

# NEWS OF THE INDUSTRY

## A NEW TWIST IN GRAPHITE SHAFTS

PLAINFIELD, N. J.—Although the “jury” was still out at press time, many members of the golf industry were confident that the USGA’s verdict on graphite shafts would be favorable. Further evidence of this confidence was the entrance of yet another manufacturer to the growing number of graphite shaft producers.

The new shaft is Graftek, manufactured by Composite Materials Division of Exxon Enterprises, Inc., Plainfield, N. J.

Marketing Director, Joel Fuerst, stressed that better dynamic performance due to flex and twist harmony was the company’s uppermost consideration in designing the new graphite shaft.

Some graphite shafts have little or no twist, according to Fuerst, but suffer from inadequate flex as a result. “Others flex fine, but have too much twist, making them difficult to control,” he stated.

The company says its objective has been to produce a shaft that flexes well but with enough twist resistance to stabilize the clubhead. The radial twist is maintained higher than with the steel shaft to make full use of the graphite properties, but the twist is progressively reduced to maintain clubhead stability at impact.

To the questions on the relative swing weights and flexes—steel to graphite, Fuerst answered: “We’ve found that you should swing one stronger shaft in our Graftek shafts than you do in steel. If you swing an S (stiff) shaft in steel, you should go to an X (very stiff) shaft in our graphite line. Also, to compensate for the stiffer shaft, go up two, three, or even four swing weight points, up to a D-6 in graphite from D-2 in steel.

“The added weight in the head also provides the necessary clubhead feel. You must have enough weight in the head to flex the graphite shaft—if a graphite shaft doesn’t flex, you won’t get anything out of it.”

## ANOTHER SUIT AGAINST “PRO-ONLY” IN THE WORKS

CHICAGO—A major sporting goods retailer here is preparing to file suit against a number of golf equipment manufacturers for being denied access to “pro-only” lines. The charges will be similar to those involved in the Golf City, New Orleans, litigation, which is expected to come to trial some time in spring 1974.

However, in terms of comparative size, Golf City reportedly is “small fry” next to the Chicago retailer. According to one source, the suit will be filed in Illinois, but will be moved, along with any similar suits in other states, to be tried in a single court, of which the location is expected to be New Orleans.

## WILSON INTRODUCES GRAPHITE II

RIVER GROVE, ILL.—Wilson became the first of the “big” clubmakers to enter the graphite field, with its introduction of the new Graphite II shaft as an option on men’s Wilson Staff woods and Haig Ultra woods only.

The graphite shafts are being manufactured under exclusive contract with Wilson by Babcock & Wilcox Advance Composites Div., Alliance, Ohio. In both the Wilson and Hagen lines, the graphite-shafted clubs have a suggested retail price of \$120 per wood, and are available in two flexes, Firm and Extra Firm. According to Larry Cassidy, business manager, Golf, the Firm plays like a Regular in steel shafts and the Extra Firm plays

like a Stiff steel shaft. Immediate visible feature of the shaft is its stepped down design.

Cassidy said the shaft has been one year in development and has undergone considerable testing both in the R & D lab and in the field. “A primary difference in the Graphite II shaft is that it has the torque resistance characteristics of a steel shaft, which means considerably better control than with other graphite shafts,” he said. “In testing, we also found that we got greater distance with the Graphite II than with other graphite shafts currently on the market.” However, Cassidy stressed that greater distance is only significant if you can control it, and he feels a primary feature of the Graphite II is “its superior control.”

## BYRON NELSON JOINS J. S. FINGER

HOUSTON—One of golf’s all-time greats has become associated with Joseph F. Finger & Associates, Inc., as golf course design consultant. Nelson’s golf history includes winning the United States Open title, the PGA title twice and the Masters twice. Nelson holds an unmatched record of 11 consecutive wins in PGA-sponsored tournaments, a record no one has matched. Joseph Finger is an internationally-known golf course architect with offices here and in Mexico City.

