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Study: Ill-fitting equipment damaging casual golfers' scores
Uncategorized — posted by JeffShain on January, 27 2011 6:35 PM
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Hank Haney, left, says the first thing he checks when taking on a new student is his equipment. (Getty Images)
 Here's an encouraging tidbit for anyone wondering why his golf game never seems to get better: It might not be you. However, it'll cost you a new set of sticks.
 Nine of every 10 golfers are playing with clubs that do not fit their body and swing types, according to results of a study unveiled Thursday at the PGA Merchandise Show.
 The study, conducted by the Sports & Leisure Research Group, reinforces a recent push for golfers to have a fitting session before purchasing that new driver or set of irons.
 Makes sense. Even so, those are some strong numbers.
 "So many people don't understand this," said Hank Haney, Tiger Woods' former coach who has endorsed the survey. "[Properly fit clubs] often is the easiest change to make – and one that often shows immediate results."
 The study examined some 6,000 avid golfers across the nation who changed their equipment in the past year. Of those, 92 percent who were custom-fit on a launch monitor realized immediate benefits after buying their new sticks.
 Of those, 56 percent stated their game had improved by at least five strokes.
 "This study is a wakeup call for every golfer who wants to get better," said John Last, who coordinated the study. "The magnitude of the difference in perception between those fit [for clubs] and not fit was among the most significant I've observed."
 Custom fitting measures a golfer's physical attributes, making sure the club matches his height and lies flat. Launch monitors provide information on swing speed, along with the ball's trajectory and spin.
 From there, a sales professional can recommend models that will maximize performance.
 Once costing as much as \$75, many outlets now perform the service as a part of the club-buying process.
 "This [study] is for all of us," said Matt Corey, marketing chief for Golfsmith. "This information is going to help every independent pro shop in the world, every retailer, every manufacturer and every teaching pro."
 A key finding for retailers: Golfers who went through the fitting process also spent 78 percent more than those who bought off the rack – an average of \$498 compared to \$279 for those not fit.
 Haney said that when he begins working with a new client, "the first thing I do is to look at his golf equipment."
 "Most people would rather not change much about their swing," Haney said. "They want to believe there's something they can change without having to change very much in their swing."

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