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The Professional Golfers' Association

SHOW STOPPERS

We didn't quite manage to see all 10,000 items on display at the world's biggest golf exhibition in Orlando earlier this year (44,000 visitors, 4 million sq ft, a 200,000 sq ft driving range!) but here's the best 10 that caught our eye...

1

Callaway Fusion FT-3 driver

Callaway's answer to TaylorMade's r7, the FT-3 is the company's moveable weight driver, only here the weights aren't actually moveable. Instead of screwing the weights into the head to help effect a certain shape of shot, the weights in the FT-3 come factory installed. This has the advantage of removing the guesswork for the player who is not entirely sure what he needs but the disadvantage of not being able to change the position of the weights should you so desire.

The club is, as its name suggests, a fusion of titanium and carbon. Using a lightweight carbon composite for the body of the driver allows for better perimeter weighting and a higher moment of inertia (MOI) which stabilises the clubhead when you hit the ball off-centre, something we amateurs do from time to time. The titanium is in the face, of course, where it can effect 'maximum energy transfer'.

The club feels light, fast and, importantly, stable. Without too much effort the ball launches incredibly high and just keeps on going – no high-spinning balloons here.

callawaygolf.com



2

Nike SasQuatch

Like the hairy manbeast after which it is named, the SasQuatch is one funny looking club. And just as you would if you saw the 'real' thing, you'll probably do a double-take when you first spot a SasQuatch driver.

It seems impossibly large for starters, way bigger than the 460cc limit the rules allow, in fact. It is extremely long from front to back but by virtue of it being shallower than most other drivers it actually hits the 460 limit on the nose. In an attempt to minimise the startling effect such a long, wide clubface has, Nike coloured most of the crown black and made in the shape of a more traditional clubhead, while the additional titanium on the back, known as the PowerBow, is coloured grey.

With its wide, shallow design, the centre of gravity is set way back and low in the head making it ridiculously easy to hit high, long tee balls.

nikegolf.com

3

Mark Mender

This pitch-mark repair tool first appeared in Orlando a couple of years ago but this year's version is stronger. If used correctly a tee does a pretty good job of repairing damage made by a ball impacting the green but if done incorrectly you're just making the damage worse. With the Mark Mender it's much easier to do the job properly. Open it up, position a prong either side of the pitch-mark and squeeze the grip together. Simple.

markmender.com



4



Vegas Golf

This won't help your golf necessarily, but it might make it more fun. Seven poker chips each with a positive or negative designation – water, trees, sand, three-putt, an eight, birdie or one-putt – are handed out to players who find the corresponding hazard or record the corresponding stat. Each player starts the round with no chips. The first time a player hits into sand (or water or trees etc) he receives the sand (or water or trees etc) chip. When the other player finds similar trouble he then gets the chip. Same with one-putt and birdie. You want to be holding the good chips and none of the bad chips at the end. Assign a cash value to each chip. Comes in a small box with velvet carry pouch.

vegasgolfthegame.com

5

Nike One Platinum

The One Platinum's core gets progressively denser and harder the further you get from the centre. Apparently it is Woods' favoured pill just now as it allows him to increase his distance without, he says, sacrificing control around the green. "I hit it further than ever now but I can still put a lot of spin on the ball and be really aggressive on short shots," he claims.

It's possible that you may not fully reap all the benefits of the new One Platinum unless, of course, you also happen to drive the ball 300 yards and carry a 5-iron 200, so for you there's the new Ignite Ball which will cost, and spin, a little less helping you hit the ball a decent distance and make it easier to buy a second sleeve after you lose the first.

nikegolf.com



6

SureShot

Last Autumn the R&A and USGA decided to allow the use of electronic distance measuring devices in tournament play starting on January 1 this year as long as Local Rules permitted it. This is certainly good news in the States where a round of golf takes a minimum of four-and-a-half hours, but probably not as significant among golfers on this side of the pond. In Britain we tend to play much quicker and aren't nearly as fussed about having an exact yardage as our American cousins. Because of that we are not overcome with the same, burning desire to get to a shop and purchase one.

If you do ever feel the need for one, however, make it is the SureShot, the only GPS unit we saw in Orlando with a colour screen. Having a digital readout of your yardage in colour instead of black and white doesn't change the distance you're faced with or increase the likelihood of your hitting a good shot but, hey, everything is better in colour, right?

In addition to the colour screen and supplying trustworthy yardages to the hole and hazards from anywhere on the course (a laser rangefinder requires line of sight; it can't be used if you're behind the maintenance shed), the SureShot allows you to map courses, record your score and statistics, and store information at up to 10 courses so you don't have to keep on paying an annual subscription to use the GPS technology, (provided you keep to the same 10 courses, of course.) There's a USB port too, so you can download your stats on to your computer. The company will be mapping British courses this year and the price in the UK will be about £280.

sureshotgps.com

