

## How diamonds turned clubs into trump card

FAMILIAR scenario. You've reached a certain age, you've introduced your children to your abiding passion — golf — and they've taken to it with alacrity. Now suddenly they are capable of outdriving you by considerable distances and it's all a bit depressing.

Most ageing golfers learn to accept that the passage of time eventually works against them. Not so Mahlon Dennis. A Texan businessman, Dennis went back to the factory for inspiration and pinched a few diamond drill bits to stick to the front of his drivers. This seemed to work — until the bits fell off under the pressure. The balls suffered, too.

But Dennis had seen something that might work. Several years later and after extensive testing, his ad hoc solution has become commercial reality and is poised to become the latest toy in the lucrative American and Japanese markets. The DR4E (diamonds roll for ever, in case you missed it) "woods" comprise titanium heads with an industrial-strength diamond insert.

Not that they are cheap, you understand. At \$1,000 (about £640) a throw just for the driver, it would take a man with means to pick up the full set. Yet they are completely legal, with approval from both the R & A and the USGA. And with a 16-year patent protection, they have the golfing diamond market to themselves. All this energy and the

**'To see the ball being belted more than 350 yards down the 1st fairway was quite something'**



**Robert Hands**  
Long-distance drivers prove gem of an idea

clubs have yet to be officially launched: that comes in January in Orlando.

Ah, but does it work, you ask? Leaving aside the unworthy thought that no Texan ever came up with a money-making venture that will not produce the goods, the answer is yes. The publicity styles the DR4E as "the world's longest-hitting driver" and there are statistics to prove it. Not only that, but it also has the merit of improving accuracy thanks to the science involved in constructing the diamond.

Nothing can provide as much proof, though, as the naked eye. The DR4E was demonstrated to journalists at Royal Blackheath this week and to watch that small, dimpled object being belted more than 350 yards down the 1st fairway was quite something. Admittedly, the protagonist was Paul Barrington, the national long-drive champion, but his best was 20 yards farther than his champion hit at Stoke Park.

The professionals may soon be getting involved, too. Ronan Rafferty, the former Ryder Cup player and Order of Merit winner, has given his backing to the project and is mightily impressed. Rafferty even delayed production by three months because of suggestions that he made about the efficacy of the club. "That shows they wanted to get it right," he said. "But it's totally usable and I'm excited about it." All it needs, Rafferty believes, is for someone to win a tournament using the DR4E and the package will be airborne.

So. You're short of the Christmas present for the man who has everything, and now you know what to get him. Just make sure he's paying.

#### LINKS

WEBSITE: [www.diamondtouchgolf.com](http://www.diamondtouchgolf.com)