

# Driving School

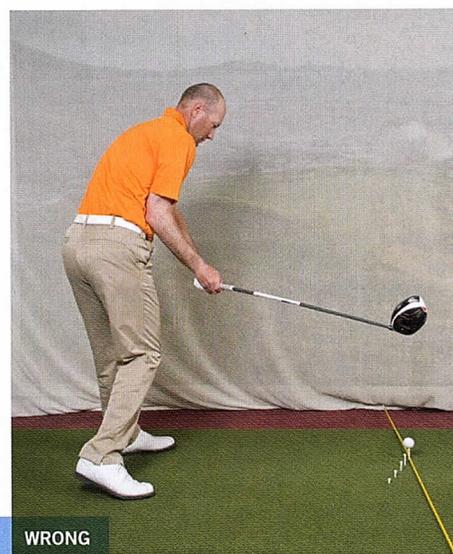
How to take control of your tee shots. By Trent Wearer

**LIKE IT OR NOT**, the driver often sets the tone for your entire round. Such will be the case during this month's U.S. Open at Oakmont, where the winner will be the one who consistently finds the fairway off the tee.

Most players can hit 75% of their clubs pretty well—but not their driver. Unlike those other clubs, the driver requires you to approach the ball from well inside the target line while hitting up on the ball. Research shows that with your driver if you hit down 5 degrees on the ball compared to hitting up 5 degrees, you will lose 20-25 yards off your tee shots. So how do you take control of your tee ball?



**THE VISION** Our bodies work incredibly well when we have an image of what accurately needs to be occurring. The image below should be stamped into your mind, this shows the ascending approach the driver should take. Imagine hitting a ball off of each tee as the club moves up into the ball. This picture also shows how much the club should be swinging from inside the target line (yellow sticks) as it approaches the ball. If you don't do this you'll struggle.



WRONG



CORRECT

**THE BODY MOVEMENT** Golfers too often try to generate power at the start of their downswing. However, doing so forces them to open up too soon (above left). The shaft goes too far outside, which will produce shots that follow the one-third theory—one-third left, one-third right and one-third in the middle—with some shots off the heel of the club, some off the toe and some in the middle.

The golfer in the photo to the right has properly pushed off the ground so that his hips have moved laterally toward the target without spinning open. This pertinent move allows the club to drop lower/behind you, which will help the club hit up on the ball from the inside.

**THE PROOF** Next time you're out practicing, ask the golf shop for 3-4 impact stickers and see what they reveal. You'll probably see one of three things:



THE SMUDGE

This golfer's club head swings across the ball (outside-in) where they lose lots of ball speed and creating sidespin that makes the ball slice. If you always find yourself on the right edges of holes, You needed help yesterday!



OVAL DIMPLES

This golfer is somewhat close but still swings down too steeply. Notice how the dimples are more oval-like which means the ball is rolling up the face creating too much spin. His drives sometimes take off low, while other times they pop straight up. Look for scars on top of your clubhead and a lot of broken tees. You need help now!



MONEY

This impact shows that the club is hitting up on the ball from the inside because the dimples are perfectly circular. You can let 'er rip!

Twice named Teacher of the Year by the Colorado PGA and four times rated the #1 Teacher in Colorado by his peers and *Golf Digest*, Trent Wearer, PGA regularly appears on Golf Channel Academy and is the author of *Golf Scrimmages*. At his Trent Wearer Golf Academy at Meridian Golf Club in Englewood, he teaches both juniors (many of them state champions) and adults. 303-645-8000; [trentwearnergolf.com](http://trentwearnergolf.com).

To watch a video of this lesson, visit [coloradoavidgolfer.com](http://coloradoavidgolfer.com).