

Tip Soft Shaft: What Does it Mean for Your Swing?

What is meant by a "tip soft" shaft? A shaft can be designed with many variations in the distribution of its stiffness over its whole length. A tip soft shaft is one that is designed to be more flexible in the tip portion of the shaft which we define as the last 16" to 21" of the shaft. Likewise there can be any number of variations in how stiff the tip section of a shaft is designed. The reason this is done is to help golfers with different swing characteristics find the right shaft that matches best to how they release the club, i.e. when they unhinge the wrist-cock angle on the downswing.

Most typically, golfers who unhinge the wrist-cock angle early to early/midway in the downswing are better fit with tip soft shafts, while golfers who hold the wrist-cock angle until very late in the downswing are better fit with a tip stiff or tip firm shaft. Those who unhinge the wrist cock somewhere in between early and late then are typically better fit to shafts that are more what is called a tip medium design.

The terms "tip soft/tip firm/tip medium" are completely generic in their description and in no way tell you exactly HOW TIP SOFT or HOW TIP FIRM the shaft is. That's why we created the Shaft Bend Profile Software so that

clubmakers can empirically compare how much stiffer one shaft is than another, and where on the shaft from butt to center to tip the shaft is more or less stiff.

Let me explain using a graph and data from our Bend Profile Software data base. In this program we store the FULL LENGTH STIFFNESS measurements of many different shaft models and flexes so that clubmakers can empirically compare the stiffness design of one shaft to another to help them make better shaft fitting recommendations for the golfers they fit.

These are six different shafts which are designed to be virtually the same exact stiffness from the butt to the center of the shaft, but are very different in stiffness for their tip section. In the graph and data box, the 41 to 11 columns tell you WHERE the stiffness measurements were made on each shaft, in inches up from the tip end. So the 41/36 measurements are considered the BUTT end of the shaft, the 31/26 measurements the CENTER section of the shaft and the 21/16/11 considered the TIP Section of the shaft. In the measurements, the higher the number, the stiffer the shaft is at that point.

So from this you can see that the shafts are all very similar for their 41, 36, 31 measurement positions but then vary from the 26 position on down to the very tip end of the

shafts. The swing speed rating of a shaft is chiefly determined by the stiffness from the 41" to the 26" measurement positions on the shaft which represent the butt to center sections of the shaft. All six of the shafts displayed in the graph could be fit to a golfer with a 90-100mph driver swing speed. The tip section stiffness among all these 90-100mph rated shafts varies from 324/422/683 (Apollo Shadow UL) all the way up to the very tip stiff design of the Fujikura Vista Tour 70-S of 371/524/963.

Thus the Apollo shaft would be fit to a golfer with a 90-100mph driver swing speed who has a very early cast-off release of the club, the Vista Tour 70 would best be for a 90-100mph driver swing speed player with a very late release of the club, and the other shafts for golfers with a 90-100mph swing speed with their release between early/midway to midway to somewhat late release.

The best way to be sure you are properly fit for the right shafts that match all your swing characteristics is to find a GOOD [Clubmaker/clubfitter](#) in your area and have them use their knowledge and experience to custom fit you.

Tom