

“T’s 5 Keys”

For the past several years I have had the privilege of coaching and caddying for 10 year Tiaghan Chea, aka “T”. In addition to competing in local events, he also competes on the international stage. He has experienced much success. In 2018 he was the boys 7-9 year old Drive-Chip-Putt National Champion. Most recently he finished T-6 last month at the IMG Junior World Championships. He competed against the top 125 kids from around the globe.

T has a complete game. He is a great ball striker with phenomenal touch both on and around the greens. One area we needed to address over the past couple of years was his length off the tee. As any parent knows, kids grow and different times. T is typically one of the smaller competitors. He tends to be shorter and much lighter than most kids. He was constantly being out driven by bigger players. Through much hard work both on and off the course, he now is regularly the longest player in his group.

So here are “T’s 5 Keys” for driving it long and straight...

1. It begins at set-up. T has widen his stance so that the outside of his shoulders line up with the inside of his feet. One thing we constantly monitor is making sure he doesn’t too wide. If his feet get too far apart he can’t properly use his lower body. Also, the ball has been moved up in his stance so it is in line with his left ankle. This promotes good balance and a shallow attack angle.



2. At this point of the backswing we call it “Push”. T has made a very large shoulder turn with no hand manipulation. This achieves maximum width with a square club face. His face is in the same position relative to his body as it was at address. Most players take the club back with their arms leading to an open or closed club face and not much width.



3. Here is where the power builds. Notice that T's sternum is over the inside of his right foot. This means that about 80% of his weight is into his right leg. He has not slid back off the ball, but rather coiled into his trail leg. On the downswing, we focus on getting his left hip back out of the way as fast as possible. His lower body fires and pulls the upper body thru the ball. Most players either tend to lunge towards the target with the upper body or slide with their lower body.



4. At impact, the only difference is that his hips are facing the target. The club face and hands have returned to his address position. This is one of the keys to his accuracy. Length is worthless without being able to keep it in the fairway.



5. This finish position is great! T has finished with his sternum over his left knee over his left foot. He is in perfect balance with almost all his weight on top of his left foot. One thing we constantly monitor is that his upper body doesn't hang back. Hanging back leads to off center hits. It is very important for T to hit the ball in the center of the face to maximize ball speed.



Pound for pound the kid can move the ball! For help with identifying which one of "T's 5 Keys" could help you hit the ball further please visit www.brianflugstad.com to book your next lesson!

