



Golf Guide

Finding the Right Shoes

Golf shoes provide traction during your swing, making them a necessary accessory, but like all shoes, you wear them for a certain look as well.

Finding the right golf shoes might prove a challenge and probably not something best bought online.

Golf courses require players to wear shoes that will not damage the turf, especially the greens. Athletic shoes are usually permitted, but golf shoes, designed for the purpose, can benefit the golfer, according to Golfweek.

Before you go shopping, ask around your golf partners and friends for recommendations, and check with the pro at any clubs you visit. They'll have opinions, but also offer insights into fit, functionality and style.

Once you're armed with some research, check your local newspaper for ads and sales. One reason it's crucial to shop local instead of online is that golf shoes are sized a bit differently than everyday shoes, a factor that varies from maker to maker.

If you're new to golf shoes, you'll notice right away that the myriad bands and styles don't align much with the popular image of golf shoes. Dress-style golf shoes with pre-attached spikes exist, but



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many shoemakers have bypassed them for models featuring waterproof outer shells and molded soles to provide traction, style and comfort.

You can — and should — purchase detachable cleats to add to the bottom of a pair of shoes that don't feature them. According to Golfweek, cleats or spikes come in different styles and sizes and attach to the shoes via one of four different systems. Take your shoes with you when buying

the cleats to make sure they fit.

Plan to spend some time visiting various sporting goods and shoe stores to get a good feel for what's available and to test out the look and size comparison of several pairs. You'll also get a basic understanding of prices, which can vary greatly in golf shoes.

Once you've found a good fit, the next thing to consider is style. Again, "old-school" dress-style golf shoes still exist

— and some prefer them for a retro look — but modern golf shoes most closely resemble casual walking or athletic shoes.

A good salesman can pitch you on the pros and cons of various brands, and you'll find that many in sporting goods stores play golf themselves so they can relate to your search.

Again, prices vary but most golf shoes will set you back at least \$100 for a quality pair. Consider your game, how much you golf and the various

styles you can often narrow down your choices to a few specific brands in your budget.

Like most shoes, golf shoes can feel stiff at first so take time to walk around in them to ensure they offer a snug-but-comfortable fit. Some sporting goods stores and clubs have indoor driving ranges where you test your swing wearing the new shoes, an excellent way to make real-world comfort, fit and action judgments.

Golf Carts and Pushcarts

There are two kinds of golfers: those who prefer the ritual of walking the course, which is sometimes required, and those who prefer to use carts.

The latter has become the clear favorite in the U.S., but there is a movement afoot, so to speak, to return the sport to its original glory of walking.

Then, of course, comes the not-small matter of how to transport your bag between holes. Caddies existed for this purpose for many years and still do. But for the everyday golfer who doesn't always employ a caddy, carts and pushcarts have become the go-to methods of conveyance.

GOLF CARTS

Golf carts have obviously added much to the sport. They speed up the game, give players a chance to rest between holes and allow for comfortable conversations between shots. Carts not only carry players and golf bags, but often coolers and other equipment and have come to be equipped themselves with all sorts of electronic and connected gadgets. Plus, they're just plain fun to drive and have become ubiquitous not only on golf courses but as a means of travel in neighborhoods and some businesses.

Golf carts come in two



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basic models: gas-powered and electric. Both have their pros and cons, but choosing either is a matter of personal preference. The standard golf cart is a two-seater with bag racks on the back, a canopy and perhaps even a windshield. After that, the sky — and your budget — are the only limits.

As golf carts move up in price range, so do the features — headlights, better tires, cooler bags, additional seating and storage, GPS, ball cleaners and other customized onboard accessories.

Gas carts, like gas-powered

carts, have been around for a long time and proven exceedingly popular. They're faster, have more power and can go longer distances than their electric counterparts and can make the transition from the course to neighborhoods and public roads.

Electric carts are less noisy and are more environmentally friendly. They require a battery or charging, but require much less maintenance, and are generally slower than gas-powered carts. They also struggle with hills and can carry fewer passengers and less equipment.

upgrading, as well.

Brad Payne, a former Apple designer and avid golfer, had used and tested many pushcarts at Presidio Golf Course, his preferred — and hilly — course near San Francisco and during his travels in Scotland, the storied home of golf.

Payne had tried all the course-supplied carts and found them all lacking. In true Apple fashion, he knew he could design a better pushcart, one that's simple, sleek and easy to push and fold for the golfer who prefers walking the course.

The result is Walker Trolleys, a startup that has drawn the attention of some of the best walking-only courses in the U.S. Payne debuted his cart during the 2020 Merchandise Show, where it also drew raves.

The Walker Trolley features whitewall tires, a polished aluminum frame and leather handle in a cart that exhibits both old-world style and modern design.

A waxed canvas storage accessory — available in floral camouflage or custom colors and patterns — comes standard on carts, with an everyday carry. The trolley folds at one point, which the company claims makes it the simplest folding trolley on the market.

Walker Trolleys will set you back \$399 and will be available this spring. The company is taking pre-orders on its website, walkertrolleys.com, where you can learn more about this simple, stylish pushcart.

EX-APPLE DESIGNER MARKETS SLEEK PUSH CART

Golf carts are fun to drive and make lugging golf bags, coolers and other supplies a breeze. But some courses are walking-only, which means you either carry your bag, use a course-supplied pushcart or bring your own.

Many worthy pushcarts are available at golf courses or you can bring your own. Almost all of them are constructed similarly, featuring an angled bag holder mounted on a bar frame with two wheels. But pushcarts are

Technology Improves Golf

There's no denying that technology has had a huge effect on the world of sports, and golf is no exception.

That's saying a lot for a game that prides itself on swing, knowledge, skill, practice and environment as much as anything.

But tech has improved the game, if not altered it dramatically. Technology has had a major effect on the manufacture of clubs, balls, shoes and other equipment. It's made the sport easier and more accessible and, most would agree, more enjoyable. Here's how.

CLUBS

The single most important factor in the game is golf clubs, an area where technology has played a critical role. Golf clubs have evolved from wooden sticks to metal and aluminum poles to aerodynamically designed works of art in which factors such as weight and shafts have been toyed with and altered, allowing golfers to hit balls longer and straighter. Golf clubs are now stronger, lighter with larger driver heads and are for more wind-resistant, resulting in speed and farther reach.

BALLS

Golf balls seem like such simple items. Round, divoted, composed of bands of rubber surrounded by plastic. No longer. Today's golf ball technology has devised balls, some constructed of from one to five component layers, designed for players at every level from beginners to pros.

Beginners start with one-piece balls. They're less complex and fly straighter, but won't achieve the dis-

tance of more layered balls. As golfers advance in skill, they usually move up in layers, since the greater number of layers the greater distance a ball will fly.

HYBRIDS

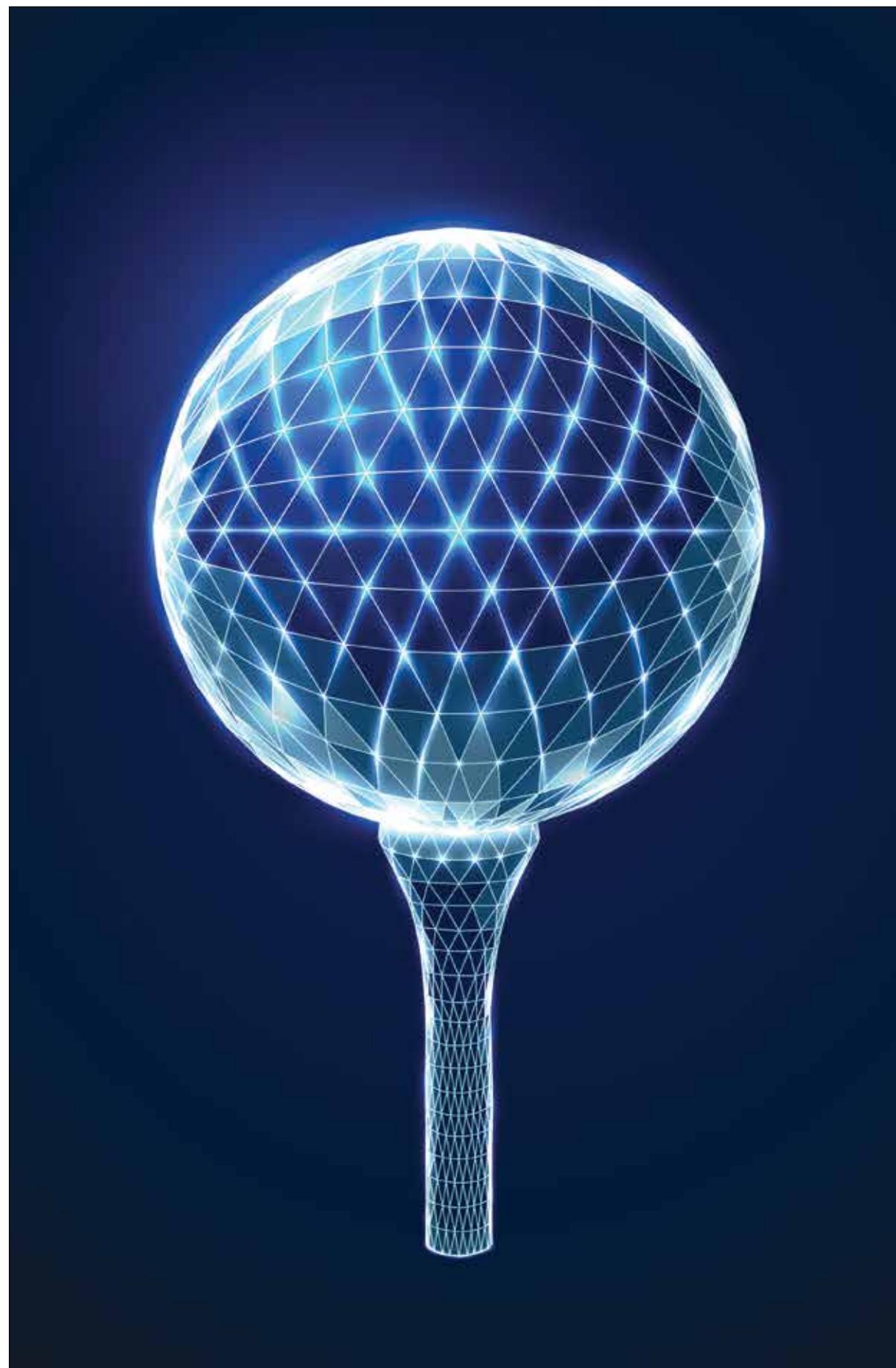
Besides drivers, irons and putters have experienced the most improvement through technology. Many have difficulty with these clubs, hence the focus and the turn toward hybrid clubs. Hybrids provide greater launch and are more forgiving of less-than-perfect swings. Because the vast amount of golfers are amateurs, it's no surprise hybrid clubs have experienced the most growth and have become the most focused area of technological advancement.

RANGE FINDERS

Besides the skill of their swing, most golfers are concerned with precision. It's often difficult to tell how far you are from hole in the middle of the fairway, even worse if you find yourself in the rough. Range finders deliver this peace of mind. Using laser technology, range finders accomplish exactly what they promise: they find the range from Point A to Point B, giving golfers another tool in choosing the right club for the circumstance.

You'll still need to have a great swing, but range finders provide the knowledge that you put the right spin and power on that swing to deliver the ball closer to the pin.

There are all sorts of other gizmos and gadgets, accessories and other tools technology — in gloves and shoes, apparel and apps and carts — but not much has proven more effective and provides better results than technology focused on these core elements, which both enhance and improve the game.



Become a Golf Pro

Just a fraction of all golfers ever qualify to program PGA pros.

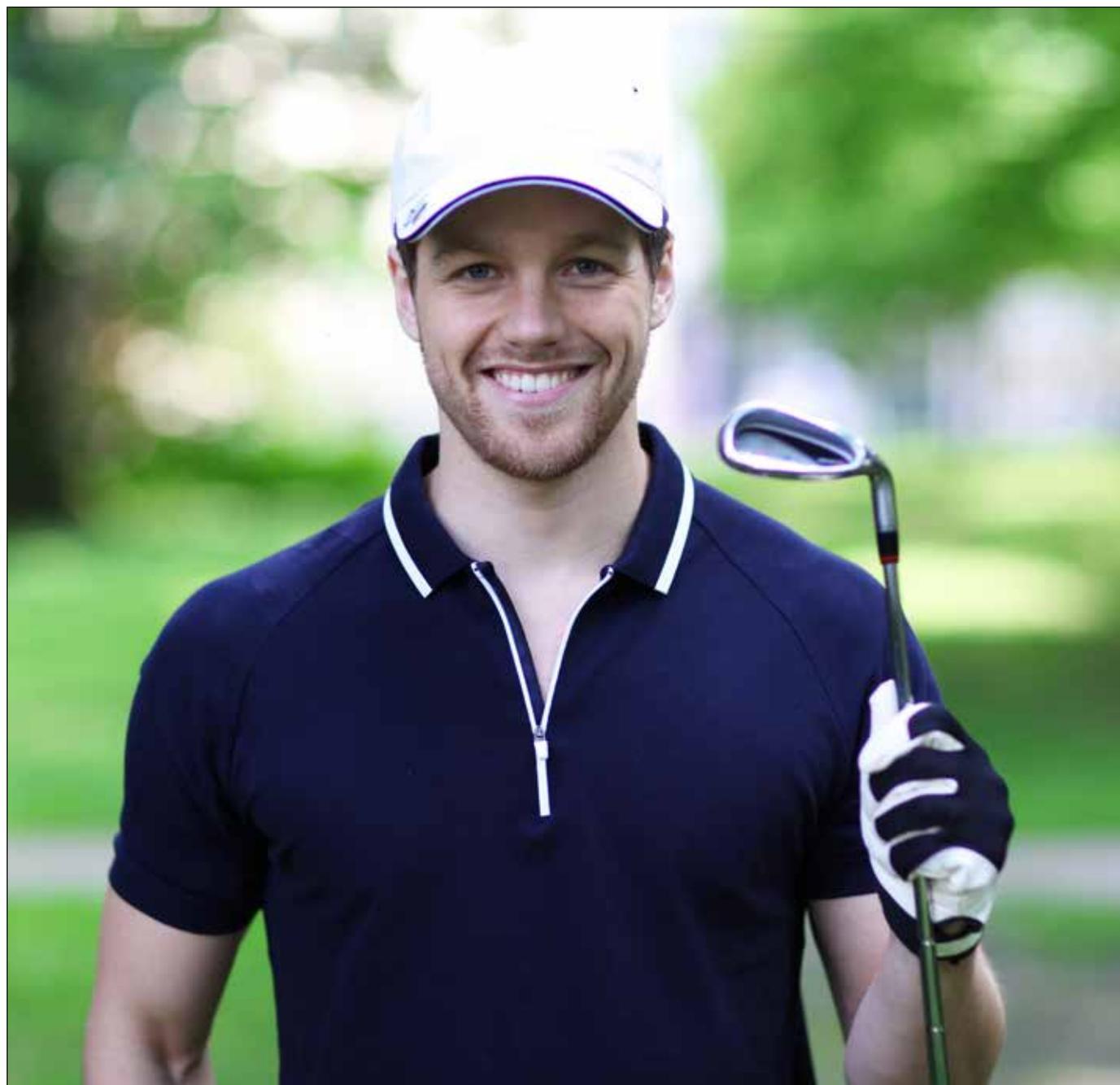
It's highly competitive and only the best of the best reach the upper echelons of the sport.

There are plenty of other careers, however, for excellent golfers to fulfill, chief among them is the golf pro.

First and foremost, pros at clubs and courses must be at the top of their game, consistently shooting par or under. They may not be of the caliber of PGA Tour golfers, but they must have mastered the mechanics of the golf swing and, just as important, possess the ability to explain and teach fundamentals and techniques to others. Golf pros are generally members of the PGA and have passed the association's Playing Ability Test.

Beyond golf proficiency, golf pros at public and private courses manage operations such as the golf shop. Some golf pros provide lessons to club or course members; others leave this to staff teaching professionals.

Along with a skilled, professional-level game, golf pros are the face of the game at clubs, are excellent communicators with highly evolved management and people skills.



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CAREER PATH

Most head golf pros worked their way up, beginning their careers in high school by taking a job on the golf staff at a local club or course. While they perform the daily tasks of anyone in a service-oriented job, they also have a front-row seat watching and learning from the club pro.

Becoming a golf pro means

not only maintaining your own game, but the ability to help club and course members improve theirs as well. Members are diverse and have varying levels of skill and needs. Possessing an outgoing personality and the ability to listen are both essential aspects of the job. That same attitude extends to teaching the finer points of the game to

provide a high-quality experience to all members.

PGA MEMBERSHIP

Becoming a PGA member is key to earning a spot on a professional golf staff at a club or course. This requires a combination of course study and practical training under the guidance of the club pro. Apprentices are required to

complete a series of qualifying tests and attend seminars to the PGA Education Center in Florida.

To achieve the pinnacle of success as the head golf pro at any club means not only a developing into a tour-caliber player but also mastering a wide array of management skills from maintaining courses to running golf shops and merchandising. The PGA offers a university program by extension to larger colleges and universities around the U.S. and successful participants earn bachelors degrees in golf management after four to five years of study.

ON THE JOB

Becoming a professional golfer is often a solitary pursuit requiring many hours of individual study and play to master the game. Becoming a head golf pro at a club course demands that, but also the people skills to work with members of varying skill levels and manage a team and staff while interacting with other professionals at the club. This includes not only organizing and overseeing tournaments and special events but working with groundskeepers to maintain a pristine golfing experience and dealing with practical matters such as scheduling, payroll and money management.

Not every great golfer can develop these attributes, but for those who do, becoming a head golf pro at a club or course can be a fulfilling career in a sport they love.

5 Great Golf Tour Vacations

Avid golfers are a special breed who live and breathe the game at home and on the road.

They play routinely at their own favorite local course and take advantage of trips in their professional careers to experience other courses around the country. Naturally, they connect the game to vacations and few hobbies offer such a wealth of relaxing trips to extraordinary resorts that please every family while upping their skill at top courses.

Here are five great golf vacations, ranked by Trip Advisor, that offer the best of these vacation experiences. You can enhance your planning by also seeking out suggestions of golfing friends and partners, as well as consulting with your local travel planning expert.

MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA

For more than a century, golfers have been drawn to the serene and dramatic Big Sur coast where there exist more than 20 world-class courses. A peak golf vacation experience can be had here, epitomized by playing Del Monte, which has been thrilling golfers since 1897. Other dream courses such as Pebble Beach and Spyglass are nearby, mixing the majesty of the area's landscape with seaside relaxation and upscale resort, shopping, dining and enter-



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tainment scenes.

HILTON HEAD, SOUTH CAROLINA

Long a favored destination, Hilton Head offers 33 world-class championship courses designed by the likes of the legendary Golden Bear himself, Jack Nicklaus. Frequently ranked by Golf Digest as one of the top courses in the nation, Hilton Head's Harbour Town Golf Links feature greens and fairways that make every golfer salivate. Dotted with five-star resorts and hotels, this quaint Southern coastal town blends a historic setting with excel-

lent dining and entertainment to please any taste or desire.

SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

The coasts are not alone in their draw for dream golf vacations. Deep in the heart of the Southwest, San Antonio offers great weather amid a deeply historic city known for its Tex-Mex flavors and playful attitude with such breathtaking courses as TPC San Antonio and the Palmer Course at La Cantera. Surrounded by quaint, friendly Texas towns and villages, its no wonder San Antonio has become a premier golfing destination.

TRAVERSE CITY, MICHIGAN

In the Midwest and located in the upper reaches of the Michigan "mitten," Traverse City is home to the Arnold Palmer-designed Manitou Passage alongside Jack Nicklaus' Bear course at the Grand Traverse Resort and Spa. Both locations offer top-drawer golf packages and experiences. Off the greens, visitors are attracted to the city's funky and sophisticated bars, wineries and distilleries. Another attraction is Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, "mountains" of sand on Lake Michigan. Charming and cozy,

Traverse City offers a wholly different golf vacation between the coasts.

ORLANDO, FLORIDA

Any golf trip planner would be remiss if they didn't include Florida's many vacation destinations. While there are plenty of exciting opportunities on the Atlantic and Gulf coasts, it is central Florida that is home to "The City Beautiful" of Orlando, where magical family memories are made at Walt Disney World and golfers bask in the glories of its Waldorf Astoria Golf Course and any one of more than 150 courses open for year-round play.

Big Trends in Golf

Predicting trends is part art, part science, part guessing. But trends in golf tend to exist more in the concrete world of evolution. Which is to say most trends are surface-level growth in predictable scenarios.

Here are a few of the more visible trends in golf as identified by the experts at Links magazine.

GAMBLING

Betting on sports has been around since sports began, so it's no surprise that such a data-heavy game as golf would be the subject of passionate gambling. As remote sports betting continues to emerge in many states, the PGA has been clear about its involvement alongside other major professional sports. To that end, the Tour has joined with IMG Area, a sports betting service and content hub, as its source for scoring data for media and betting.

Fantasy golf has also become a popular online hobby, joining football and baseball, taking an interest in the sport to another level. Using popular players such as Tiger Woods and Phil Mickelson with real-world data, players can create fantasy scenarios that are also the basis for gambling. Legalized



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golf gambling is not far behind.

STREAMING AND DIGITAL CONTENT

Watching golf on TV has long been a favored past time of fans and players alike. Unlike team sports, consuming golf on TV is mainly a soli-

tary pursuit that makes it perfect for streaming. The National Golf Foundations estimates that 22 million people watched a golf tournament via streaming, whether on TV or on a device like a phone or a table. That 2017 figure is only growing and evolving as the sport figures out new ways to

reach consumers with all types of golf media, including the PGA Tour Live package available on NBC Gold and PGA of America streaming deal with ESPN Plus.

The Discovery Channel is the outlet of choice for a 12-year PGA Tour deal, including billions of dollars of invest-

ment in licensing international rights and an exclusive deal with Tiger Woods, the European Tour and the LPGA Tour via its Golf TV. Or, as Discovery refers to it, the “Netflix” of golf.

ON-COURSE DATA

Companies such as Cobra Golf and Arccos Golf are taking smart technology to the next level by exploiting capabilities to gather data with built-in club sensors that track performance. Other major players such as Ping and TaylorMade are following these innovators, making all new golf clubs made now incorporating sensor technology as a standard feature. The systems assess strengths and weaknesses that provide valuable feedback to both golfers and golf club manufacturers.

RETAIL

Like many other niche stores, golf specialty shops were once a popular refuge and shopping destination for players and fans. Survivors of the online e-commerce revolution are rebounding or stabilizing, but are always competing with the “everything” store known as Amazon. The giant online retailer has had a huge impact on physical stores and continues to effect equipment and apparel outlets. Where it can't compete is in the tactile experience every golfer requires — holding and trying out clubs and other equipment. Nor will it likely ever replace the in-person experience in shoes and apparel.

Golf at the Movies

Golf has infiltrated the plots of movies for longer and to a deeper and more effective degree than almost any other major sport.

It's no surprise golfing as a theme has been the driver behind many popular films. The popular quote, "Golf is a good walk spoiled," is attributed to many, including Mark Twain, but it is perhaps better amended in movie terms as a backdrop interrupted for character development. Here's a list of a handful of the best golf movies ever made, with more surely in the pipeline.

'CADDYSHACK'

This 1980 comedy classic combined a nexus of talent — Saturday Night Live alumni Bill Murray and Chevy Chase and re-emergent old-school comedian Rodney Dangerfield and veteran comic actor Ted Knight — in a smart, snappy script that evoked the real-life caddy experience of writers Harold Ramis and Brian Doyle Murray (Bill's older brother, who also has a role) against the upscale suburban setting of a patriotic golf club in which the serfs generally wreak havoc and chaos. Much laughter ensues, set to a hit soundtrack. A hole-in-one on every level.

'TIN CUP'

Kevin Costner might be best known for his baseball-themed movies such as "Bull Durham" and "Field of Dreams," but he elevates golf to near-real life drama with a comic undercurrent — much like the game itself — as Roy McAvoy, the archetype of cynical ex-pro down on his luck and earning a living as a driving range



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instructor. The movie follows his aggressive and eccentric ploy to try out for the US Open and features several real pros (Peter Jacobsen, Gary McCord) fitted into a rom-com with many attributes to recommend it as among the best of the genre. A pin-perfect cast includes love interest Rene Russo, with Cheech Marin and Don Johnson in supporting roles.

'HAPPY GILMORE'

Golf and comedy can't be mentioned without referencing this Adam Sandler classic, in which the SNL veteran epitomizes his almost patented mix of psychotic and sentimental character creations. This formula blends the sentimental and sappy with slapstick schtick, served with a side of romance. In "Gilmore," Sandler plays a failed hockey player with a killer slap-

shot who attempts to rescue his debt-ridden grandmother by using that swing on the links to hustle golfers on the driving range. Standout supporting performances by comic genius Ben Stiller and the legendary Carl "Apollo Creed" Weathers of the "Rocky" film series.

'THE LEGEND OF BAGGER VANCE'

An exemplar of golf dramas, this 2000 period piece is Robert Redford's paen to the game at its Depression-era peak of popularity. "Bagger Vance" brings together Will Smith, Matt Damon, the late legend Jack Lemmon (in his final film role) and Charlize Theron for a golfing trip through time set in stately, sumptuous post-antebellum era Georgia. The sentimental script is reminiscent of some of

Redford's previous metaphorical greats, such as "The Great Gatsby" and "The Way We Were," although here he directs and does not star.

'DEAD SOLID PERFECT'

Sports movies don't evolve from better novels than those of Dan Jenkins, the legendary Sports Illustrated writer, author and passionate golfer whose books have been the basis of such drama-comedies as "Semi-Tough," the Burt Reynolds-Kris Kristofferson-Jill Clayburgh classic. As cult classics go, "Dead Solid Perfect" is near perfect feature Randy Quaid as a struggling, lower-tier PGA golfer who tours the country dreaming of his emergence as a champion. The 1989 HBO film is quite the sought-after collector's item and is reputed to be among unconventional golf hero John Daly's favorite movies.