

40 Gear-Packed Pages

Celebrating Our
30th year!

GOLF TIPS

THE GAME'S IN-DEPTH INSTRUCTION & EQUIPMENT MAGAZINE

www.golftipsmag.com

Equipment '18

» THE LATEST IN
Clubs, Balls,
Training Aids,
Technology,
Apparel +More

EXPERT INSTRUCTION

- » BUILD POWER
- » ESCAPE BUNKERS
- » KILL THE HOOK



SUMMER TRAVEL » MONTANA MOUNTAIN HIGH

DISPLAY UNTIL
JUNE 11

\$5.99US \$7.99CAN 06>

0 74820 64931 2

MAY / JUNE 2018

🎯 SPIN WE CAN ALL BELIEVE IN: THE INDI STINGRAY

Who doesn't want to spin that little pill like Phil, only to see what seems like his or her best wedge shot skitter across the green into a bunker or simply roll too darned far to leave a decent putt for par? Sure, it takes talent and scads of practice to truly master those delicate shots from within 100 yards, but the brand new Indi Golf StingRay wedge proves that equipment has something to do with it, too. A lot, in fact.

Rob Lang has worked in the golf club industry for years, gaining expertise especially in the wedge design game. So he decided to put his chops into his own StingRay wedges — one square-grooved and non-conforming to USGA rules, making it perfect for the casual player, and the conforming "TT" or Tournament model. Both offer increased spin, optimized launch and improved control thanks to grooves that run the entire length of the face, what Lang calls an "aggressive sand blast finish" and a "ScoopBack" design that optimized face thickness in every section across the head, so even off-center strikes produce wicked spin. There's more thickness higher on the face, for instance — a spot many amateurs tend to hit the ball. The wedges' weighting stabilizes the head at impact to fight twisting.

"We did a ton of research," Lang said as he demo'd his new spinmasters at the PGA Show. "We wanted our wedges to grip the ball but not tear the ball up. We wanted it to grab the ball, launch it a little lower but with more ballspeed, so the person ends up flying it a little further, but then it stops."

Lang's starting point was not with the grooves, but with the wedges' ScoopBack technology. "Most wedges get really thin at the top, so if you catch one high on the face you lose all the energy and spin. With our wedge, with its extra thickness, we shortened the hosel a bit and moved the CG to the middle of the face, which helps with stability through impact. If you mishit it doesn't twist as much."

Then came the grooves, the square versions of which

aren't legal for competition but a boon for every casual golfer. "We spent a lot of time figuring out what was the best groove configuration, and added a very aggressive sandblast," Lang added. "And once it's broken in, it maintains its spin. On a traditional wedge, once the grooves are broken in, it loses a lot of spin. Players like Jordan Spieth replace their wedges every three to four weeks because they want that spin."

The StingRay wedges are forged from 8620 carbon steel for soft feel; plus, Lang says, "we wanted to be able to bend it a bit and make adjustments as needed for each individual; we want every person to have the best experience possible."

Another design element that's different from anything else out there: The grooves extend all the way to the perimeter of the club.

"Most amateur players miss it toward the toe, so why not have grooves out there? You won't have nearly as much energy loss," Lang said. His internal testing showed his wedges producing the kind of spin that most weekenders only dream about. "Tour pros get 10,000 rpm spin from 60 yards out. With our wedges, amateurs, who average 5,000 to 8,500 rpm, get there as well — a 50 to 100 percent increase in spin. The additional grooves on the StingRay take place of the extra texture other companies put onto their faces, accounting for about a 25 percent increase in spin. Even our conforming wedge produces about 25 percent more spin."

So, do Lang's assertions bear out on the field of battle? Golf Tips put three versions of the Stingray through their paces — square-grooved 52- and 58-degree models and a 56-degree TT model with conforming grooves — and came away, well, blown away, especially on full and three-quarter swings at purposely hard golf balls. We knocked them onto grass both thick and thin, bare dirt, greens themselves ... and every ball stopped on the proverbial dime, or better yet, displayed that Philly Mick big-hop-and-pull-back move that we all love to watch on TV, even on thin or off-center strikes. The grin-inducing grip powers stuck around for even the most gentle chip and pitch, too; in fact, balls not hit target-length would pull up short. The StingRay takes the well-worn "take dead aim" philosophy and makes it a close-range reality.

"The feedback we've gotten from testers is that this wedge simplifies the game," Lang said. "They can just fly it to the hole and it'll stop. If you play in a lot of tournaments, you can use the non-conforming wedge in practice, beat it up as much as you like, then turn to the conforming one for their round. And all of the wedges do well in the sand, especially the 56 degree; they all have a wider flange so you can open them up and get the ball out."

The verdict? Make room, Mr. Mickelson. Joe Average is coming for you. — Vic Williams

\$159.99 | www.indigolfclubs.com

