique between shots could be seriously affecting their performance, a study has suggested.

St Andrews University and US scientists said they had established that too much analysis made the golfer's game worse.

They said thinking too much about the previous shot can disrupt performance.

In total, 80 golfers were given shots to practise until they got it right. Those who discussed their putting between strokes took twice as long.

The study found that when the mix of skilled and novice golfers tried again, those who had discussed the shot took longer to get the shots right as those people who had spent a couple of minutes engaged in other, unrelated activities.

St. Andrews University psychology professor Michael Anderson told the BBC that the effect was particularly dramatic in skilled golfers who spent five minutes discussing their putting technique, before attempting to putt again. Those skilled golfers were "reduced to the level of performance of novices," Anderson said, after the self-analysis of their putting technique.

The effect wasn't seen in novices, probably because beginners don't have much room to get worse. So beginners: Analyze away.

Intermediate and advanced golfers, however, may want to save the analysis for practice sessions while during play trying to keep in-depth analysis at bay.

What effect might be at work in "analysis paralysis" for golfers? The BBC report states:

The researchers think the loss of performance was due to an effect called verbal overshadowing, which makes the brain focus more on language centres rather than on brain systems that support the skills in question.

The study, which also involved the University of Michigan, marks the first time researchers have claimed to demonstrate that verbal overshadowing can adversely affect motor skills.



# Fix that fault!

## How to stop hitting it fat, thin, and that dreaded 'S' word

(Editor's Note: The tips below are written by instructor Roger Gunn from the perspective of a right-hander; lefties should reverse the directional elements.)

### Diagnosing Fat Shots

#### Grip

Not normally a factor with fat shots.

#### Set-up

Your weight might be too far to the right and/or your right shoulder might be too low at address. Your aim could be too far to the right.

#### Ball Position

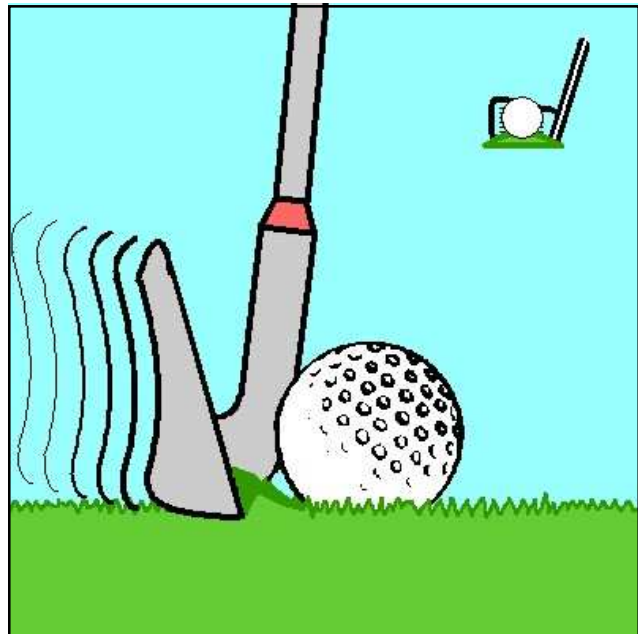
The ball might be too far forward (toward the left foot) in your stance.

#### Backswing

You might be taking the club too far inside, away from the target line. Your posture should remain the same without leaning toward the ball or lowering your head.

#### Downswing

You might be too far to the right on the downswing. Keep your posture without lowering your head toward the ball. *Shift your weight!* You should have some 80-percent of your weight on the front foot at impact.



*The club strikes the ground prior to striking ball to produce a fat shot.*

*Illustration by William Glessner*

### Diagnosing Thin Shots

#### Grip

Not normally a factor in thin shots.

#### Set-up

Your shoulders could be pointing well right or well left at address. This puts the bottom of the swing in the wrong place.

#### Ball Position

Look for a large deviation from the norm. A driver's ball position should be around the front heel, moving progressively farther back until it reaches the middle of the stance with short irons ([photo](#)).

#### Backswing

The club may be deviating from its gentle arc on the backswing, tracking a path that's either

too much inside or too much outside. Posture should remain constant without raising up.

### **Downswing**

No effort should be made to lift the ball into the air by pulling your arms up through impact. Check to make sure the circle of your swing is in the right place by making practice swings to see if you can hit the ground slightly after the ball.

### **Diagnosing Shanking**

#### **Grip**

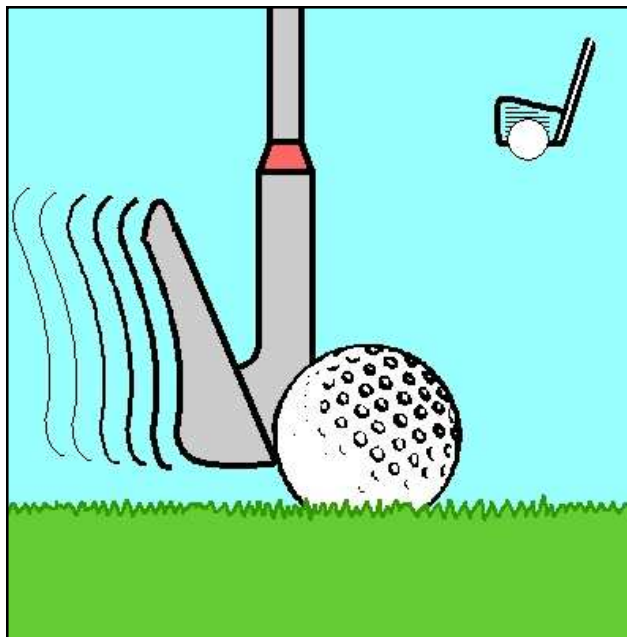
Not a contributing factor.

#### **Set-up**

You might be set up too close to the ball, or be too tall in your setup, or you might have too much weight on your heels.

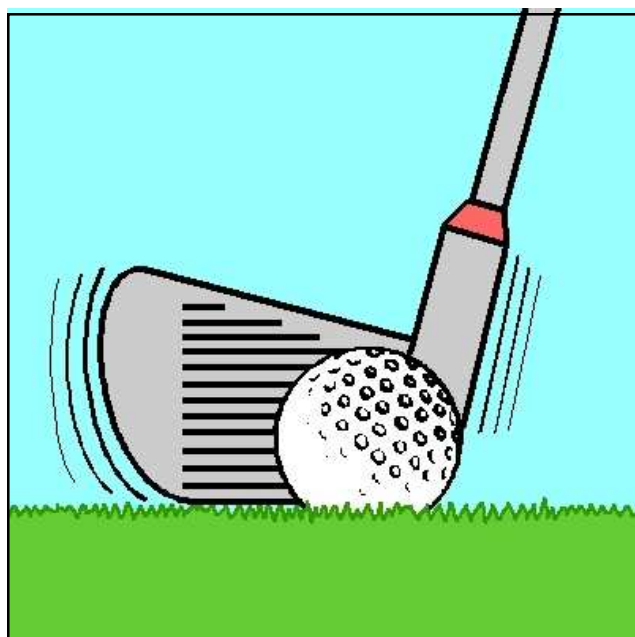
#### **Ball Position**

Having the ball too far forward or back in your stance should not be a factor. But as mentioned, standing too close can be.



*Thin shots occur when the clubface contacts the ball near its equator or a little below.*

*Illustration by William Glessner*



*The club and ball come together at the hosel to produce a shank.*

*Illustration by William Glessner*

### **Backswing**

Watch out for pushing the arms and club away from you in the backswing. The arms should just go with the turn of the shoulders. Also, leaning toward the ball or toward the target with your head can cause a shank.

### **Downswing**

Watch out for pushing your arms away from you in the downswing. Leaning toward the ball (dropping down) or toward the target with your head can also cause a shank.

# What do the numbers on a golf ball mean?

From Brent Kelley

Every golf ball has numbers on it. How many numbers and which numbers vary from brand to brand, but they all have at least one number.

That one number is most likely to be a 1, 2, 3 or 4 (although it can also be anything from a zero to a 9). What do these numbers mean?

Nothing, really. These single-digit numbers are simply there for identification purposes. If the members of a foursome are all playing a Titleist NXT ball, for example, one might play a ball with the number "1," another a "2," the third a "3," and the fourth a "4." This will allow the members to keep track of which ball belongs to each player.

These numbers usually appear just below the branding of the ball's name. All the balls from the same sleeve will have the same ID number.

A golf ball might also have a three-digit number on it, usually something in the 300s or 400s.

If you notice such a number on a ball, this number is letting you know how many dimples are on the ball.

Another number that might appear on golf balls is the ball's compression rating. Until solid core balls drove the wound ball almost completely out of the market - beginning in the late 90s - compression rating was a big deal to golfers. A compression rating of 70 or 80 for a wound ball was regarded as an indicator that ball was a "ladies ball." A compression rating of 110 meant you had to swing very hard to make that ball work right (the he-man ball).

We know now that compression relates much more to feel than to distance. Solid, soft-core balls are a huge segment of the golf ball market now, and the compressions these days can be way down in the 30s or 40s (ranging up to 100 or so). When these low-compression balls first started appearing on the market, manufacturers felt there was still a stigma attached to low compression - i.e., that a low-compression ball would be viewed as a "ladies ball." And so numbers representing compression were dropped from most golf balls.

You'll still find them on some brands, however, and they are almost certain - these days - to be two digits.

So, to recap: A single-digit number is there for identification; a double-digit number most likely represents compression; a triple-digit number most likely represents the number of dimples