

2024 Opus Wedges Vidcast Transcript

Hosts

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Introduction/Spin

Paul: We've got some exciting product to get into here for the wedge category. The quote that we've been living by with this product is this idea of where art meets science. And as we get into it, you'll kind of understand what that means. But there is sort of a dance and art that happens when designing a product that's used as nuanced as a wedge—full shots, partial shots, open face, you name it. There is an art to the game, and we really felt this quote summarized what this product really meant: where the art meets science.

So, with that, introducing the new name for our franchise of wedges is Opus. In general, the name has an air of elegance to it. There's a sense of beauty, and especially as you look at the product and we get these in your hands, you'll see that there really is just a new look, just a beautiful sense to them. They're quite elegant. And so, the name for us harkens back to the days of Beethoven, Mozart, their magnum opus, their greatest achievement. And for us, there was a ton of time and effort put into this product, and we really felt that the product was befitting of the name Opus.

And so, getting into some of the technology that sets this product apart from maybe even prior generations of our own wedges, we're going to start with the face. You can't have a product that doesn't spin, especially with wedges. So, we've got an all-new Spin Gen Face technology, sort of the one-two-three. And we'll get into this with Brian here. But the one-two-three for the Spin Gen Face is really about a new groove package. We've enhanced the surface roughness, and we're continuing to use those angled micro-features. So, to talk about the new groove package, Brian, unpack a little bit about what this really means.

Brian: Yes, so we're continuing to use what we call the most aggressive groove in golf. And what we've done is essentially put more of those on the face. And to do this, we had to narrow the pitch or lessen the distance between each groove. And what this does is put more groove edges on the golf ball. And what we've seen in testing is that it's lowering the launch and creating more spin.

Surface Roughness + Spin

Paul: We'll get into some of the data with this as well. But the second piece that we talked about is that enhanced surface roughness. And before you kind of get into this and the development behind it, the one thing you'll notice is that this is a fully chrome wedge. And so, some of the data that we'll also get into, the performance is better than even a raw wedge.

Brian: That's right. So, to do this, we had to kind of change how we blast the face and what we used to do it. This year, we're using a quartz blast on the face. Some of you probably know what

quartz is—countertops, things like that. And quartz is a hard blast media, and it penetrates the face and creates roughness. And the quartz is really doing a good job in the wet condition when you need surface roughness and friction. And it's helped in keeping launch low and, again, with the spin in the wet condition.

Paul: And then that last piece, the angled micro-features. So, this is something we've had great success with in prior-generation products. So as sort of a one-two-three punch, kind of maintaining those in there, Brian?

Brian: Yeah, it's a technology that we've used in the past, but it just works. And when you open the face and you come across the ball, it really creates spin for us.

Paul: Love that. And so that's Spin Gen Face technology. So, talking about performance behind a wedge, you can't have a product that doesn't spin, doesn't perform. So not just telling people but showing them. So, let's get into some of the data here. And I know the extensive testing and the hours that your team has spent. We just, to kind of give the folks listening to this some color, you guys grew your own grass to run these tests.

Brian: Yeah, that's right. So, you can't really test out of rough with the GC Quad. But to get data, we grew grass in tubes and then we put those tubes behind the golf ball in our robot testing. And then that simulates rough for us, right? So, what it does is it shows us what's going to happen when you get into the rough along the green or when you're off the fairway. So, what you see here is we're continuing to spin more out of that rough condition. And what we've done in the past and then what maybe our competitor has done. And what you're going to notice is that if you hit shots out of the rough onto the green, you're going to be able to spin it more, keep it on the green, and it's not going to fly off on you.

Paul: Yeah. And I think the thing that you touched upon is sort of getting the testing into a real player, real course scenario, right? Looking at this product, putting it through its paces of what real players on real golf courses will see. And so, these benefits are directly related to performance on the golf course. And with that, obviously, wet conditions as well.

Brian: So again, we're talking about a condition that's not dry. And what the goal here is that you're going to see the same spin or similar spin amounts from rough, from wet, from dry. We're really trying to tighten that window that you're spinning in and you're launching. And you'll see here in a minute. But this is an easier test to perform. Getting the golf ball wet and then hitting it. But you're seeing that we're beating ourselves handily here from the past. And that's a raw face. So, this is where the quartz blast really comes into play here, keeping friction between the golf ball and the club face when the ball's wet.

Paul: And so, another sort of key signal for you guys in the testing was this lower launch, sort of a lower trajectory with the golf ball.

Brian: Yeah. Something that we really saw a lot this year with Tours, they talk about launch windows. They want to keep the launch window in a certain area. And when you get grass in the face or you'll see here in a second with wet, once you introduce things between the golf ball and the club face, you're not going to launch in the same launch window. So, we're keeping our launch window low here in the rough. We're beating ourselves handily here, 5 degrees. So, we're really pleased with that. And then again, in the wet, we're doing the same thing. The aggressive face blast is keeping us in a lower launch, really close to where you are in a dry condition. So, you're going to notice across all conditions, we're tightening our launch windows. We're keeping spin up, and it really makes for a more easily controlled product.

Tour Validation

Paul: And I think we've talked about sort of the new name, there's excitement behind that. We've talked about and shown the data behind the Spin Gen Face technology. So, sort of check and check on both of those. The next piece that we really wanted to make sure we're checking is Tour usage. And so, you know, to take a step back, we've gone about Tour adoption sort of differently in the past than we have this year. And so, we would typically sort of introduce product later in the cycle of development, kind of get some whispers of feedback from players. But for over a year and a half now, we've had a prototype on Tour with the best players in the world. That has been under the guise really of Jaws Raw. And so, talk a little bit about the work that you and our Tour rep, Dean Tekyl did hand in hand to sort of get more players in. And to what we're able to say now is really the most tour validated wedge in Callow's history.

Brian: Yeah, as you talked about how long ago, we started. We started with a different mentality this time. We didn't design a wedge and then bring it out and see what they thought. We started from the ground up, we started with shaping. We had multiple different shapes that we brought out and showed, we got their feedback, we iterated, we got their feedback, we iterated again.

So, we really let the Tour players design this product to a shape they wanted. And then after we got a shape that we loved, we started on the sole grind. So, there's notes here all over of what Dean tested and what he built and how he went about making products for players and getting their feedback. But really, it was 18 months in the making of going and testing and then iterating and then going back out, getting as many players as feedback as we could and helping them to have them help us design it.

Paul: Yeah, getting into this product is more of a Tour driven as opposed to Tour inspired product. This is really a product that better players will gravitate towards. And honestly, the next thing for us is, we've never launched a product prior to being out with two major champions using the product.

So, Yuko Saso U.S. Women's Open player with the S6 Opus wedge in the bag and then Xander Schauffele with the Opus S6 in the bag for the PGA Championship, it's been an incredible head start. We're seeing these numbers improve continually. Looking at the full list of players is like a snapshot of early adopters. Rose Zhang has won, Ronnie Yin and Chris Kirk won at the Tournament of Champions with this product in the bag. Earlier in the year, even John Rahm had

great success with the Opus S6 at the Open Championship and the Ryder Cup. It's demonstrably the best product we've ever had in terms of Tour usage and validation.

Brian: Paul mentioned S6 a couple of times. Just to clarify, we were creating prototypes named shape one, shape two, and so on, until we got to shape six, which we started calling S6 around the building. The feedback on S6 was so positive that we proceeded to develop what is now Opus with the Jaws RAW graphics under the S6 branding. We saw John play and Yuka win with an S6, and Xander and Chris Kirk as well. Opus started as S6 and then evolved the name, but it's had a strong presence on Tour already.

Paul: Earlier adopting into our products for Tour players than ever before is exciting.

Grinds

Paul: Looking at the grind offerings, as wedges go, this is crucial for us. On the right-hand side, we have the S and W grinds where we do the lion's share of sales. The S is our standard everyday grind with a standard sole, while the W has a wider, more forgiving full sole. We've optimized the bounce in both, which Brian will elaborate on. We also wanted to create a product that's a better fit for better players, so we introduced the T grind, which is new, and the C grind.

Brian: The T grind is narrow and sits low to the ground, incredible for open-faced shots, particularly for players who pick the ball cleanly without taking a divot. On the other hand, the C grind is a departure from what we've done before, designed to keep the leading edge low when opening the face, suitable for versatile shot-making from various lies. The wider sole in the C grind provides better feedback through the turf compared to the T grind. Both grinds cater to skilled players who want to make any shot around the green.

Paul: Looking at the full offering, we've got two finishes: the fully black cosmetic, which is sick, and then the chrome. These won't have the raw face like we talked about, but we will have a fully Tour raw head available in our Callaway Customs program, which is exciting. There's a full lineup of women's offerings as well, with a Golf Pride Tour Velvet grip and DG Mid 115 steel shaft. What's exciting is the plus two on the lower hand, based on player feedback. It's a nice complement to the offering. We also have the US RLE Dart in 65G and 50G women's flex. It's a full offering, a full smattering that's Opus.

Final Details On Opus + Introducing Opus Platinum

To put a bow on this, it's really about the Spin Gen face technology we talked about, with incredible performance even compared to competitors in the marketplace. The Tour validation behind the shaping, iterating back and forth, and the multiple grind options with Opus make it exciting. We're not done yet; we have one more product to talk about. It's sort of the Steve Jobs moment, the "one more thing," if you will.

At Callaway, we really looked at the wedge market. Our leadership pushed the team to think, "If money was no object, what could we bring to disrupt the market?" We explored various ideas

from materials to design, and what we came back with is Opus Platinum. Brian, could you share more about what went into this, including your own anecdotes?

Brian: Sure. When we were asked to create a product where we didn't worry about money, or costs, or all those things, we came up with the idea with how we could make ourselves better with our own wedge games? My personal wedge game I tend to hit the ball a little bit higher on the face because I'm steep, in turn that has my misses launching a little bit higher. So, we wanted to pull the CG up and the best way to do that is to put heavy material in the topline to pull it directly up from where it is. As you can see Opus Platinum is just that, we put a large tungsten weight in the topline to pull the CG up higher to create lower launch.

Paul: The Opus Platinum looks super premium with MIM (Metal Injection Molding) lines in the back and elevated curb appeal. As a quick elevator pitch, we have the Spin Gen face technology as with Opus and Tour-validated shaping so those are kind of baked into the product. But what we're doing to take it up another level is that trajectory control using tungsten. And then that unique MIM construction. We've talked about this already but through a large amount of tungsten being bonded into that topline to help the CG placement.

Brian: That's right – 17-gram tungsten weight here, a significant amount. It's going to really help lower launch and keep our trajectory down. With that, the spin that we already have from the groove package in the face with the spin gen.

Paul: And the next piece of that is the Metal Injection Molding – it's not cast, it's not forged, it's kind of something new for us.

Brian: This is MIM Construction, we have a proprietary mix of materials, something that hasn't been done before in the golf industry. MIM is a different way to manufacture, it's more precise, and it also provides better feel. We've done extensive testing on MIM versus other manufacturing methods. MIM dampens better than other materials even the same material in different methods. MIM is a better dampener, so you're going to notice a premium good, soft feel.

Paul: So that's really Opus Platinum and the other thing to touch on is the finishes. The Platinum Blue is really striking, it's got a ton of curb appeal. And then that Chrome as well is just really elevated, really, beautiful look. The grind options, this is tighter, it's niche, this will be supplemental to the core line of Opus. We're keeping this in the sands and lob wedges. It's really where that tungsten and trajectory story benefits most. Looking at the grinds we wanted to have something that was friendlier but a low bounce option. Something that the quote/unquote "better player" the player that's a lower handicap but might need a little more help. The Z Grind is the only one that has that leading edge chamfer in there.

Brian: That's right. This is a bounce that we think works well in this product, because it's still a grind that you can make all the shots if you want to. It pairs well with the tungsten, the ability to keep the ball low, this Z Grind I think we've improved from our previous model is better out of the bunker than it was before. So a really good addition to our lineup here.

Paul: And then looking at the full offering like we said, the tungsten we looked at this kind of every which way and really benefitting the sand and lob wedges the most. That's why we kept it tight in terms of offering 54 up to 60. We've optimized the bounce in these, so you'll see a bit more bounce on the sole with the sand wedges – where you want that out of the bunker when you're opening the face. You want a little bit more bounce as well.

We've tailored the grind options to enhance performance, particularly in sand and lob wedges where tungsten and CG benefits are most noticeable. The ZR grind, with its Leading-Edge chamfer, offers a friendly low bounce option suitable for versatile shot-making.

The full offering includes optimized bounce and upgraded components, like the gunmetal finish on the DG Mid 115 steel shaft and MCC gray black grip. It's a total package that elevates the wedge experience.

Paul: In summary, Opus Platinum offers premium looks and components with M.I.M tungsten construction, Spin Gen face, and Tour-validated shaping. We're excited about our Callaway Customs program, offering customizations like stamping, emojis, and paint fills, along with custom ferrules and shaft bands for personalization. Unlocking a raw head option in Callaway Customs adds another level of excitement.

That wraps up our Opus franchise. Thank you, Brian, for unpacking it. For any further questions, please reach out to Jeff Newton at Callaway Golf. Thanks, everyone, for your time.