

## New & Noteworthy from the floor of the PGA Merchandise Show

By Bob Seligman

**B**efore the start of this year's PGA Merchandise Show, negative conversations about the potential effects on the 3-day event this past January 29-31 were so strong that in some cases it was somewhat scary.

So it was somewhat ironic that in an atmosphere that potentially looked more tricky than treaty, and where attendance prognostications from some were downright ghostly, that the show began Thursday morning with a big BOO!

As in **Boo Weekley**, that is, who announced the start of the show on Thursday morning at the Orange County Convention Center in Orlando and promoted several products he was associated with, including the new Boo By Firethorn Tour line of apparel.

Some joked that Weekley's sartorial slant towards camouflage would prevent the line from being seen on the show floor. And, indeed, there was mossy oak camouflage in the collection, as well as bright moisture wicking polos that has highly affordable MSRP's of ....

There were also plenty of other products to be seen.

Like with last year's show, adjustability was the big technology story, only this time it was with adjustable heads in



**Bradley Forge from Corporate Golf Solutions and PGA Tour pro Boo Weekley**

drivers instead of adjustable shafts. TaylorMade and Nike Golf were the primary drumbeaters, although Cobra also had a version of their own. With adjustable head technology, golfers can significantly alter their ball flight to overcome weaknesses in their games. Is the clubface too open at impact? Just close it a bit. Hooking too much? Open the clubface a tad, or maybe more.

### Taylor Made Golf

**TaylorMade's says its R9 is the most advanced driver it has ever created.** (insert R9 photo) It certainly is loaded with technology. In the R9, TaylorMade has taken the Moveable Weight Technology (MWT) its known for and combined it with new Flight Control Technology (FCT). With a simple twist of a wrench, FCT changes the R9's face angle, loft and lie angle with a simple turn of the head. A small metallic sleeve is positioned over the tip of the shaft, which is secured to the clubhead with a specially made bolt in the clubhead's bottom. Face angle, loft and lie can be changed by loosening the bolt, removing the shaft from the head, rotating the sleeve and shaft into a specified position and then locking them into position within the head with the bolt. That alone creates eight different positions.

But that's just because of FCT. Add in MWT, which has three weight ports – one with a 16-gram weight and two others with 1-gram weights -- and you have

the potential for what TaylorMade claims is 24 different drivers all in one club.

"There's never been a driver like this," says Sean Toulon, TaylorMade's executive VP of innovation.

Make it that there's never been two drivers like this because R9 has two different versions, depending on which graphite shaft you're using. The R9 has a Fujikura Motore shaft with High-Inertia Tip (H.I.T.) technology. The R9 TP's Fujikura Motore F1 is slightly stiffer and has a lower torque. MSRP's: R9 \$500; R9 TP \$600.

### Nike Golf

**Nike Golf's SQ Dymo STR8-FIT and SQ Dymo (square-shape) drivers, with what Nike calls STR8-FIT (straight fit) technology, has eight club head positions** that can affect ball flight. Golfers can change the face and shaft relationship up to plus/minus 2° for face angle, loft and lie. A shaft adapter built into the hosel provides access to the different head positions. MSRP: \$540.

But how long will these drivers – and their future generations -- be around, particularly when product lifecycles are so short. Toulon says the R9 will be on the market for 12-18 months. Tom Olsavsky, senior manager, product marketing for metalwoods for TaylorMade, says the technology may carry on much longer.

"FCT is game changing and will be how all premium metal woods are made

### Nike DYMO



**TaylorMade R9**



EQUIPMENT

from now on,” says Olsavsky. “Adjustable head technology is here to stay. It benefits all golfers.”

Stites agrees that adjustable head technology is game changing and should be around for quite awhile.

“Some form of this will be around for a long time; maybe 10 years,” says Stites.

TaylorMade has already introduced the technology into fairway woods and Rescue hybrids. Nike will likely follow suit, according to Stites.

### Cobra Golf

Cobra is also into game changing technology, but not as deeply as TaylorMade or Nike Golf. **The King Cobra L5V driver** has only two settings, 0 and 1 degree. When the head is loosened and the shaft is turned 180 degrees, the face angle is changed 1 degree. MSRP: \$490.



King Cobra L5V

### YES Putters

Putters have also entered into the adjustable technology realm, and we're not talking adjustable faces.

**YES! Golf's interchangeable screw-in**



Tracy YES! Putter

**hosel system lets golfers custom fit their putter** based on their preference of the look and style of the hosel. The system is available in two new models, the Tracy III Plus, a blade, and the Lizzy Plus, a mallet. Both putters are CNC milled from forged stainless steel and have MSRPs of \$360.

There are four hosel options. The plumber neck hosel is standard in both putters. Three other hosel options - slant neck, z-bend and pronounced heel-toe hang - are sold separately. Each option has a MSRP of \$100.

### PING

**PING's iWi putters are the first interchangeable weighted putters in the company's 50-year history.** The iWi has two 12-gram steel weights on the sole, near the heel and toe. An optional weight kit includes two 20-gram tungsten weights, two extra screws, and a wrench. The iWi is available in six models: Anser, Zing, B60, D66, Craze-E and 1/2 Craze-E. MSRPs: \$190 for all models except the Craze-E, which is \$220. The weight kit, which is sold separately, costs \$70.



PING's iWi Anser putter

### Among other new introductions...

#### Titleist

**Titleist** continues the evolution of its franchise product with the new **Pro V1 and Pro V1x**. The 2009 version of the Pro V1 has a newly reformulated and larger core for soft feel and added distance, while a redesigned thinner, Ionomeric casing layer contributes to scoring. The urethane elastomer formulation offers improved cover durability.

The new Pro V1x has the same cover durability attributes, plus a soft center, high energy dual core that delivers low spin and increased velocity. The enhancing Ionomeric casing layer helps achieve longer distance. MSRP: \$58 per dozen for both models.

### Callaway

Callaway Golf's Big Bertha Diablo has the right price for drivers, \$299, and a heritage in the use of the company's fusion technology. That's led by a 4-piece formed construction employing fusion-like methods to an all-titanium driver to achieve optimal CG locations and higher Moment of Inertia. Unique draw and neutral head shapes improve shot-shaping control.

### Tour Edge

Tour Edge continues to keep things Exotics with its new Exotics XCG-V driver. The cup-face is 125 percent larger than previous Exotics models and features a hot zone that's 30 percent larger. The XCG-V combines three metals, a v-shaped titanium cup face, an ultra light magnesium crown, and a heavier high-density steel sole plate that are brazed together for permanent bonding without welding. That leads to better results on off-center hits. MSRP: \$499.

Finally, in the show that began with a BOO, there was a monster on the floor for all three days: Cleveland Golf's new HiBore Monster XLS driver (MSRP: \$299), that is. It's 16 percent larger than the original HiBore XLS and has 24 grams of weight in three strategic perimeter locations for near maximum moment of inertia.

And no one can say "Boo" to that. ●

### Tour Edge Exotics XCG-V

