

DEREK MURRAY

ALL WOOD AND NO TIMBER

Mizuno are known for their irons, but there's a lot going for their woods, too



Mizuno are renowned for their irons, and for the quality of the steel used in the construction.

However, when it comes to their woods, even some of their Tour players have been reluctant to put a Mizuno driver or fairway wood in the bag.

To see if they could indeed stand up to the competition, we tested the JPX 800 driver, fairway wood and hybrid, after the JPX range of irons we tested earlier this year impressed so much.

The Golf-Stig was instructed to drop by for some ball-flight analysis. He obliged and took the three clubs off for some TLC, Stig-style.

Firstly: the driver. We had a 9-degree model with a Project X 6.5 shaft. It had a very neutral-looking position, and thanks to a unique multi-thickness face it controls mis-hits very well when struck high or low in the face. For a normally priced driver, without all the adjustability of other brands, it both looked and performed very well under pressure.

Stig squeezed a few out and started to open up the power little by little. The well-placed back-weight on the driver and the very lightweight crown promoted good launch with low spin and this head and shaft combination hit the ball just as far as any other driver on the market. The best part of this driver is the price

– at around €245, you get a whole lot of club for very little.

The fairway wood came in a 15-degree 3 wood, and was shafted with a Grafalloy Pro Launch Blue Stiff. The neat, low centre-of-gravity head sits great behind the ball and the flat head made it easy to get the ball in the air even off the very tight surface on the truck. It has a nice rolled toe weighting which when matched with the Pro Launch Blue shaft produced a nice even draw flight. The shelf price for the fairway wood is around €150.

Likewise the hybrid – which we had in the standard shaft offering, the Exsar HS5 in stiff – was such a great looking hybrid it was hard not to hit it well. The 19-degree head framed the ball very well and ball flight was easy as Stig was able to hit this little beast high or low and could almost make it talk. The price on this one is around €135, but for full information on the JPX range head to mizunoeurope.com.

It's very important not to overlook any clubs in your pursuit for the perfect club and just because Tour professionals don't have them in the bag is not enough for you not to give them a try. With so much choice out there, it can be hard sometimes to see the wood for the trees.

ACCESSORIES



Cover up – It's dangerous out there

I'm always on the look out to solutions to problems or help where I think it's needed. On a recent cheeky 9-holes, my mate David used his iPhone and a cool app to input hole by hole scores so he could compile shot by shot data that analysed his different rounds and gave him feedback on his game weaknesses. Similarly he asked me to video his swing so he could use another app to analyse his swing at a later date and spot irregularities. He then stuck the phone back in his bag and I thought about how he should really be protecting his expensive phone and like a headcover that minds the driver I went on the search for the perfect phone cover. I eventually came across OtterBox (thanks Clodagh) and the ultimate phone cover search was over!! They have two main protectors, the Commuter which is the very lightweight one and the Defender which is the practically bullet-proof James Bond one. Either way they do covers for all the major phones and with prices from around €35 for the Commuter and €50 for the Defender you will find them in most good phone shops or on their website at otterbox.com so hurry up and get yourself well covered.

DEREK MURRAY, Ireland's leading golf club technician and clubmaker, offers consultation on the correct golf club for golfers of all abilities from his base Fore Golf in Naas, Co. Kildare and also for the world's top players on The European Tour. He is the 2010 GCA World Clubmaker of the Year.