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Shakespeare introduces a graphite shaft
Shakespeare Company of Columbia, S.C., has announced the introduction of a graphite fiber golf club shaft in a driver for 1972.
According to Frank Thomas of Shakespeare’s central engineering group, a shaft of Thornel graphite yarn has been developed using computer and space-age materials. Shakespeare, well-known for its fiberglass fishing and archery equipment, has also bolstered the strength of its fiberglass shaft, long considered by some manufacturers to be too whippy or weak. According to Thomas, a new method of constructing the glass fibers has enabled Shakespeare to challenge the dominance of aluminum, steel and lightweight steel shafts.
Shakespeare said that its Tor Fil Sigma driver with its graphite shaft will be available by early spring, but the retail price will probably not cause a mass buying movement by the public. A spokesman for Shakespeare estimated that the graphite shafted driver with an extremely stiff, but strong shaft, would retail for around $100. The marketing is currently being directed toward the big hitter and the professional golfer.
Bernie Lavins, Shakespeare’s vice president for manufacturing, says, “The weight of the head can be slightly increased with the decrease in shaft weight. By lightening the shaft of the club,” Lavins explains, “we have made it possible to increase clubhead speed without decreasing head mass.” In addition to its lightweight and regular steel shafts, all-fiberglass and all-graphite shafts, Shakespeare is also preparing a combination graphite-fiberglass shaft. This shaft will be more in the buying range of golfers than the all-graphite shaft, says a company spokesman. Although Shakespeare has not found another golf equipment manufacturer to buy its Union Carbide-developed graphite shaft concept, the company is pursuing this avenue as well as attempting to find tour professionals willing to test the shaft. Professional Don January, under contract to Shakespeare, has worked with the company in testing and designing the graphite shaft.
According to Thomas, the over-all weight of the graphite shaft is 2.6 ounces as opposed 4.0 to 4.5 ounces for steel.

Chlevin resigns top GCSAA post
Ben Chlevin, for seven years executive director of the Golf Course Superintendents Assn. of America, resigned effective January 31. The announcement came prior to the GCSAA Conference and Turfgrass Show in Cincinnati, February 13 to 18, and was accepted “with regret” by the GCSAA Executive Committee, according to association President Richard Blake.
“I have no definite plans at this time,” said Chlevin, “although I would like to go into public relations activity connected with the golf industry.”
Chlevin served as public relations director of the National Golf Foundation from 1953 to 1960; assistant to the publisher, GOLFDOM Magazine from 1960 to 1964, and was named executive director of the GCSAA December 1, 1964.
During his tenure the GCSAA headquarters were relocated from Jacksonville, Fla., to Chicago. The association’s membership increased from 2,000 to 3,000, and the annual budget doubled from $275,000 to over $550,000.
GOLFDOM Senior Editor Herb Graffis, in commenting on Chlevin’s resignation, said, “Solid progress and smooth operations in the superintendents’ association have been achieved since Chlevin has been on the job.”
Dr. Paul Alexander, director of education for the GCSAA, is acting as temporary executive director until a successor is found.