

French revolution

Jean-Jacques Rivet and Under Armour are taking golf apparel to a new level - one where clothing could help you hit the ball further. Dave Tindall finds out more

By Dave Tindall. Last Updated: March 30, 2012 9:11am



Jean-Jacques Rivet is no ordinary golf coach.

Once a star windsurfer, injury caused the charismatic Frenchman to turn to golf and, showing a fascination for the workings of the human body and the golf swing, he quickly turned himself into a scratch player.

JJ went on to develop the Biomecaswing concept and his methods were soon integrated by renowned coach David Leadbetter at his Florida Academy.

A leader in his field, JJ is the Biomechanics Consultant to Europe's Ryder Cup team and, most recently, has been made Head of the European Tour Performance Institute at Terre Blanche near Nice.

It's there where I was lucky enough to meet him in person last month.

A tour of the Institute shows that no stone is being left unturned in the quest for perfection and the number of signed photos and "thankyous" on the walls from leading players reveals how much affection there is for JJ.

Jean-Jacques explained some of his key concepts by showing and breaking down the swings of [Lee Westwood](#), [Alvaro Quiros](#), [Justin Rose](#), [Sergio Garcia](#) and Matteo Manassero.

The key, he explained, lies in the abs and strengthening this area can improve the swing and also reduce injury.

... this is where his relationship with Under Armour and compression clothing comes in.

Under Armour's range of compression gear helps to maintain or offer resistance to different targeted muscles, which helps a golfer keep good posture and can reduce fatigue.



JJ's aim is to continue to help Under Armour re-invent performance golf clothing - with innovation the driving force

Adding one of Under Armour's compression shirts can change club head speed (by up to 11% if done with JJ's swing techniques) and produce a more efficient swing by reducing lateral movement; compression can also lessen the risk of injury.

And that leads us to the holy grail... the idea that golf apparel isn't just fashion, it's equipment. Instead of having a shiny new driver on the front cover of a golf magazine, a piece of Under Armour clothing could boast that it can add yards too.

That was the premise on which Under Armour approached JJ: "When you hit the [golf ball](#), can clothing make you better?"

And it may not be too long before we have our answer. ...

Watch out for Manassero

One thing that had been slightly bugging me when watching Manassero's seemingly textbook swing being hailed as one to emulate; if it's so good, why doesn't he hit it very far? Surely there must be a flaw somewhere.

I put this to JJ over dinner later that evening and his response was hugely revealing.

Rather than not having the power, JJ had told Manassero to deliberately hold back. "He was still growing," he explained. "We told him to keep the same swing so there was no change between the ages of 16 and 18.

"But now, he has matured. He's hitting it 20 yards further."

Wow. When you add longer driving to Manassero's talents elsewhere, we could be looking at a real superstar. He's already won twice on the European Tour and there should be many more to come.

A method for all

It's all very well watching the wonderful swings of professionals but can JJ help the common or garden golfer like you and I?

Actually, it's this group which may benefit most.

JJ once said: "It's easier for amateurs to make bigger improvements by understanding the role of fitness and biomechanics can play in golf; for tour players the margins are already so small that the improvements are slight. For amateurs, the rewards can be great."