

SOLE PROVIDER

The sole of a fairway wood or hybrid is especially important since it's used off the grass in a sweeping motion, unlike a digging motion that an iron may have. Some FW models have fins to help minimize friction, while others may have smooth soles to help the club slide through the turf. Either way, the technology of most fairway woods and hybrids is on the inside, where much of the weight is placed low and deep on the sole to help lower the center of gravity. A lower CG promotes a high launch angle for higher shots. The deeper in the sole the CG is placed, the higher the MOI, which affects the clubhead's forgiveness and loss of distance on off-center hits.

ABOUT FACE

What's in a face? It depends. In the case of the Tour Edge Exotics CB2, the face is a titanium "cupface" design, which means the entire front section of the clubhead and a portion of the sole and crown form a cup shape, which is then Combo-Brazed onto the rest of the club. This method helps not only strengthen the face, but adds strength where it's needed and promotes a low and deep CG to promote a higher ballflight. As for COR, most fairway woods have CORs that challenge drivers in the category (reaching the 0.830 limit). When it comes to shape, note that shallow-faced models tend to have lower CGs than deep-faced models.

CHOOSE THE RIGHT CLUBS!

If there's one thing for sure, it's that fairway woods and hybrids don't get the credit they so deserve. In fact, we think fairway woods and hybrids don't get enough play, either, considering many amateurs still tend to hit driver off every tee and long irons from the fairway, despite there being other clubs that are a lot easier to hit. Therefore, let's make 2007 the year we start playing smarter by choosing a fairway wood that gets the job done both off the tee and on the grass. Also, now is the time to drop those long irons from the bag in favor of a hybrid (or a few). Check out the following models, and pay attention to which clubs have the kind of performance benefits that will help your game the most. Trust us, the right fairway woods and hybrids will lower your score immediately.

Understanding Our Charts

Features: The primary design elements that make the wood noteworthy.

Advantages: How the primary design elements are meant to elevate the wood's performance.

Benefits: A general recommendation as to which skill level or player type would be best served by the wood model in question.

What We Like: We have our preferences, too. A quick description of what impressed us in our review and testing.

Lineup: The other wood models available from the manufacturer.

Clubhead: The primary material from which the club is either forged or cast, usually a form of steel. There are titanium models, but steel dominates the wood market, as the smaller head size mandates the use of heavier materials.

Clubface: Indicates the material used for the strike area. Check out the prevalent use of maraging steel for the face.

Clubs: Lists all of the lofts available in the line and whether or not the wood models are available for lefties.

Shafts: These are the stock graphite shaft offerings from the manufacturer. Almost all fairway woods are available with custom shaft options, however. See the manufacturers' Websites for details.