



By: Steve Hosid
Instruction Editor - PGA TOUR Partners Magazine
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The U.S. Open is going to be a prime-time televised event on NBC, at least in the East. NBC announced that its Saturday third-round coverage, from Torrey Pines in San Diego, will air from 4 p.m. to 10 p.m. Eastern time and it will carry Sunday's fourth round from 3 to 9 p.m. Eastern time. The Open has been seen in prime time in the East before, but only because of weather delays. In the future this will be more common because the Open will be at Pebble Beach in 2010 and at the Olympic Club in San Francisco in 2012.

At the height of his recent putting struggles Phil Mickelson figured out the problem could be something the size of a tee. His recent stretching exercises may have added length to his torso in place of the girth. "In the last few years I've probably grown a half inch to an inch," Lefty told me, "so I figured out my putter was too short." Phil added an inch and a half to his putter shaft, which is now 35 inches. He was working hard with Dave Pelz concentrating on the angle of the putter's face through impact.

I also spoke to him about how hard Torrey Pines is playing in its current Open configuration, knowing he had recently played it with two friends (scratch amateurs who both shot an 85). "I think it's the hardest course in the world, 7,600 yards at sea level. The rough was particularly brutal, even by usual U.S. Open standards. Even if it's soft I don't think anything close to even-par will win." **While Phil was working on his putting, American Ryder Cup captain Paul Azinger** was busy making some personal appearances during the parties leading up to The Kentucky Derby. Sampling the special \$1,000 mint juleps that raise money for charity, Azinger said "I think we'll serve these every day for our players."

Coming off his victory at the Masters, Trevor Immelman missed the cut at the Nelson, continuing a 20-year tradition of most Masters winners not winning the next PGA Tour event they play. He missed the cut at Charlotte this week too.

Is it any wonder the pros love playing in Charlotte? Here are some of the perks: clubhouse valet parking and a private lounge and eating area for the caddies; monogramming the initials of a top golfer's children on hotel pillows and towels; chartering a jet for an outing to the historic Biltmore in Asheville, N.C., for players' wives; and a player-services area to rival the concierge desk at a five-star hotel. I forgot one thing: The highest purse on Tour at \$6.4 million.

So are you all set for The Players Championship? I was wrong last year when I complained when it moved in the schedule from two weeks before the Masters to all by itself in May. If it's ever going to become the fifth major in the modern era, which it should be, then this is perfect. Even without Tiger it's going to be a great event.



SST Bags Lucky Win No. 13

Denis Watson, who SST PUREs his clubs, won the FedEx Kinkos Classic over Nick Price (who also has a history of PUREing his clubs) this week to deny Price his first Champions Tour Victory. Watson birdied the 18th hole to avoid a four-way playoff.

On the PGA Tour, Robert Allenby led a contingent of players with SST PUREd clubs with a fourth-place finish. He was joined by Jim Furyk, the amazing Fred Couples and Stewart Cink in the top 10.

Grafalloy released some information this week about their new shafts, which are manufactured by overlaying single direction fibers orientated in six specific directions, each orientation contributing differently to feel and performance. They said that they can produce shafts that are 50 percent more cross sectionally stable when compared to shafts like Mitsubishi Whiteboard or the Aldila SVS Proto.

SST has been telling the world for years that shafts are not round or straight and that they are not stable in random assembly. Combine the Grafalloy announcement with that of the renowned equipment expert Frank Thomas (of USGA fame) about never having seen a straight shaft, and you can now fully understand the need to SST PURE your shafts.

It's easy for the players on TOUR to have their shafts PUREd because the SST PURE Shaft Alignment Lab travels to the tournaments. You easily can have your shafts PUREd by locating the SST PURE licensee that is either in your city or close by.

Vijay Singh had clubs PUREd this week along with a player I'm busting at the seams to tell you about. Once we know he's put them in play we can reveal the name. Others who had clubs PUREd are Robert Garrigus, Brad Adamonis, Marco Dawson, Jeff Overton, J.L. Lewis, Tommy Armour III, Tim Petrovic, Jeff Quinney, Bob Estes, Garrett Willis, Jay Williamson, and Chad Collins.

So make this the week you start PUREing your clubs. If the pros are doing it, help your game by PUREing your shafts too!

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