



Golf Wear in Korea: From Symbol of Luxury to Trendy Expendable

LE PORTER DE GOLF EN COREE : DE SYMBOLE DU LUXE SUIVANT TRENDY EXPENDABLE

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Abstract

Golf started out in Korea as a game for the privileged classes. However, there have been some changes in recent years such as the appearance of screen golf, golf channels on cable TV and stories of golf stars who were not privileged when they started, and golf is now shifting to become a popular sport for younger people and the masses. The aim of this article was to examine changes in the Korean golfing culture over the years and use observations of the designs and functions of golf wear as a window into Korean golf and society. Korean golfers of two different generations were interviewed to reveal changing values and trends. General preferences for color and functionality were found, and younger golfers sought golf wear that looks like everyday wear and reflect their personal taste, whereas older golfers looked for a sense of formality such as vests and pretty hats.

Key words: Golf; Golf wear; Korea; Korean fashion

Résumé

Golf a commencé en Corée comme un jeu pour les classes privilégiées. Cependant, il ya eu quelques changements ces dernières années tels que l'apparition de golf écran, les chaînes de golf sur la télévision par câble et des histoires d'étoiles de golf qui ne sont pas privilégiés quand ils ont commencé, et le golf est en train de passer pour devenir un sport populaire pour les jeunes et les masses. Le but

de cet article était d'examiner les changements dans la culture coréenne golf au cours des années et l'utilisation des observations de la conception et les fonctions de vêtements de golf comme une fenêtre sur le golf de Corée et de la société. Golfeurs coréens de deux générations différentes ont été interviewés à révéler l'évolution des valeurs et des tendances. Des préférences générales de la couleur et la fonctionnalité ont été trouvés, et les jeunes golfeurs cherché vêtements de golf qui ressemble à porter au quotidien et reflètent leurs goûts personnels, tandis que les golfeurs plus âgés cherché un sens de formalité tels que des gilets et chapeaux joli.

Mots-clés: Golf; Porter de Golf; Corée; Mode Coréenne

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Although the history of golf is open to debate, since many different European countries have records of playing games involving a stick, ball and hole of some sort in Medieval Times, the modern sport of golf as we know it today is generally considered to have its origins in Scotland, where King David's decree allowed the links at St. Andrews to be used for the development of golf, in 1552 (McCormick, 2002:13). However, there are records of a game similar to golf, *chuiwan* (literally meaning "hit ball"), having been played in China as early as 1368 (Smith, The New York Times, 2010) and in Holland – where the name of the sport, which means "club" in Dutch, is said to have originated – in Medieval Times (Platts, 2000:8), showing that it is an internationally much-loved game with a very long history. One common characteristic of golf in any country is that it appears to have started as a game for the more privileged classes.

This was very much the case in Korea, and is actually still the situation in a country where golf clubs, golf wear and driving ranges cost a lot considering the average individual's income, not to mention green fees, caddy fees and cart fees – all of which are obligatory at most clubs. Yet in recent years, a tremendous change has started in the Korean golfing world in that it is gradually but surely shifting towards a sport for younger people and for the masses. There are many reasons behind this shift, including more and more young people having the opportunity to learn and enjoy golf from studying and working overseas, but one major contribution to this change is the appearance of screen golf.

The aim of this article was to examine changes in the golfing culture of Korea over the years, and especially extract unique characteristics of and changes in golf and related socio-cultural trends over the years through an observation of golf wear. After all, golf wear is a specific field of fashion, and fashion is a language of which the system of signs it sets up exhibits and communicates, and says what it thinks of the world (Barthes, 2006: 61-62). The process of this study interpreted what the signs of Korean golf wear communicate about golf and Korean society. New formative characteristics in golf wear over the years were the point of examination because fashion, in theory, is made up only of what is new (Barthes, 2006: 86). The designs and functions of golf wear in Korea have changed together with the evolution of the sport in the country, and the changes in golf wear were used as a window into Korean golf, and ultimately, Korean society today.

Existing studies on golf wear in Korea have focused on purchasing behavior (Cho, 2001), brand perception (Koo, 2007), or development of textiles or fashion design for golf wear (Bae and Jung, 2010; Paik, 2006), but there have been no studies that examine the history of Korean golf wear and provide evidence on the relationship between evolution of the sport and the golf wear industry. Therefore, this study is expected to provide valuable information to the industry and academia and is also significant in that it will provide an up-to-date record of golf wear in Korea, today.

1. KOREAN GOLF AND GOLF WEAR FROM 1900 TO 2010

1.1 Introduction and Development of Golf Culture in Korea: Early Twentieth Century

It is unclear exactly what year golf, or western golf as we know it, which originated in Scotland, was introduced to Korea, but the general opinion is that it was over a century ago. According to "A Brief History of Joseon Golf" published in Japan in 1940, golf was first played in the Joseon Dynasty in 1900, when a six-hole golf course was constructed in the customs trading area of Wonsan,

an open harbor city of foreigners, by the British who were residing in the area for customs duties (Kwon, 2005: 99).

The first golf course where Koreans could play was a nine-hole course built in Hyochangwon, Seoul. The course moved to Chungryangri when Hyochangwon changed into a park. With the move, the course was upgraded to an eighteen-hole course, and the Gyeongsung Golf Course was established in 1924 (Han, 2007: 37).

The first Korean to play golf is known as Yeong Chinwang, the seventh son of Empire Gojong of the Korean Empire. Yeong Chinwang started to play in Japan in 1924, and sometimes played in Seoul, too. Golf later became established as an official sport in the country when the Joseon Golf Federation, an alliance of golf clubs nationwide, was founded, in 1937 (Park, 2007: 166). The first Korean professional golfer was Youn Duk-choon. Born in 1916, he learned golf at the Gyeongsung Golf Club and went to study in Japan in 1934. Just three months after learning golf again in Japan, he turned pro. However, the first person to win a golf competition was Chang Byung-ran, who was the first Korean to beat a Japanese golfer and win the Joseon Amateur Golf Tournament (Kim, 1999: 137).

This period of golf in the early twentieth century was a period of the birth and growth of golf in Korea.

1.2 Golf in Korea in the Mid-Twentieth Century

After Japanese Imperialism and the Korean War, the Korean world of golf had to be reconstructed as there were no professionals other than Youn Duk-choon when the country gained independence. Training and producing professional golfers surfaced as an urgent and important issue in the mid-twentieth century. Seoul Country Club director Lee Jung-ho made it a point to focus on training professional golfers as soon as he was appointed, because he considered players absolutely necessary in order to raise the status of Korean golf and quickly improve the national standard. It was not easy for people to consider golf as a career at the time, because the sport was new, and society as a whole was in a difficult economic situation. Nevertheless, Youn Duk-choon was placed in charge of training players, and the Seoul Country Club opened its first four-day Korean Open Golf Tournament, from September 1 to 14, 1958 (Kim, 2001: 6).

Other major developments in the mid-twentieth century include the start of the Pro Golf Society and establishment of the Korea Golf Association in 1966, and the establishment of the Pro Golf Association in 1968 (Han, 2007: 37). Due to the major efforts to develop Korean golf and train talented players, Korea won the Japanese Open for the first time in 1972, and the first woman pro, Koo Ok-hwae, was born (Han, 2007: 37).

The mid-twentieth century was a period of promotion and development of Korean golf. The aim was to produce talented golfers to compete in the world, but most of the results in this period were establishment of associations

and tournaments as a foundation for the future of golf.

1.3 Golf in Korea in the Late Twentieth Century

There were two major turning points that contributed to great development of golf in Korea in the late 1990s. One was the appearance of professional golfer Choi Kyung-ju, known as K.J. Choi, who won several professional golf tournaments after turning pro in 1994, and went on to win seven PGA Tours in the 2000s, and the other was the appearance of cable TV golf channels. SBS, one of the major national broadcasting stations of Korea, acquired and started a golf channel in 1999. It sounded the start of Korean golf as a public sport, and was the foundation of golf industry development in the country (Park, 2007: 168).

The now world-famous Se Ri Pak also made her LPGA debut in 1998. She won two major competitions in her first year and went on to win many more competitions (Han, 2007: 37). This had a great effect on the pride of Koreans and stimulated great patriotism in golf, and belief in people that Koreans could excel in golf. The appearance of these star players led to another boom in golf, especially among young children. Korean parents, known for being very passionate about their children's education and concerned for their future, started to send their children to golf lessons, in the hopes that they would some day become as famous and successful as Se Ri Pak. A handful of successful golfers who appeared around six to ten years later are actually known in Korea as "Pak Se Ri kids (the family name comes before the given name in Korea)," for starting golf at an early age after being influenced by the major star.

Efforts to develop and train golfers started in the mid-twentieth century, and great international golfers actually appeared in Korea in the late twentieth century. Their success led to a greater effect than anyone expected, and golf became largely more popular than before as others dreamed of similar success and the image of golf turned more accessible yet prestigious at the same time, as famous golfers like K.J. Choi and Se Ri Pak shared touching rags to riches stories. They both had difficult and humble backgrounds, but worked extremely hard despite harsh conditions and became international stars.

With the rise in the number of talented golf players in the country, more and more golf courses were constructed. Statistics on the number of golf courses from 1991 to 1995 show that there was an increase each year, and thirty-seven more golf courses in 1995 compared to just four years ago, in 1991 (Korea Golf Association and Korean Golf Writers' Association, 1996: 25). This period can be seen as the period when golf made a great leap of development, and started to mature in Korea, through the appearance of internationally renowned golfers and an increased number of golf clubs throughout the country.

1.4 Golf in Korea from 2000 to 2010

Despite rapid economic development leading to much

more comfortable lives for the public and small luxuries such as foreign cars, flat screen TVs, and expensive designer handbags becoming a part of daily life, perhaps because of the conservative minds of Korean people who are traditionalist by nature, and perhaps because of the lobbying activities that take place through golf, it was still considered a forbidden activity for civil servants, especially high-ranking officials, to play, in 2006. One major golf-related incident in 2006 is the resignation of Korean Prime Minister Lee Hae-chan. Forbes reported (Forbes.com, 2006),

"South Korean President Roh Moo-Hyun has accepted the resignation of his prime minister over a round of golf that has sparked allegations of influence-peddling... Lee, appointed prime minister in June 2004, played golf with businessmen in Busan on March 1, a major holiday, while the country was disrupted by a national rail strike... Critics say that one of the businessmen had a criminal record while others were hoping to lobby the prime minister for favors."

Although Korean people have a tendency to scorn upon influential high-ranking figures in society openly enjoying golf as a hobby, its popularity has grown tremendously in the 2000s. One major factor that has contributed to this evolution of golf in Korea is the appearance of more and more international star players. Around twenty "Pak Se Ri kids," including Mi-hyun Kim, Hee-won Han, Shi-hyun Ahn and Soo-young Kang, have been actively competing in the LPGA since 2000, and the increased number of star players is activating the golf industry in general, even further (Han, 2007: 37).

Table 1 shows the number of golf club visitors in Korea from 2000 to 2008 (Kim, 2009: 77).

Table 1
Number of Golf Clubs and Golf Club Visitors in Korea from 2000 to 2008

Year	Number of golf clubs	Number of visitors Number of visitors	Increase rate
2000	114	9,760,768	13.3%
2001	117	10,262,439	5.1%
2002	120	11,169,522	14.4%
2003	129	11,733,670	5.1%
2004	140	12,622,170	7.6%
2005	151	13,213,890	4.69%
2006	165	14,044,505	6.29%
2007	184	15,735,525	12.03%
2008	199	16,925,087	7.6%

In addition to the increase in the number of golf club visitors up to around 16.9 million in a country with a population of 50 million, the general social awareness that golf is a "sport of luxury" also decreased significantly in the 2000s, as shown in Figure 1, even though the public might not be so forgiving of influential public figures regularly enjoying the game.

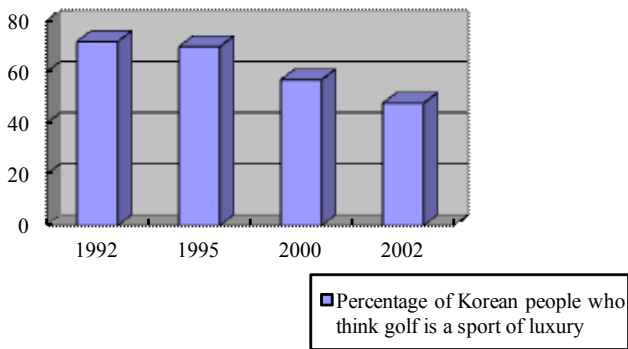


Figure 1
Percentage of the General Public Who Think Golf is a Sport of Luxury

The percentage of people who consider golf a sport of luxury decreased by 24.1 percent in a span of 10 years, from 71.9 percent in 1992 to 47.8 percent in 2002 (Kim, 2009: 131). This shows that golf is gradually becoming more popularized in Korean society.

Screen golf is a major new element in the golfing scene of Korea in the 2000s. Screen golf is a virtual version of golf, which is played indoors. Golfers log into a computer game to play a game in groups of two to five players or enter online regional or nationwide tournaments. It considers everything from layouts of courses that actually exist in the real world, wind direction and speed, handicap, which tee the player will use, such as the lady tee or back tee, and keeps track of the scores of players. The most popular screen golf company is Golfzon, which is known for very realistic simulation, a wide range of courses to choose from both in Korea and around the world, keeping track of the scores of players, and offering tips and playing back video clips of their swings through the personal page they log in to on the Golfzon website. There are Golfzon branches throughout the country and the results of games played at any store are uploaded to the player's personal page. Screen golf, including Golfzon in particular, has spread and greatly increased in number in recent years, and according to a report announced by Golfzon on January 27, 2010, the golfing population of Korea was found to be around 2.1 million, and 1.27 million were screen golf players – whether they play screen golf alone or play offline, in the field, too (Golf News, 2010). Another study by a research company found that the number of screen golfers who do not play in the field or go to driving ranges but enjoy screen golf alone is around 400,000 (Golf News, 2010). The appearance and popularity of screen golf has contributed to popularization of golf, as younger people are trying out the sport through screen golf, and people who were shy from playing in public out of fear of looking too “bourgeois” or being criticized by others are going to screen golf stores to play the game. Screen golf also offers advantages such as accessibility – there are eight Golfzon stores in Yeoksam-dong alone, a small business area of a few blocks in Seoul where there are a lot of offices – low price, and no need

to invest in golfing gear, as the stores provide golf clubs, shoes and gloves customers can borrow free of charge.

Golf may be frowned upon more in Korea than in other countries, but with an increasing number of popular players and better economic conditions, the 2000s has been a period of golf popularization. More people play the game and less people consider it a luxury or sport specifically for the privileged.

1.5 Changes in Golf Wear in Pace with Evolution of Korean Golf

Golf wear has evolved in Korea, together with the evolution of the game of golf, for the past 110 years. It started out with Korean golfers imitating the golf wear of foreigners who played the sport in Korea. Korean golfers who played at Hyochangwon Park in the 1920s wore a white shirt with dark colored vest and pants and panama hats with a dark band around it (Kim, 2009: 70). Men also sometimes wore a tie and jacket and homburg hat, while women wore more slouchy hats that fit like a cloche hat but had a brim, with a jacket, blouse and a mid-calf to ankle length skirt. Figure 2 (Kim, 2009: 72) shows Yeong Chinwang and his wife wearing this style on a golf course.

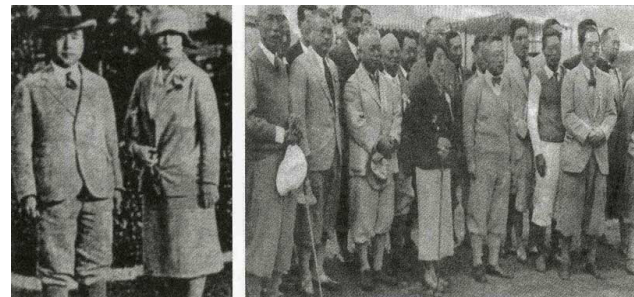


Figure 2
Yeong Chinwang and His Wife in Golf Wear

However, by the mid-twentieth century, the unique style of Korean people that reflected their taste and values started to become incorporated into the western golf wear styles they saw. For example, men wore breeches with long socks and a shirt just like American golfers for example, but they had a tendency to wear white or conservative neutral colors instead of the comparatively colorful knitwear such as sweaters that can be seen on golfers of the west during this period, and they often played without a hat. Korean golfers especially rarely wore newsboy caps that golfers of other countries wore (Kim, 2009: 115). With promotion of golf and more tournaments actively being held in the 1950s, golf wear became slightly more casual. Perhaps influenced by the appearance of sportswear in the United States, which was worn by American players stationed in Korea, who were mainly U.S. soldiers, men started to wear anorak-type flimsy sports jackets instead of formal jackets or blazers, while women wore either a knee-length skirt with knee-high socks or pants with a shirt, or sometimes even a t-shirt with no collar or a sleeveless sports top (Kim, 2009: 117).

The biggest change in golf wear in Korea from the late twentieth century is the shift to more casual styles for both men and women. Most noticeably, both men and women started to wear baseball caps and sun visors, and also started to incorporate a variety of colors into their golf wear looks. Foreign golf wear brands were introduced to Korea in the 1980s and 1990s, including Jack Nicklaus in 1985, Munsingwear in 1989, Daks Golf in 1997 and Nike Golf in 1998 (Kim, 2009: 146-150), which is an element that added to this trend towards casual and diverse golf wear looks in the late twentieth century. Korean people gained information on international trends, and developed tolerance for different looks.

The appearance of color became more apparent in the 2000s. The colors presented and sold by Korean golf wear brands were mainly primary colors such as red, green and blue, and colorful clothes produced by foreign golf brands also started to gain popularity in the 2000s. The popular high-end Korean golf wear brand Lee Dong Soo proposed a red “couple look” for the 2007 S/S season (GOLF Magazine, 2007.4). “Couple look” is a term used in Korea that refers to clothes that couples wear to show off that they are together. Couple look clothes can be identical clothes that come in men’s and women’s sizes or clothes that have great similarities and go well together. Korean people also have a general preference for high-tech products and are interested in scientific ways of improving their game in golf, too. This characteristic is reflected in the preference of Koreans for functional golf wear, which is particularly apparent in the 2000s. One of the items that was on the “Best Gift List” of the reputable GOLF Magazine in Korea in 2004 (GOLF Magazine, 2009.12) was Adidas golf shoes that “apply the new fit foam technology. They relieve fatigue of the feet after a long round of golf.” However, it must be noted that fashion is never actually functional or utilitarian, according to Barthes, because people do not buy clothes only when they need them (Barthes, 2006: 88). Likewise, Korean golfers do not purchase functional products because they absolutely need the technological functions, but because of a desire to wear something that is proven to make them more comfortable and makes them feel like they are treating themselves well, as is shown in the in-depth interviews that follow. In 2010, with Korean people being more comfortable with expressing their unique individuality, the influential golf wear designer Kim Young Joo proposed golf wear with a gradation of bright colors for a considerably more youthful look for the 2009-2010 F/W season (Figure 3, GOLF Magazine, 2010.2).

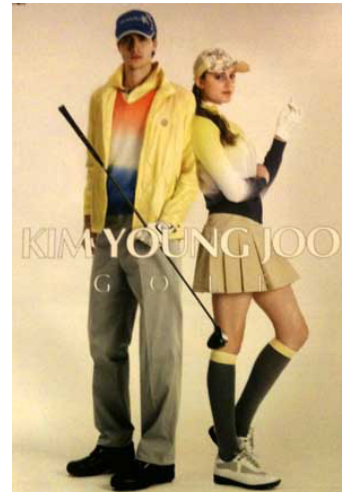


Figure 3
Kim Young Joo Golf, 2009-2010 F/W Collection

Golf wear in Korea has been largely influenced by western elements from the start. The first Korean golf players imitated the golf wear looks of foreign players they saw play the sport, and the introduction of foreign brands and seeing foreign players play at tournaments influenced their eye for golf fashion, too. However, Koreans, who tend to have a conservative nature, still have distinct characteristics such as a preference of neutral or basic colors, a preference for functional items and styles that can express individuality yet are not too different from other people. Korean golfers like to dress smart, but with this basis, clothing styles have grown more casual, youthful and diverse over the years.

2. INTERVIEWS WITH OLD AND NEW GENERATION GOLFERS

Five younger generation golfers and five older, or parent generation golfers, were selected for in-depth interviews on their views on golf as a sport and golf wear, in order to gain a better understanding of the values of Korean golfers and what influences the golf wear choices they make. The younger generation golfers were between the ages of twenty-eight and thirty-three. It must be noted that military service is mandatory in Korea, a divided country, and therefore men generally graduate from university and gain financial independence at the age of twenty-six at the earliest, and around the age of thirty if they take a few semesters off or carry on their education for a few years for another degree. All five worked – one subject worked in finance, one owned a cosmetics business, two worked at large Korean companies, and one was a doctor of oriental medicine. Two women and three men were interviewed. The older generation golfers were between the ages of fifty and sixty-four. Two women and three men were also interviewed for the older generation. The men worked—two were professors at a university and one owned a

screen golf store – and the women were housewives.

Interview questions included demographic questions; questions on overseas experience, to find out the relationship between exposure to foreign culture on the way of thinking of the subjects; golf performance related questions such as handicap and how long subjects have been playing golf, to find out the relationship between views on golf and golfing habits related to experience; questions on personal opinions on golf and awareness of general opinions on golf – golf in Korea in particular; frequency of playing golf either in the field, at the driving range or at a screen golf store, to see how dedicated the subjects are to golf and what portion of their lives the sport takes up; questions on their opinions of screen golf and differences between screen golf and playing golf in the field, to find out the impact the appearance of screen golf has on actual golfers in Korea; and finally, questions on golf wear such as what they typically wear to the field, driving range, and to play screen golf, what they consider when they wear and purchase golfing clothes or gear, and the importance of clothing style in relation to golf to each of the subjects. All subjects were also asked to submit latest photographs of them wearing golf wear.

All except one of the younger generation golfers said they considered golf simply a fun sport – something they could play for life and never grow sick of because it is different each time you play, something you can play with older generations and younger generations when you get older. However, one younger generation male subject said although he considers it a popularized sport and most of his friends play, he is not sure if he can honestly speak for his entire generation. He recognized that older people seem to think it is not for young people, and pointed out, “I can’t tell seniors at work that I played golf over the weekend,” because it costs around 200,000 won to 300,000 won (around US \$200 to \$300) per person to play a round, and it is generally considered too expensive. This is connected to the comments made by this generation about what other people think of golf, where all agreed that it is not considered a sport for everyone. Some said this is because it is expensive and that people generally consider it a “luxury” sport for the privileged class because it costs a lot to become a member of a golf club and you cannot book a round if you are not a member.

“It costs around 50 million won to 100 million won to become a member. You can play at public courses if you don’t have membership, but it is difficult to book a round on your desired date at a public course, and it costs over 200,000 won to play per person. In other words, you or someone you know has to be rich to play regularly at a good course at a reasonable price. I can see why people think it is for the privileged.....”

Two of the younger generation subjects spoke about golf as *jubdae*. *Jubdae* is a Korean term meaning “entertaining someone hoping to please them and get a business favor in return.” Since golf is expensive and only members can play at private clubs, they say business

people play golf with people they need favors from – they book a round, pay for the game, play appropriately well but intentionally lose, and buy their guest a nice meal afterwards, asking for a business favor in return.

The older generation had similar personal viewpoints on golf – that it is fun and a sport anyone can play. However, although some of the male subjects spoke about how it can be considered a luxury, none of the women mentioned this perspective. They simply said people who do not play the game do not understand it at all and consider even talking about it a bore. This seems to reflect an aspect of Korean society, where, although times have changed and many women now work and have successful careers, many older generation families have a system where the men make the money and the women spend it. Housewives are known to get together during the day to play golf, shop, eat or have coffee with each other, using the money their husbands earned and talking about their husbands, children and hobbies.

When asked about the unique characteristics of golf in Korea, both the younger and older generations agreed that there were many characteristics of Korean golf. One was the fact that there are a lot of women golfers. One younger generation golfer said if he ever played on a weekday he always saw a team of women golfers out in the field, whereas when he played in the United States, where he went to graduate school, he did not see women out in the field very often. Another characteristic is that either business or a light bet is a main part of the game in Korea. Business, as mentioned above, is normally in the form of a treat by one person to ask of something of another person in the near future. However, when players play with close friends, men in particular tend to make light bets. Traditionally, the winner does not pay at all, and the loser pays the most when taking care of the green fee, cart fee and caddy fee, and the winner buys the whole team a meal after the game. Sometimes, they place a bet per hole and the best player gets the money placed per hole. Young and old male golfers alike said it was fun and stimulates you to play the game better. The older generation said that golf had now developed into a sport that you have to play in order to socialize. They said reunions, family gatherings and spending a day or going away on holiday with friends often involve a day or two of golf, and those who do not play feel left out. Of course, those interviewed were active golfers, so this may not be the case for all levels of society in Korea, but it can be said that for the financially stable class where some people in the same social group play golf, it soon spreads and golf does become a major socializing element in Korean society. The remaining characteristics of Korean golf mentioned were related to the system of golf itself in Korea. For example, using carts and a caddy is compulsory at almost all golf clubs in Korea. This is because with the sport becoming highly popular, golf clubs have strict rules about time and players therefore have to use carts to move swiftly through the

course. The general rule regarding caddies is one caddy per team of four, and normally you either have to have a team of four or join with other players to create a team of four. This all has to do with efficiency and golf clubs making the most money they can in the set amount of time. Since playing quickly is so important, those with a high handicap often end up talking only with the caddy throughout the game because they are busy chasing after the ball and asking the caddy for tips. An unspoken rule to do with golf wear in Korea, is that classic golf wear such as a sports pique shirt with a collar, long golf trousers and a sensible hat is encouraged and those who wear clothes that look too informal are frequently frowned upon. Men, for example, are not allowed to wear shorts, no matter how hot the weather.

The younger and older generation golfers interviewed had slightly different opinions on golf wear, which seem to be due to generally different standards of dress, different handicaps, and different experiences, especially in terms of overseas experience and screen golf experiences. The younger generation golfers had handicaps between 18 and 40, compared to between 13 and 29 for older generation golfers, who had been playing for twenty to thirty-something years. Some of the older male golfers boasted that they had a single handicap in their prime. While only three of the older generation golfers said they had tried screen golf, all the younger generation golfers interviewed played screen golf regularly, and one subject even learned how to play golf through screen golf. They said the advantages of screen golf were accessibility, low price, the fact that you do not need to prepare anything such as clothes, clubs or shoes, and playing an entire game in a fun way while learning the rules and watching your swing play back as you go. The screen golf program records good swings and sends the video clip to the player's personal page on the web, and players may even play back any shot they make and record it. Since they can also dress any way they want to play screen golf, they start to see what they look like when they make a swing in different clothes. Perhaps because of this visual stimulation, younger generation golfers generally said they placed great importance on how they looked when playing golf in the field. They preferred tight to normal fitting clothes compared to the older generation, who preferred a normal to slightly loose fit. Younger generation women said they liked to wear short shorts and skirts in the summer, whereas older generation women said they preferred slightly cropped pants that just showed their ankles to skirts. Both young men and older men said they wore pants, but the younger men said they liked the fact that you could and often wore shorts if you played overseas. The younger generation golfers interviewed all had experience living overseas or traveling for months at

a time, which is very common for young people in Korea. As mentioned above, it is regulation at Korean golf clubs that men cannot wear shorts. However, older generation men said they wore long pants even if they played in a different country where you were allowed to wear shorts. The younger subjects had different views on color. Some said they liked to wear bright, primary colors while other said they preferred to wear neutral colors like black and white. One thing they all had in common, however, was that their fashion preferences in everyday life were reflected in their golf wear choices. In other words, those who liked to wear bright colors that match normally liked to wear their personal style on the field, and those who liked black and white for daily wear tried to wear black and white while playing golf, too. The older generation men said they wore dark suits in daily life but said they preferred soft colors when playing golf, and the older women also said they liked to wear bright, soft colors. There may be some differences in taste, but generally all the golfers seemed to want to wear bright colors to go with the scenery and show off sportiness. There were clear distinctions in the types of items worn by the two generations. The younger generation said they often wear baseball caps and white, black or colorful gloves and shoes, but the older subjects said they almost always wore a golf hat, straw hat or other type of hat, but never a baseball cap, and most stuck to black or white gloves and shoes. All the older subjects also liked to wear vests for a more put together look, while none of the younger golfers said they wore a vest for golf. One unique characteristic of Korean people that appeared during the interviews is that they were very cautious about skin protection. The skin cancer rate is relatively low in Asia compared to western countries, but Korean people, like many Asian people, like their skin to be pale and clear. Therefore, they not only apply a lot of sun block when they play golf, but also like to wear "arm covers," which are black or white thin, tight, long sleeves with UV ray protection functions, to make sure their arms do not get too tanned during the summer months. Some younger generation golfers said they did not like the arm covers because they seemed unfashionable, but did express concerns about getting too tanned. All subjects interviewed had similar priorities when making golf wear purchases and getting dressed for golf, which included comfort, color and functionality, but the younger generation was more focused on looking good and concerned about price, whereas the older generation was more focused on functionality such as sweat absorption and UV ray protection, and less concerned about price. Table 2 shows a summary of the golf wear preferences of younger and older generation Korean golfers.

Table 2
A Comparison of the Golf Wear Preferences of Younger and Older Generations of Korea

Golf wear preferences	Younger generation golfers	Older generation golfers
Color	-Bright colors, primary colors -Beige or other neutral pants	-Bright, soft colors
Items	-Golf shirt and cotton pants -Golf shirt and shorts for women in the summer -Arm covers for UV ray protection (worn under golf shirt) -White, black or colorful gloves and shoes -Baseball cap or golf hat	-Golf shirt and pants -Vest and outerwear for cold weather -White gloves and golf shoes -Arm covers for UV ray protection (worn under golf shirt)
Fit/length	-Clothes that fit well (tight to normal fit with stretch) -Short shorts above the knees for women -Long pants for men and women	-Try to match the color of the hat (golf hat for men straw hat or other pretty hat for women) with their clothes -Clothes with a natural fit (normal to slightly loose fit) -Ankle-baring slightly cropped pants for women -Long pants for men and women
Priorities when getting dressed	-Comfort -Makes the body look good -Color	-Comfort -Color -Functionality (sweat absorption)
Priorities when making a purchase	-Whether it looks good -Rational price	-Practicality, lightness -Functionality (sweat absorption, UV ray protection, etc.)

3. FUTURE GOLF WEAR IN KOREA AND AROUND THE WORLD

Golf has evolved and changed over time in Korea from being a sport solely for foreigners, to a sport only for the privileged, to a sport enjoyed by people of many ages and income levels. Playing golf in the field is still expensive and private clubs are very exclusive, leading to the consistent image of golf being a luxurious sport, but more and more people with different backgrounds are now going to the driving range or enjoying screen golf after being exposed to the sport through cable TV channels, the internet and the many screen golf stores that have established themselves nationwide.

Golf wear has changed, too, along with the changing characteristics of golf in Korea and other changes in the fashion mainstream and society. Korean people started by imitating what they saw British or American people wear when they played golf. Gradually, they started to slightly alter the colors or items worn to reflect their own tastes, and by the mid-twentieth century, golf wear changed to casual and more diverse styles. In the late-twentieth century, Korean people started to show an interest in a wider range of colors, especially bright colors, and in younger looks and item coordination. Young golfers in Korea say they do not necessarily wear golf wear, but just t-shirts and pants they normally wear with a baseball cap. Older golfers have a tendency to stick to what they consider very put together clothes, while both generations focus on UV-ray protection and UV-ray protection sleeves are a big hit in the Korean golf wear industry.

The unique characteristics of Korean golfers and golf wear provide a window into the changing attitudes and

values of Korean people today. The golf wear industry targeting Korea should consider these characteristics, including preferences for color and functionality, clothes that look like everyday wear and reflect the wearer's taste for younger golfers, and items that add a sense of formality such as vests and pretty hats for older golfers, when designing for and marketing to Korea.

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