



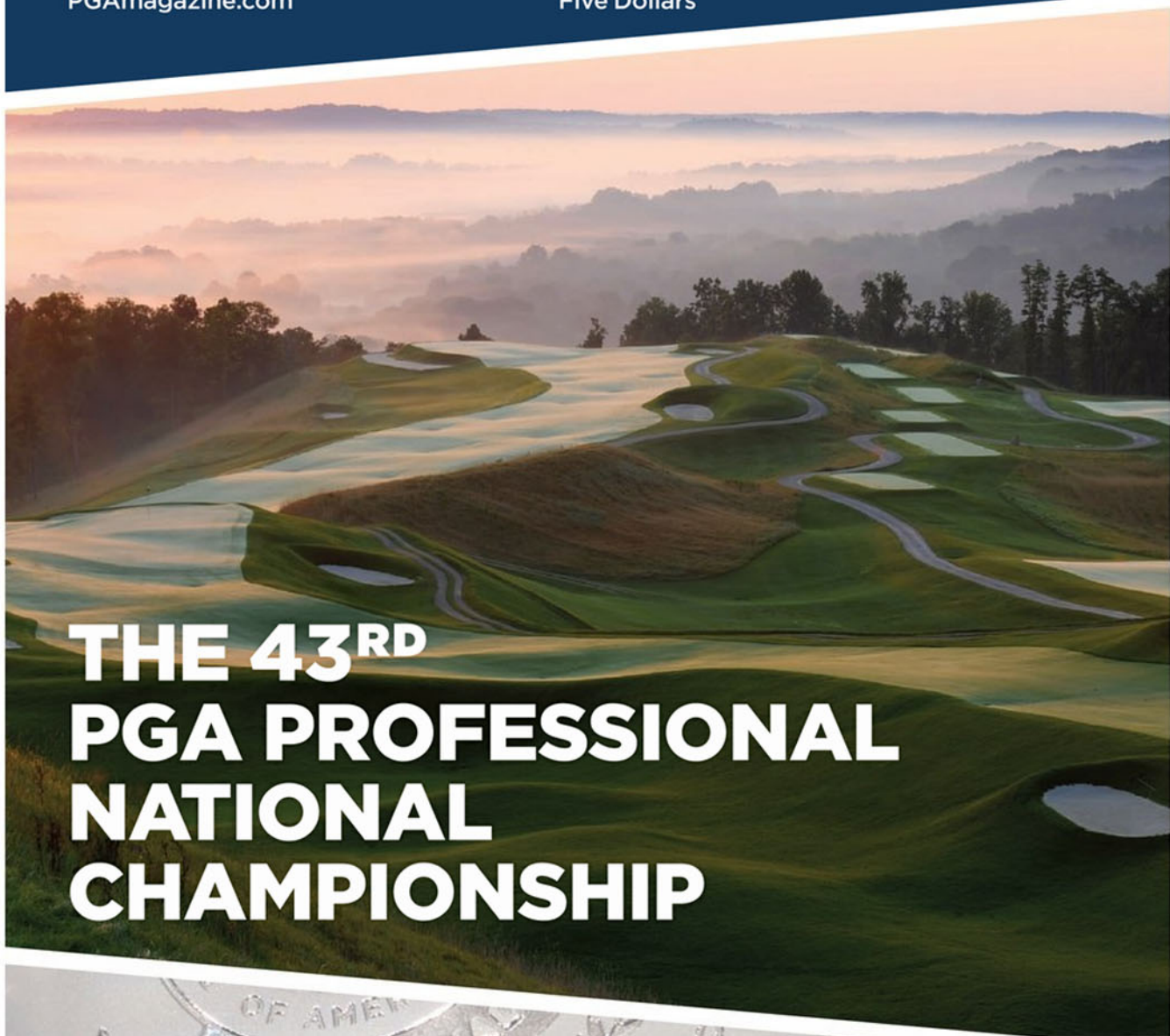
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A Fitting Clinic

Bundling club sales with a fitting session can spur greater sell-through, along with more lessons and better relationships with your customers

By Don Jozwiak, Senior Editor

Custom fitting is a central part of selling equipment for many PGA Professionals today, and a growing number of golfers expect to be fit for new club purchases. Still, there are many golfers of all skill levels who tend to buy clubs off the rack rather than relying on the clubfitting expertise of a PGA Professional.

That's the situation that confronted PGA Professional Laurie Adams in 2006. An experienced clubfitter and merchandiser, having worked for past PGA Merchandisers of the Year such as Jim Tureskis and John Buczek, Adams wondered if there was a way to boost sell-through of equipment inventory while increasing interest in clubfitting.

At the time, Adams was at The Golf Club at Cedar Creek, a semi-private course in Aiken, S.C., where she used the Titleist fitting system and had a good inventory of the company's Vokey wedges. Adams decided to spur wedge sales and promote fitting with a single program: a Saturday morning wedge clinic. For \$100, golfers could sign up for the clinic and receive a one-hour wedge fitting session and a Vokey wedge. During the clinic, golfers hit a variety of demo wedges, and Adams often had the model they needed in stock.

"I'd get the golfers out on the range – anywhere from one to three golfers in a group – and look to see what yardages they hit their wedges and where they had holes in their yardages," Adams says. "Everyone always figured they needed that traditional 56-degree sand wedge, but it's really different for each golfer. Depending on what other clubs they have and how they swing, they might need anything from a gap wedge to a lob wedge. Or maybe the combination of 54- and a 60-degree wedge works better instead of a 56-degree wedge and a 3-iron they never hit."

For Adams, the immediate goal was to get her clinic clients into a new wedge that gave them more versatility and consistency from 100 yards and in. But the fitting clinics caught on

in more ways than one. First, the wedge fitting clinic often served as a stepping stone to a more comprehensive fitting. And second, the time spent with golfers during the clinic led to more lessons and better relationships.

"Once we got the wedges dialed in, we'd take a look at their woods and hybrids and see if there were any gaps that needed to be filled there – or maybe that golfer really needed a couple hybrids instead of another wedge," Adams says. "You also see what they're doing in their swings, and that leads to lessons. The best part is that you're showing an interest in your members, their golf games and the equipment they're playing. It opens up a lot of great relationships."

For PGA Professionals thinking about starting a similar program, Adams says the most important step is getting started. She suggests scheduling a wedge fitting clinic for a Friday or Saturday evening, and advertising it in your golf shop as customers browse your golf clubs. From there, word of mouth from satisfied customers can sustain and expand the program.

Adams says that the clinics helped her learn a lot about the equipment choices golfers make on their own, especially some common mistakes players made in their short game equipment mix.

"I was really surprised at how many people need a gap wedge, and how important that can be to the average golfer," Adams says. "I had a lot of gentleman who played every shot from 100 yards or less with the same club. So that means they were either trying to finesse a pitching wedge on short shots, or trying to swing too hard at a sand wedge on longer shots. The clinic gave me a chance to explain that they have seven clubs in their bag to use on shots between 100 and 200 yards, so why would they only have one for 100 and in? When I could put a gap wedge in their hands, it was exciting and inspirational to see the results." ■

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— Laurie Adams, PGA



clubfitter's cart

Barton Creek adds Callaway Performance Center

Barton Creek Resort & Spa in Austin, Texas, is opening the state's first Callaway Performance Center this month. Scheduled to open June 5, the center will allow resort guests to experience the same state-of-the-art custom fitting technology enjoyed by Callaway Golf staff professionals on the world's professional tours. The center has an indoor fitting bay that uses the Callaway Performance Analysis System (CPAS), including high-speed cameras, a launch monitor and a 3D ball flight simulator. Guests at the resort can be fit for woods and irons using Callaway's OptiFit Fitting System, and can also experience a golf ball fitting.

