

# **XR SPEED: Q&A WITH ALAN HOCKNELL**

## **Why is the XR Speed Driver only being introduced in Europe?**

Callaway enjoyed huge success with Epic in 2017, becoming the #1 Driver brand in Europe (as well as in most other regions of the world). For 2018, Rogue and Epic are both off to outstanding starts but the feedback from our European sales teams, retailers and consumers was that (despite Epic accounting for more than 70% of £400+ driver sales) there is still a significant number of golfers who seek outstanding performance but their budgets can't quite reach to the Epic and Rogue price points. Therefore, we set about the challenge of creating the best 'non-Jailbreak' driver possible that would deliver the kind of performance that would give our leading drivers a run for their money.

## **How does the XR Speed Driver compare to other Callaway Drivers?**

The XR franchise has been hugely successful for Callaway over the last few years but we knew we needed to move it to another level with this latest incarnation. Performance across all drivers has probably moved further in the last few years than in any time over the last two decades. Because of this, we have introduced some of our most premium technologies (ultra-lightweight carbon crown, X Face VFT Face Technology, refined aerodynamic Speed Step) to create a driver that delivers enhanced ball speed and up to a 6 yard total distance gain compared to XR 16. Whilst the new XR Speed doesn't have our industry leading Jailbreak Technology, it delivers strong performance versus our super premium drivers and, based on our internal testing, XR Speed may not quite beat them, but it does outperform every competitor driver we've seen.

## **Is it 'speed' at all costs? How have you balanced the performance recipe?**

The distance that all golfers are looking for ultimately comes from speed and so, whilst it is an exceptionally important parameter, we also have to consider forgiveness. Forgiveness takes on a few different forms. The MOI of the head is important when you don't hit the centre of the face; having draw-bias is also important to hitting straighter shots and, finally, having good aerodynamics enhances total head speed. We balance all of these in the XR Speed Driver. Ball speed is within 1-1.15 mph of the ball speed we see with Rogue and Epic based on robot testing of centre and off-centre hits.

## **What ball flight characteristics can golfers expect with XR Speed Drivers?**

Relative to a standard Rogue Driver, for example, golfers will see a little more backspin and a slight increase in the right to left (draw or anti-slice) tendency. This makes the club a little easier to get up in the air overall and a little straighter for some players.

## **Would you not have created even more speed (and saved weight) by not including the adjustable hosel element?**

Yes, non-adjustable drivers have a hosel that is lighter than adjustable heads. However, it wasn't a goal of this design to produce the lightest driver head possible. Also, we have a carbon fibre crown which is very light, so the combination of the adjustable hosel and carbon crown remains lightweight and draw-biased whilst still providing the adjustability that golfers have told us they are looking for.

**Who will benefit the most from XR Speed?**

This driver has been designed to deliver success to golfers of all ages and abilities. It is very good at helping generate ball speed combined with an easy-to-launch trajectory and this will be apparent in club fittings.

**If I'm a golfer wishing to trade up from a driver I've owned for say three years, what will XR Speed give me?**

Ball speed and, very likely, increased forgiveness. Callaway Drivers in 2018 are considerably higher performing than those of just a few years ago. Construction technology and face design, in particular, have improved significantly.

**Explain the looks of XR Speed?**

The deep blue head colour is taken from our old Steelhead Plus Driver and Fairway Woods. The colour is rich and looks particularly striking on the crown, where you can see the solid blue fading into a cool blue carbon fibre weave pattern.

**How important was the inclusion of a premium shaft to the overall performance recipe of XR Speed?**

We always try to put premium shafts in our drivers and XR Speed is no different. The XR Speed is a good match to the Project X HZDRUS Shaft in terms of total weight and flex profile. However, we will also have other premium shafts available in our custom range to ensure we max out performance for every golfer.

**XR 16 was played on Tour – Danny Willett and Henrik Stenson both won Majors with one. Are you expecting to see the same with XR Speed?**

With Epic and Rogue both in play successfully on Tour it is not automatic that we will see players transition over to this mid-season. However, with the classic shape and outstanding performance, it will undoubtedly catch the eye of Tour players as well as the general public.

**Sum up the XR Speed story? Why should golfers be excited?**

This is a driver brimming with Callaway product technology, leading to ball speed advantages over pretty much every other driver outside of those with our Jailbreak Technology. XR Speed will be famous for producing a fast and forgiving ball flight which is easy to launch. The club looks and sounds great and will out-perform the vast majority of drivers in the fitting bay and on the golf course.