

GEOMETRY:

Changing the Shape of the **GAME**

*What's new in equipment for 2007?
The answer is simple: **PLENTY.***

By Pete Wofford

Give some thought to the question, "What's new in golf equipment?" and the answer might be one that's off the wall: "These people have too much free time on their hands."

As an example of some of the products to hit the market in 2007, clubmakers are trying square-headed drivers, one of Wilson's top innovations is a 50-compression ball, and FootJoy has introduced a shoe that the wearer doesn't actually tie.

Are these ideas fads or improved technologies? Time will tell.

Getting square or, at least, going big is the new trend for 2007 in oversized multi-material drivers. The promise is in the geometry or "moment of inertia (MOI)," where claims of less clubhead twist means straighter drives—that mis-hits will be more playable.

The square clubhead shape is obvious and clearly noticeable, and in addition, a player definitely will hear the difference. Nike's SasQuatch SUMO2 (Squared) neon yellow sole plate glows as the whack of impact turns heads.

[In the spring, Nike confirmed that some of the SUMO2 drivers may have been nonconforming to USGA

specifications. The company said the potential problem was identified and corrected in February, so that SUMO2 drivers sold from that point and thereafter were those that conform to "The Rules of Golf." For golfers who are not certain if their new SUMO2 conformed to USGA regulations, the company also initiated a program, scheduled to end on April 30, to test and replace clubs where needed.]

"It is a matter of rearranging geometry," said Tom Stites, director of club creation for Nike Golf. "The science has been there, but the timing was not always feasible until the advancement in materials and resources."

Also pushing the boundaries of square design is Callaway's FT-i, promoting clubhead weight distribution to the extreme corners.

Joining the high MOI race but in a more traditional pear shape are drivers from Titleist and TaylorMade. The Titleist 907D1 is multi-material with tapered face thickness. The company claims the triangular shape has a 28 percent higher MOI and the shape is more efficient in weight distribution and drag. The TaylorMade r7 SuperQuad has maximized size and taken Moveable Weight Technology to the



Nike SasQuatch SUMO2
MSRP \$479
www.nikegolf.com

extreme with 26 grams creating up to 63,000 center of gravity combinations.

Tour Edge, a club manufacturer in Batavia, Ill., has unveiled its Exotics CB2 fairway wood for 2007. Featuring a titanium-cupped face with a heavier hyper-steel body, the club has been promoted as being 20 yards longer than any other fairway wood. The titanium cap is 30 percent lighter than its predecessor, allowing 70 grams of weight to be transferred to the sole for a deeper and lower center of gravity.

In the area of putters, the Ping Redwood series and Scotty Cameron's Titleist Detour share in the "what's new?" category. Ping's Redwood putters, which target the premium golfer, feature heavier, stainless steel-milled designs. The Titleist Detour series also features high moment of inertia with backweighting. The putter's curved profile, with its extended orange sightline, which is straight for the first inch and curves thereafter, shows the player the proper path.



Tour-Edge Exotics CB2
MSRP, \$350
www.exoticsgolf.com

And the way two-piece golf balls are traveling, why not a softer core that Wilson claims in the new Staff 50, which also is the ball compression that the company claims provides a softer feel around greens and a greater acceleration off the tee.

One of FootJoy's newest products is its ReelFit line. The shoe has no laces across the instep. Instead, 49 strands of wire run between there and a reel that is located on the heel. By turning the reel one way or the other, the wires are tightened or loosened.

The ReelFit line will be available in mid-October. 🍷

Pete Wofford is a freelance writer from Mount Pleasant, S.C.



Titleist 907D1
MSRP, \$500
www.titleist.com



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