



**MAN WITH
A PLAN**
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THE MAGIC MAT

Bad swing habits die hard, which is why sometimes a golfer needs a good slap in the face. Problem is, no teacher who expects to get paid ever does that. George Kelnhofer, a PGA professional of 41 years, has come up with the next-best thing, better in fact, because his invention doesn't leave a bruise. Kelnhofer has synchronized video, light-activated screen pixels and an automated tee so that when students make a swing error, the ball disappears under the mat before they can hit it. It's Pavlov meets Rube Goldberg.

The light bulb popped on for Kelnhofer, now 68, during a sweltering afternoon at the Atlanta Golf Center in 1995. He was on the range, teaching the 26th consecutive lesson to a middle-handicapper who couldn't stop swinging across the line at the top. The man's inability to refrain from this specific fault despite a collective day's worth of instruction was staggering, mostly to his teacher. There had to be a better way to get through to him.

The nagging fault of that middle-handicapper was the seed that became Accelerized Golf, a teaching system based on Kelnhofer's magic mat. In short, an instructor can draw shapes on a special video screen to activate certain pixels. If the space of those pixels is violated during the swing by any part of the golfer's body or club, an electric signal activates the tee and ball to drop below the surface. Once these parameters, called Hotlines, are set on the screen, students can revisit the facility and hit balls without supervision. Well, at least students can swing at balls—actually getting to hit them depends on how well they're swinging.

THE APPLICATION

A teacher can set parameters for your swing, then make the ball disappear when you violate them.

// GOLF TECH 2.0 //

To negotiate the engineering, Kelnhofer called on Bud Bleckley, an inventor/scientist who used to take lessons from Kelnhofer's brother, Phil, also a teaching pro. At first the men decided to use laser beams to create the swing parameters, but they proved difficult to adjust and keep steady in the wind. Next they tried infrared beams, but they wouldn't work in bright sun. There were even bugs in the first iterations of the disappearing-ball mechanism.

"The driving range was always a mess of wires. It was hilarious, but all the members loved him," says Anne Cain, then a student of Kelnhofer's at the Atlanta Golf Center and now a teacher who runs her own golf academy in Amelia Island, Fla.

In time, golf pro and scientist got the apparatus fine-tuned. But the man who made Accelerized Golf a commercial success was Oswald Drawdy, an electrical engineer and former mini-tour player whose career highlight was playing in the 1993 U.S. Open at Baltusrol.

"I provided the glue between George's golf mind and Bud's technician mind," says Drawdy.

With his game to back him up, Drawdy convinced business partners to fund the development of Accelerized Golf, whose technology is being used at 14 locations in five states.

Kelnhofer doesn't know the whereabouts of that middle-handicapper who couldn't stop swinging across the line. Perhaps the man will resurface to reap the benefits of the biofeedback technology he inspired, and most likely still needs. *

For more information and sites to utilize these technologies, visit golftec.com, k-vest.com and accelerizedgolf.com.