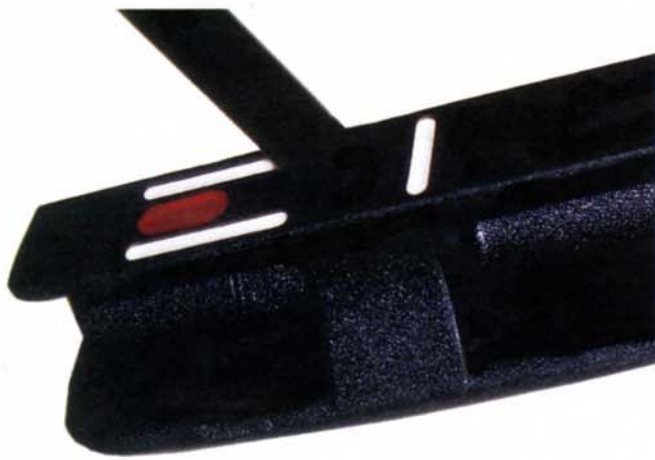


For your game

# Seeing is believing



Johnson's Masters title opens eyes to once-struggling SeeMore putters

By James Achenbach

**The resurgence of the SeeMore putter, used by Masters champion Zach Johnson, is one of those occurrences in which the moon and stars must have been aligned perfectly in golf heaven.**

Perhaps Payne Stewart, who used the SeeMore to win the 1999 U.S. Open, was responsible.

The SeeMore, designed by veteran Southern California teaching pro Jim Weeks, was introduced in 1997. It was different: The lower portion of the shaft had a black powder-coat finish. The putter sported a red oval on top of the heel, directly behind the shaft. When standing over the ball, the idea was to cover the oval with the shaft so that none of the red color was visible,

ensuring the proper shaft position at address.

Touring pros immediately realized that this design feature – now called the RifleScope – could be used in practicing the stroke as well. If any of the red showed on the backstroke or the followthrough, it meant the blade was opening or closing too much.

Weeks proved to be something of a golf genius. At the same time, though, he was a business neophyte. SeeMore floundered until Stewart stuck the SeeMore in his bag.

His U.S. Open victory put SeeMore on the map. His death a few months later essentially put the putter in golf's trash bin.

Weeks, unable to regain momentum, sold most of the company to an investment group headed by Greg Kuppler and Tim Raymond. SeeMore

continued to struggle and was purchased by former Odyssey executives Jim Grundberg and Jason Pouliot in September 2006.

In the meantime, Johnson continued to use the putter. It has been six years now, and he never has been paid to do so.

Johnson's buddy Vaughn Taylor has putted with the SeeMore even longer. When he and Johnson made the 2006 Ryder Cup team, it cemented their reputations as two of the best putters in golf. On the 2007 PGA Tour, Taylor ranked ninth in putting average through the Verizon Heritage; Johnson was 18th.

The Johnson-Taylor endorsement gave hope to Grundberg and Pouliot, but they remained cautious. They renewed their pledge to sell only putters. They designed a new milled line of

## Breaking down the SeeMore putting system

By James Achenbach

**Back when the Nationwide Tour was the Buy.com Tour, teaching professional Pat O'Brien was hired by SeeMore to teach its system to young touring pros.**

Two early converts were Vaughn Taylor and Zach Johnson. More than six years later, O'Brien still tutors his two pupils in the SeeMore putting philosophy. (Taylor's swing coach is Jack Lumpkin, while Johnson's is Mike Bender.)

O'Brien is a close friend of Mike Hicks, who caddied for Payne Stewart, and O'Brien was introduced to the SeeMore putter by Stewart.

"I watched what the SeeMore putter did for him in 1999 (the year Stewart won two tournaments, including the U.S. Open)," O'Brien said. "He had been a streaky putter. He was always standing on the side of the green,

fiddling, trying to find a feel for the day.

"With SeeMore, he had a system, and he became one of the best putters on Tour."

O'Brien, a full-time teacher at The Practice Tee in Richardson, Texas, before recently becoming director of instruction at Lakewood Country Club in Dallas, remains a vocal SeeMore proponent.

Here is some of his advice:

>> "If you create good angles, the putter is going to swing the way it should."

Translation: Good angles equal no manipulation of the putter with the hands or arms.

>> "Feeling comfortable (over a putt) is not the answer. It's a fallacy. If you can show me that you can return the putter to square, and if it's repeatable, then I'll let you do anything you want. Otherwise, you better listen to me."

Translation: Most golfers need to focus on putting fundamentals. It's the only way to develop a consistent stroke.

>> "The first fundamental is the grip. It's the most overlooked element in putting. With a weak grip, you have zero leverage. I guarantee you that your left hand *will* break down."

Translation: Right-handed golfers should move their left hand to the right for a stronger grip.

>> "Most people, when they take a grip, will come from underneath the putter. This puts the putter in an unnatural position, and the putter will go back shut. That's when you get that rock-and-block stuff."

Translation: The left wrist will break because it doesn't have enough leverage, and the putter cannot arc naturally.

>> "If the face gets closed, you will take the putter inside (the line) to compensate. With a bad stroke, you are always compensating."

Translation: Take a putting lesson from your PGA professional.

>> "I want you to set up to the ball correctly,



The FGP at left is one of the original models. SeeMore also is developing a line of milled putters.

SeeMores, called the M Series. They hired an independent sales force in the United States and found foreign distributors. They limited their sales to green-grass golf shops, off-course clubfitters and the company's Internet site ([www.seemore.com](http://www.seemore.com)). And they waited for lightning to strike.

Kaboom!

"It's been overwhelming," Pouliot said of the increased traffic that has followed Johnson's Masters victory. "I had to increase the amount of Web space we had. I had to double our capacity."

"Before the Masters, we were selling maybe two putters a day online. Starting Sunday night, we were selling a putter online about every five minutes."

Duplicates of the putters used by Stewart and Johnson carry a retail price of \$149. The new M Series putters are \$325.

"Obviously this has changed things for us," Pouliot said. "We had planned on 2008 as our coming-out party, but the party started early."

Grundberg said SeeMore's two-pronged sales strategy – an affordable line and an expensive line – by saying "Not everybody wants a Rolex watch."

Company officials said SeeMore can ship its putters within 72 hours, except for the >>>

and to do it without thought. Then you can get to (focus on) the target. It may take two lessons, or it may take 10 lessons."

Translation: Take another lesson.

>> "There are a million putting aids. You can stay on those things all day, but if your angles are bad, it won't help."

Translation: Fundamentals, fundamentals.

>> "Posture is tremendously important in the putting stroke."

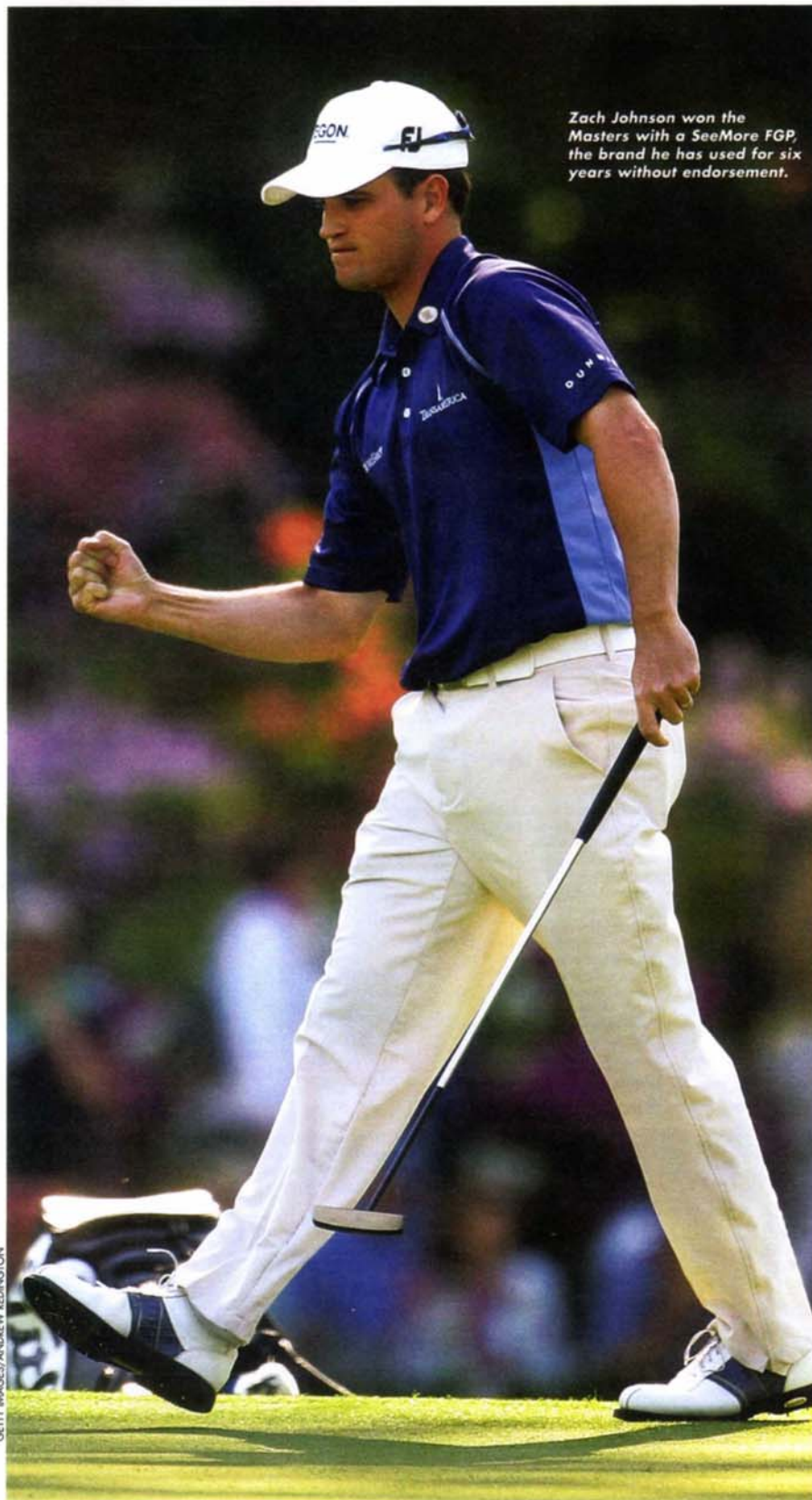
Translation: Think Tiger Woods.

>> "Get it (grip it) 100 percent in the fingers. Feel it. This can only happen if your arms hang freely."

Translation: With proper grip and posture, a golfer can hold the putter loosely, yet authoritatively.

>> "Usually when Zach gets in contention, he's a little fidgety. He's so amped up, he gets quick. He walks faster, he swings faster. That day (last round of the Masters) was totally different. He was totally calm."

Translation: Totally green. ○



Zach Johnson won the Masters with a SeeMore FGP, the brand he has used for six years without endorsement.

GETTY IMAGES/ANDREW REDINGTON

# For your game

◀◀◀ M-FGP model. That one is the newest SeeMore, and supply has yet to meet the demand.

"I expect it will be a season where we're constantly chasing it," Grundberg admitted, "but we're in pretty good shape. We are manufacturing the product in the United States. The (M Series) heads are milled in Tennessee and California. The inspection and custom work is done in Tennessee."

SeeMore appears dedicated to customizing its putters. The stock lineup includes putters in half-inch increments from 33 to 36 inches

in length.

"We'll build anything for anybody," Pouliot said. "Any length, any lie angle, and we'll get it done in roughly 72 hours. Over the years, the putter has been the ugly stepchild. People say, 'Oh, it's just a putter.' We don't feel that way."

Even SeeMore's unusual sales strategy seems to say, "We're serious."

The only place new SeeMores are sold on the Internet is the SeeMore Web site ([www.seemore.com](http://www.seemore.com)).

"We want complete control of the education process," Pouliot said. "We are selling a system, not

just a putter."

Added Grundberg: "Our distribution strategy was already in place to seek out locations where a teacher or somebody on staff could focus on instruction and tell a story. We like teachers. We like owner-operated off-course shops."

"There may be some national accounts that we won't even be able to take on. We have to grow under some control."

See Zach use the putter. See Zach win the Masters.

In this case, SeeMore is BelieveMore.



GOLFWEEK/SCOTT A. HALLER

Custom putters are the name of the game for Jim Grundberg (left) and Jason Pouliot of SeeMore.

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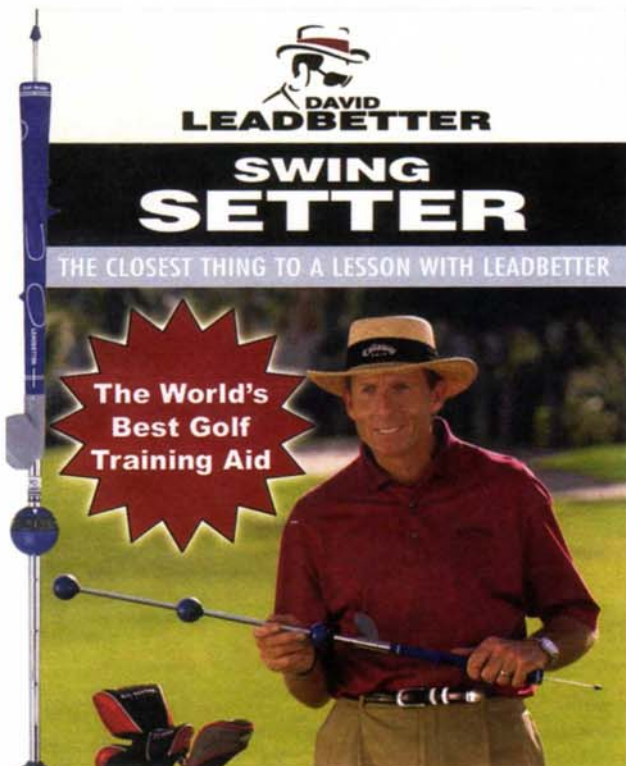
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