



2

3



Sync That Putt!

Countless new digital products are hitting golf courses. We try to lower our handicap.

BY PETER LAURIA

Your tee shot at the 18th hole at Pebble Beach is gorgeous, avoiding the craggy coastline on the hole's left and turning the 543-yard par-5 round killer into a much more manageable 300-yard par 4. The small device clipped to your visor calls out exactly how many yards to the hole, and an app on your phone reminds you how to avoid repeating that hitch in your swing. You make another fantastic shot, then eagle the hole and seal the 2019 US Open title.

1

Big data has made its way to the fairway, where apps, sensors, and internet-connected devices can help all golfers improve their games (even if this year's US Open title may be out of reach).

Indeed, courses that don't offer GPS yardage indicators with hole descriptions linked to smartphones or embedded in golf carts are seen as antiquated, says Matt Adams, the best-selling author, Golf Channel regular, and host of the daily *Fairways of Life* talk show. "This is the kind of

technology players expect nowadays," Adams says.

This year, golfers are going to see a bundle of digital products that can, among other things, analyze swing mechanics, improve putt accuracy, and even speed up a round, says Marc Simon, who oversees the annual PGA Merchandise Show in Orlando, Florida.

To test out a few, we warm up before we even go to the golf course. The **InBirdie Smart Putting Green** lets us take a few practice putts, which will hopefully minimize the chances of our missing a 4-footer in front of the boss. By linking its app to



Five Gadgets for Your Golf Game

- 1 **Finn Cycle** / about \$25 to rent
finnscooters.com
- 2 **GPS Audible Golf Range Finder** / \$90
sharperimage.com
- 3 **Theragun G3 Pro** / \$599
theragun.com/products/g3pro
- 4 **Smart Shoes** / \$360
iofitshoes.com
- 5 **InBirdie Smart Putting Green** / \$265
inbirdiesmart.com

a smartphone, this digital putting green records a host of data and allows for practice on greens of up to 49 feet with three different grass speeds.

We then put on a pair of **Smart Shoes**. The Internet of Things-enabled footwear measures how much a body shifts weight when swinging a club. The shoes send data to an app on a smartphone, which in turn will make adjustment suggestions in real time.

Once we're at the course, we slide our golf bag onto the frame of a **Finn Cycle**, a hybrid scooter-caddie that looks more like a Harley than a golf cart. We mount it, motorcycle-style, and zip to the first hole. While not available for individual purchase yet, golfers can rent them at various courses around the world starting this year. It's a heck of a lot cooler than a golf cart.

Our first shot off the tee lands in the middle of the fairway, which is great except we can't figure out which club to use next. So we switch on the **GPS Audible Golf Range Finder**, a small, lightweight gadget that conveniently clips onto a hat or glasses. The device contains information on more than 30,000 courses worldwide and calls out

exactly how far the ball is from the center of the green. We know exactly which club to use now! The device's accompanying app reminds us that there's a sand trap just beyond the green, too.

The round goes quickly, but all that swinging can leave a body awfully sore. So, once we reach the clubhouse, we break out the **Theragun G3 Pro**. This personal massager features six different attachments to target various muscle groups. Since it's only about three pounds, it's easy to use while waiting for the bartender to serve up a post-round Arnold Palmer. ▀



4



5