

Golfers can lower their handicap by an average of 14% by matching clubs.

June 25, 2013. Richard Dovrell Smart Balance Golf

Summary

A survey on golfers who have been playing with ergonomic matched clubs. From a total of 147 customers we have received 102 responses (69%) The number of women in the group is very small, only 10 responses. The average drop in handicap for women was 7%. In this study we focus only on male golfers.

Average for the male group is: hcp 13,7 age 50 years, 30-40 rounds/year and played golf for 20 years.

For comparison we have data from the Swedish golf federation on 4215 active male members from 2011 to 2013 (50 years old and handicap between 8–15 in January 2011).

Result total group	Smart Balance Golf players	Reference group
<i>Decreased hcp</i>	<i>66% with average 20,5% lower hcp</i>	<i>27% with average 9,5% lower hcp</i>
<i>Hcp development</i>	<i>From 13,7 to 11,7 -14,7%</i>	<i>From 11,7 to 11,8 +0,5%</i>
<i>Lower or stable hcp</i>	<i>83%</i>	<i>55%</i>

Introduction

The purpose of matching clubs is to make it easier to regularly hit solid shots with every club in the bag.

Smart Balance Golf is a system to specify and ergonomically match golf clubs by using Newton's laws of motion. Golf is a difficult game that involves many aspects where the specifications of equipment can often be overlooked. Measuring the effect of ergonomic matched clubs is not an easy task. Measuring the development of handicap is only an indirect measurement, as a large portion of our handicap is related to the short game, chipping and putting.

Our Swedish handicap system is different from the US system, our handicap is more a reflection of how you play on your best rounds, not your average. Most golfers only hit this goal a couple of times a year. We would expect that if we used the US system, we would obtain more accurate values, with, most likely, greater reductions in handicap.

Customer survey

A customer survey was sent to all customers who bought ergonomic matched clubs (Irons +wedges and/or woods). The idea was to reach the customers who have had the opportunity to play one to three seasons with their new clubs. A total of 147 customers received a survey where they were asked to fill in the following:

- Number of years playing golf
- Present handicap
- Handicap prior to receiving the new clubs
- Number of rounds played per year. (four groups, 5 to 19, 20 to 39, 40 to 59, 60+)
- Handicap trend prior to switching clubs
- Age
- Comments on injuries/training
- Comments how they experience the clubs

Variables

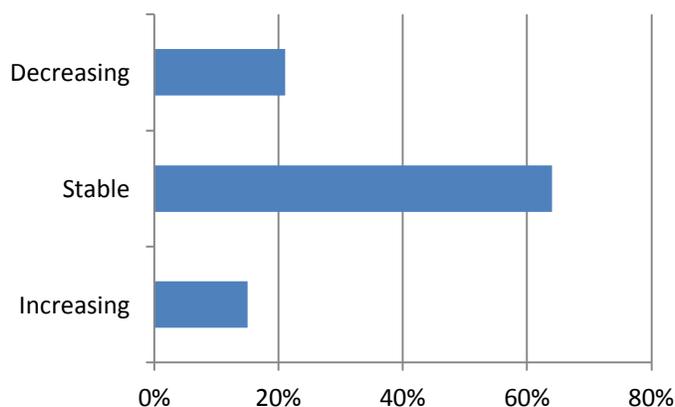
We have no record of what equipment our customers played with in the past. We know that both off the shelf clubs and custom fitted clubs are represented in our customer base. We assume that the majority of clubs are standard swing weighted while a few customers have played MOI matched clubs. Some customers have indicated that they are today registering all rounds, which in practice mean they will automatically get a higher hcp. Some customers play more and some less frequently than before.

Customers were asked to state “hcp trend” prior to changing clubs, this can be interpreted in different ways. There remains some uncertainty about how customers who did not respond have developed. Late incoming responses can later be compared and validated with present statistics.

From 92 male responses 10 people were deleted for having played less than five rounds with new clubs due to personal reasons or injuries.

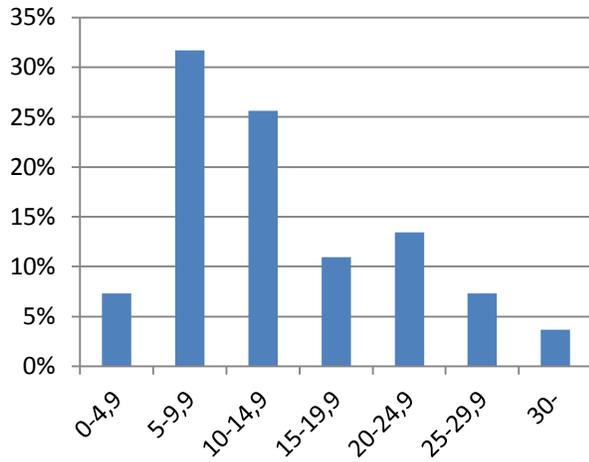
Details of responses

Handicap trend prior to new equipment

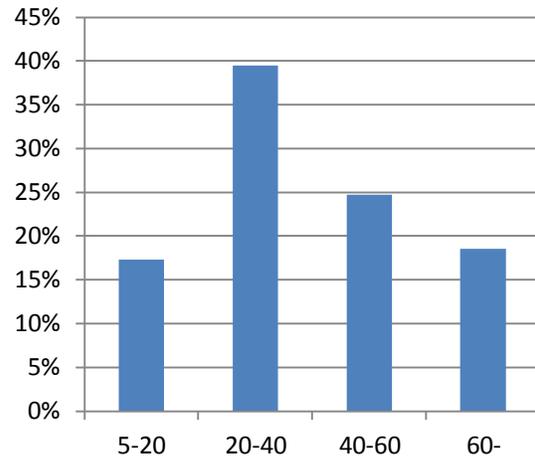


Customer survey Smart Balance Golf

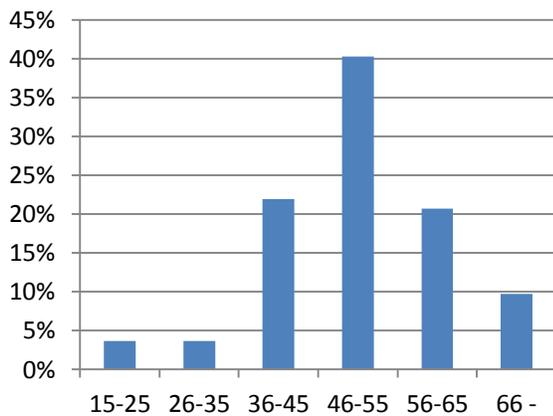
Handicap distribution



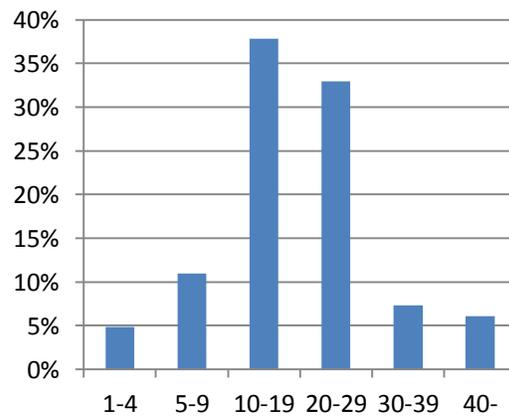
Rounds/year



Age distribution



Playing golf # of years

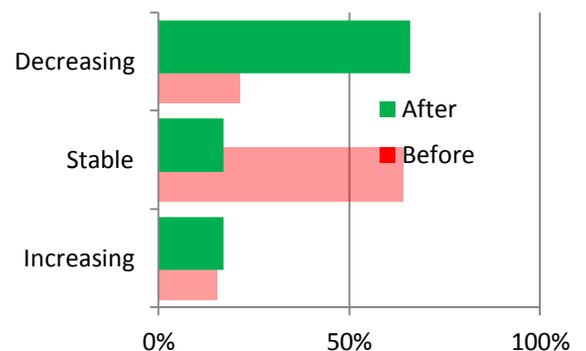


Result

66% of responses have lowered their handicap by, on average, 20,5%. If there had been many beginners and young people in the study, these would be natural numbers. The study however includes 50 year old male golfers who have played golf for 20 years. If we analyze all responses for hcp change in percent in quartiles we get.

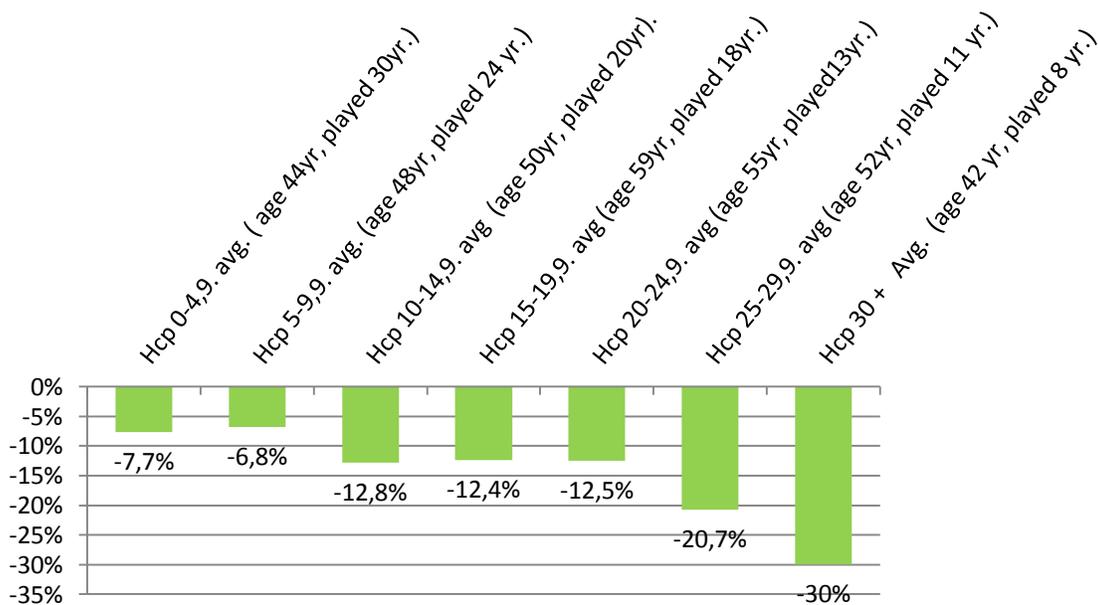
Q1= 0, Q2= -9,4%, Q3= -21,8%.

Actual hcp change



Result cont.

When we analyze percent change in handicap vs. starting handicap in each hcp group we see that all groups lower their handicap. The number of rounds played in each group is very similar (30 -40), except in hcp group 30 + where 5 -20 rounds were average.



Comments from our customers are perhaps more important than the percentage change in handicap. The comments reflect the customers' own experience of ergonomic matched clubs. The comments that show up in the vast majority of responses, irrespective of handicap changes, were that they experienced greater stability and consistency, fewer bad shots and more control. In some responses, customers have written of better self confidence in their descriptions of their clubs, and this is the real positive mental effect you experience when all clubs in the bag “behave” the same way.

If we look at individuals we can examine the person who dropped most and the person who increased most in handicap. At the top we have a 55 year old guy who has played golf for 18 years. His handicap dropped from 13.5 to 6.5, a 52% drop. His comments are: “I know exactly how far I hit every club. I got better self confidence, actually first year I went down to hcp 4,5.(-66%) At the other end of the list we find a 65 year old guy who has been playing golf for 50 Years. He experienced an increased hcp of 32%, going from hcp 3,4 to 4,5. His comments are “I have gotten older but without the new clubs it would have been worse.

Conclusion

Handicap development for the group together with their comments shows a very clear picture of the effect of playing with ergonomic matched clubs.

We sometimes hear stories about golfers who drop drastically when changing clubs but this survey reflects results from all our customers.

We also have a story that we want to share with you that concerns a 37 year old guy called Stefan Kullberg with a 9.2 handicap. He has been playing golf for 24 years and plays in excess of 100 rounds a year. Three months after he got his new clubs he came in to the shop with a big smile on his face. He had just competed in a weekly club tournament on a regular par 72 course Bro-Bålsta (where Annika Sörenstam grew up and hosted her tournament). He had just shot 64 and did 7 birdies for the first 9 holes. Not bad for a 9 handicapper.

Golf is a hard game and one fantastic round is fun, but what makes most golfers feel good is when your worst shots become good misses and you are able to play more consistent golf. Results from the customer survey definitely indicate that this is what has happened.