From the ground up

Athalonz, a new player in the golf shoe game, positions itself as a comfortable power source that is making believers of World Long Drive tour members.

Mike Purkey | Nov 21, 2019

From the ground up /

Markison Ex. 5

Under Armour Exhibit 1028
Under Armour v. Athalonz
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Because power is king in the modern game, technology abounds that professes to give golfers more distance without extra effort.

A shoe manufacturer, new to golf, believes that power comes from the ground up and its product puts golfers in a position to tap into a power source that most people have never had.

Apparently, many of the longest drivers in the world agree because five of the top six on the World Long Drive tour are wearing EnVe shoes from Phoenix-based Athalonz. All from a chance encounter at a charity tournament.

Until a year ago, Athalonz had primarily made athletic shoes for baseball and softball. Tim Markison, founder and CEO, was playing in a charity golf event two years ago with three other Athalonz employees and on one of the holes, you could pay $25 and long driver Mitch McDowell would hit the team's tee shot.

Athalonz' EnVe shoe has gained traction on the World Long Drive tour and is now grabbing attention on the PGA Tour Champions / (Photo: Athalonz)

"We all were wearing Athalonz shoes and we asked Mitch, 'We paid $25, will you hit it wearing our shoes?'"

After the drive, McDowell was amazed at the way the shoes connected him to the ground and said, "This is what I try to teach."

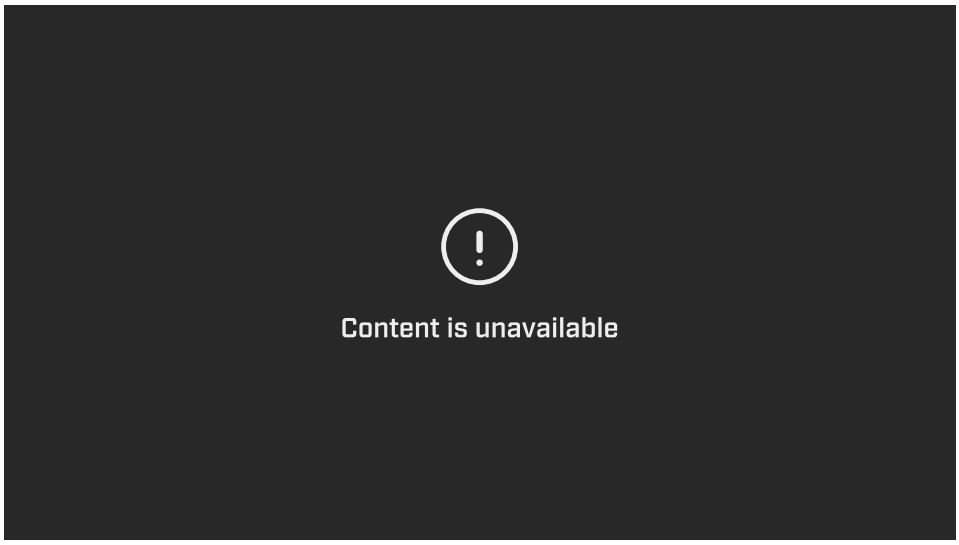
McDowell recommended the shoes to fellow long driver Ryan Steenberg, who has won two WLD events in the EnVe shoes. Pretty soon, other long drivers tried the shoes and now Athalonz is a popular choice among top WLD tour members, including top-ranked Kyle Berkshire. About 50 percent of all the WLD players wear EnVe shoes, Markison said.

The reason is the design of the shoes, which Markison claims gives players a 9 person increase in power over wearing traditional golf shoes. Markison is an engineer and a patent attorney and there's a complete spreadsheet on the company's website that he says proves his claim.

Athalonz started by making baseball and softball shoes after seeing a study that outlined what made a Hall of Fame player opposed to a just a regular major leaguer.

“All of the Hall of Fame players, whether hitting or pitching, their lower half was impeccably balanced and aligned to be incredibly powerful,” said Markison, who played adult baseball until age 57. “They found if you draw a line from the ankle to the groin when they were in their stance, the knee was just inside that line.

“For most people, that’s an unnatural position. By teaching that, you’d put a resin bag just on the outside of the foot and underneath the heel to kick the knee inward. The problem with that is you now have to create muscle memory, which takes a long time.”



So, Markison built a baseball shoe that created the powerful position. He believed the same theory applied to any sport that has a rotational component as well as lateral movement. So, he turned his attention to golf.

The concept is that in order to put a body in motion, there has to be an equal and opposite force against it. "So, our body pushes on the ground and the ground pushes back," Markison said. "That's what enables our body to move. If we didn't have the ground to push against, we couldn't move. The ground pushing back on our body is called ground reaction force."

Markison explains the construction of the EnVe:

"The heel is conventional but as you go forward in the shoe, it transitions you to the inside of your foot," he says. "It mimics the natural movement of walking — you land on your heel, roll to your toe and push. When you're in that athletic stance, your knee is inward just a little bit.

"So, it's the ground reaction force from perpendicular to angled inward. That little shift of angle creates more stability and power. It's easy to mathematically prove. We've had amateur golfers switch from (a leading traditional golf shoe) to our shoe and they've seen up to a 30 percent improvement in ground reaction force." Which translates to an increase in power.

Markison says that three players from the PGA Tour Champions, including one very prominent name, are in the process of testing the EnVe. No group of players wants to recover lost yardage more than the seniors do. They will endlessly try drivers and shafts looking for 10 (or more) elusive yards.

Who knew it might be in the shoes?

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MIKE PURKEY

Purkey has been writing about all things golf for more than 30 years, working at the highest level at publications such as Golf Magazine and Global Golf Post. He is an avid golfer, with a handicap too low for his ability. Purkey lives ...

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