

Does the Price of the Shaft Ensure Better Shaft Performance?

In a word? No, the price of the shaft does not ensure that anything about the shaft will be better, whether you are talking about the fit, the performance or the quality. Sad, but it is true.

Over the past several years, a number of shaft companies have chosen to develop and market graphite shafts for woods which are VERY expensive. From the early 1980s when graphite shafts were first introduced until the mid 2000s, the most expensive graphite shafts sold for around \$50 to \$60.

In almost every case, the higher cost shafts were those which were manufactured to be very light in weight and with a much lower torque. Making a graphite shaft that weighs 65 grams or less and with less than 3 degrees of torque costs more money because more expensive higher strength/higher modulus graphite fiber materials are required to achieve the much lighter weight and lower torque.

But since the late 2000s, there are many shafts selling for \$100, \$200, \$300 and even more which are of "normal

weight" with a torque measurement in excess of 3 or 4 degrees. Why are many shafts being sold for such high prices? If you pay hundreds of dollars for a shaft, does that mean you will hit the ball farther, straighter or more consistently?

There are FIVE elements in the design of a golf shaft which ordain every aspect of its performance. Those elements are the, 1) Flex or overall stiffness of the shaft, 2) Bend Profile, otherwise known as how the stiffness is distributed over the length of the shaft, 3) Weight, which is important because the shaft's weight controls the total weight of the whole club, 4) Torque, also known as the shaft's resistance to twisting during the swing, and 5) the Weight Distribution, which is also referred to as the balance point of the shaft.

At Wishon Golf, we maintain a data base of shaft measurements for thousands of different shafts. This data base served as the core of our TWGT Shaft Bend Profile Software, a program which allowed custom clubmakers to be able to make quantitative comparisons of shafts for the purpose of making better shaft fitting decisions for golfers. With this software program, it was possible to compare the design and production specifications of any shaft in the data base to any other shaft.

In a nutshell, it is completely possible to find shafts which cost hundreds of dollars for which all of the performance

elements are either identical or so close to be considered identical to shafts which cost less than \$50. In all of our shaft research we simply cannot find any performance justification for the very high price charged for some shafts.

What makes a GOOD shaft is whether that shaft's flex, bend profile, weight, torque and balance point are well matched to the golfer's swing speed, swing tempo, downswing transition force and point of wrist-cock release before impact. There really is no such thing as a "bad shaft"; there are only poorly fit shafts and properly fit shafts. A properly fit shaft has no price guidelines or cost requirements attached to it.