



GOLF COLUMN

The leaves have changed colors and many of you will soon be packing your clubs away for the winter. Others will be trying to squeeze in a few more rounds, while a few hardy souls will play all winter long.

If you have a golfer on your holiday shopping list, it's not too early to start thinking about the ideal gift. Believe it or not, golfers can be easy to shop for, without spending \$300 or more for a state of the art driver.

Here are a few suggestions.

- Books on golf—Through the years, a great body of work has been written on the subject of golf and the quality of that work exceeds what has been written on virtually any other sport (this column is an exception).

While there are numerous books on the subtleties of the golf swing, we would recommend a volume that touches on the history and tradition of the sport. *The Greatest Game Ever Played*, by Mark Frost, was on the shelves last holiday season, but if your loved one hasn't seen it yet it's a must-read. Some of the country's finest golf courses are located in the Philadelphia area and Geoff Shackelford's *The Golden Age of Golf Design* relates how some of those courses came to be. The photos alone, some of which date back to the 1920s, are worth the price.

New titles are coming out all the time, so keep an eye out.

- Golf lessons—Lessons aren't as flashy as that driver, a putter or a new set of irons, but in the long run they will likely be far more valuable. For less than the cost of that high-tech driver, a PGA instructor can analyze your game, show you drills to improve it, help you develop a practice routine and even let you see what your swing looks like on video (be prepared to be surprised).

Most of all, a golf professional will enhance your enjoyment of the game.

- A golf vacation—Your friend or significant other probably has a dream trip in mind, a place where they've always wanted to go to play golf. It might be Scotland, the game's ancestral home, or perhaps Pebble Beach.

While those locales might be out of your price range, there are countless other destinations, some quite close to home, that provide a quality golf experience for an affordable price. Check the Internet, or take a day to explore one of the golf merchandising shows that take place in this area every winter, often around the time of the Super Bowl.

If you don't know where your golf buddy would like to take a trip, ask them. Ninety-nine percent of the time, they'll have an answer for you without having to think too long about it.

If you're putting your clubs away, have a nice winter. If you're still playing, keep it in the fairway!

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