

Articles and Tips - Close to the Vest



Instant feedback and wireless technology highlight the benefits of golf instruction's newest breakthrough.

I've taught golf since 1982 and became a PGA member in 1993. I've worked with golfers of all skill levels, from PGA Tour winner Ryan Palmer to newcomers picking up clubs for the first time. My goal always has been to provide a positive lesson experience. As such, I adapt my teaching philosophy to cater to each respective student, as some will naturally improve quicker than others.

Recently, I was introduced to the K-VEST and the "K-Swing Summary" technology. This product is, without question, the future of golf instruction. Taking the practice of videotaping swings to the next level, golfers now have technology similar to the MRI in the healthcare industry. The K-VEST is a three-dimensional, wireless golf instruction system with a printable report that helps instructors teach more efficiently and allows students to improve faster.

The student straps on a vest with three sensors placed on the golfer's hip, shoulder and hand. The sensors communicate with software on a nearby laptop to display live video and 3-D animation, which generates the "K-Swing Summary."



The student takes a swing and in 60 seconds, the K-VEST precisely analyzes it. A series of numbers are generated that dissect the swing from alignment to impact. It highlights strengths and weaknesses in six key swing areas, including posture, shoulder and hip angles at impact and spine angles throughout the swing.

Since January 2007, I've been using the K-VEST to help Champions Tour veteran and former University of Houston three-time All-America Keith Fergus improve his game.

"What I like about it are the numbers [it produces]," said Fergus, who had eight top-10 finishes and one victory in 2007. "The numbers don't lie. I can stand here and hit balls all day and someone can tell me, 'That looks good.' Well, what looks good about it, specifically? The K-VEST tells me."

The technology captures 120 frames per second. Most digital videotaping software systems grab 60 frames a second; the human eye can see 15 frames per second. Besides Fergus, Annika Sorenstam and Charles Howell III

are among the elite golfers currently using the K-VEST. But you don't have to be a pro to reap the benefits.

From the moment you put on the vest, it tells you if your posture is correct. If not, the 3-D display shows you how to achieve the correct posture. The average player can improve different parts of their games in mere minutes with this technology and the right teacher.

What I like best about it is that it puts the student "into" the correct posture and spine, shoulder and hip angles. I don't have to tell the student what's right; they feel it for themselves. They jump into the experience, which is the absolute best way to learn.

A completely mobile system, the K-VEST can be used on any golf range, indoors and even for on-course instruction. It's simply one of the game's great innovations for game improvement.