

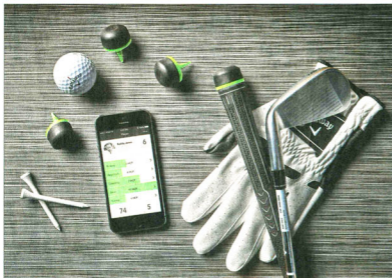


The Palm Beach Post

THE PALM BEACH POST REAL NEWS STARTS HERE | TUESDAY, JANUARY 27, 2015 **CS**

SPORTS

GOLF



The 62nd annual PGA Merchandise Show, held last week at the Orange County Convention Center, provided golfers of all skill levels an array of gadgets and equipment to make the game more enjoyable. **CONTRIBUTED**

Show features gadgets galore

Technology-based aids are among the items featured.

By Brian Biggane
Palm Beach Post Staff Writer

ORLANDO — Technology has arrived in golf, and that was never more evident than at the 62nd PGA Merchandise Show last week at the Orange County Convention Center.

While the usual array of clubs, bags and carts were around every corner, our attention was drawn to new products that promise to improve the golf experience for everyone from scratch players to high-handicappers. We offer five that are just finding their way into the retail marketplace:

ARCCOS Golf

One of the big hits of the 2014 show was Game Golf, a GPS system that uses sensors on each club to track every shot hit in a round and compiles data as a statistical analysis at its conclusion.

ARCCOS Golf would seem to be the next step in the evolutionary process of that technology.

Where Game Golf requires the user to tap the club before each shot, ARCCOS demands only the presence of an iPhone and the small sensors that stick on each club to track when a shot is taking place, what club is being used, how far the ball travels and where it ends up, with each of the five facets of the game — driving, approach, chipping, sand and putting — compiled separately.

"We have mapped every course in America and many abroad," vice-president of custom-



The Groove Caddy is an electric device that is advertised as taking time and effort out of cleaning clubs. It won the best new product award in 2014. **CONTRIBUTED**

er experience Al Vikman is said, "We have outlined every fairway, every bunker, every green, so the system knows where you are — if you're in the bunker, if you missed the fairway left, if you reached the green in regulation. All the data is automatically collected; you're just playing golf."

At \$399 retail, it's about twice as expensive as Game Golf. Find it at www.arccosgolf.com.

Dot Putter

Hardly a week goes by that we don't hear about a new putter being introduced. What sets the Dot Putter apart is its inventor, Kevin O'Neill, a former tour pro who works as a master putting instructor in his native Australia.

O'Neill used a math background and his place, which has a slit across the top of the head and a series of holes on the bottom, one is ready to putt

only when the eyes look down through the head and see the holes aligned as full circles. That forces the shoulders forward and the knees to bend slightly.

Blade putters are \$199 and mallet putters \$219 at www.dotputter.com.

DST Golf

After his playing career was cut short by illness, Englishman Bertie Cordie focused his attention on the science of ball striking. Studying the swings of four players — Ben Hogan, Lee Trevino, George Knudson and Moe Norman — he determined that the club has a specific curvature at impact and has designed clubs at that angle.

"I wanted to physically force golfers to feel the same movement and sensation, where the club-face trails behind the hands and remains under control," Cordie said.

The remaining challenge was defining the correct position of the club at impact, which Cordie solved by drawing a white line down the hosel and the club-

face aligns with the eyes. The better the player, the quicker one masters what Cordie calls the Optimal Impact Position.

Designed for warmup and not play, the clubs are available in both wedge and 8-irons, are priced at \$99 and available both online (www.dstgolf.com) and in retail.

Groove Caddy

Winner of the Best New Product award at last year's show, the Miami-based Groove Caddy is a handheld electronic brush that makes cleaning clubs a 5-to-7-minute process instead of one involving a bucket, soapy water, a towel and a lot of scrubbing.

President Jose Espin, who reports 5,000 units sold in his first year, said his product — which includes a 1000 rpm motor, a nylon brush that digs into the grooves of a club-head, a charger, spray bottle and case — was for use after a round but clients have reported also using it during a round. It retails for \$29.99 at www.groovecaddy.com.

Tee Claw

Frustrated at how little you learn about your swing from hitting off mats? We're the inventors of Tee Claw, a small, circular plastic device with claws on the edges that can be twisted into a rubber mat to mimic the benefits of hitting off a real tee. The set also includes lanyards to hook to the back of mat so it doesn't fly away. Full or partial tees can be inserted into the holes to raise the ball.

The price is \$14.95 for a pack of two claws and three lanyards, find them at www.TeeClaw.com.

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BASEBALL

Manfred has lots on plate as commissioner

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Rob Manfred knows he'll get pounded now that he's baseball commissioner — his name is printed in blue script on every big league ball.

Manfred succeeded Bud Selig Monday and started a five-year term as commissioner. Having worked for MLB since 1998 as an executive vice president and then as chief operating officer, he didn't have to move into a new office.

The issues are piled up, perhaps not physically, but the to-do list is lengthy: Oakland and Tampa Bay want new ballparks; negotiations are ongoing with players over pace of play and domestic violence; Baltimore and Washington are fighting in court over broadcast revenue; there are widespread agreement initiatives that must be undertaken to develop young fans and players.

A pitch clock must be considered and decreased offense scrutinized along with increased defensive shifts. "I do think it's important for the game to continue to modernize," he said. "That modernization has to proceed at a pace that allows us to be very respectful of the traditions of the game."

He opened his regime Sunday by releasing an open letter to fans, promising development in urban areas and increased emphasis on partnering with high school, college and amateur ball.

The contrast between Manfred and Selig is clear. The longtime Brewers owner ruled baseball with grandfatherly charm. Selig claims to have never sent an email during his 22-plus years in charge.

"Bud and I are actually very different," Manfred said. "Bud's not much of a technology guy. I am the original plugged-in technology guy. Bud is an expert at the politics of managing owners. ... I think I can effectively manage the owners as well, but my style will be more based on information, rational persuasion, argument."

Labor strife remains the biggest danger. Following five strikes and three lockouts from 1972-95, baseball negotiated three straight deals without a stoppage and is ensured labor peace through the 2016 season.

"A labor disruption would be a real setback for this game," Manfred said. "I think that we've taught people to expect that we can solve our



Commissioner Rob Manfred said his term would be based on information, not politics. **WICK SOUTHERN/AP**

problems or issues with the players in a constructive way without disrupting the play of the game."

The speed of high-tech innovation is the No. 2 issue. Regional sports networks and national broadcasting contracts have helped push baseball's revenue to nearly \$9 billion last year, a more than fivefold increase under Selig. "Obviously, the cable model has served us well," Manfred explained. "We hope it lasts a very long time. But it's something you have to be concerned about."

One change could be a 20-second pitch clock. While Selig ruled it out for the big leagues this year, it will be experimented with at Double-A and Triple-A.

The big league batting average dropped to .251 last year, its lowest level since 1972. Manfred told ESPN Sunday that he was open to banning defensive shifts.

"I said somewhere down the road it's something I'd be prepared to have a conversation about. Nothing more," he clarified Monday.

Manfred also says he doesn't see a DH change coming, but the height of the mound could be open to debate. It was cut from 15 inches to 10 after the 1968 season.

He does want to push ahead with international play, but games in Asia and Europe are difficult because of travel.

"The Western Hemisphere is a more realistic in that regard," he said.

Baseball is monitoring the U.S. government's opening to Cuba.

"It's a great source of talent. Our people are very interested," he said. "Obviously the president has announced an important policy change. What that means at the nuts-and-bolts level that we operate, we're just not sure yet."