



Swing Shift

Rookie sensation **Meena Lee** cashes in on a revamped swing and a feisty competitive spirit. **By Carl Rabito**



1 I love the angles Meena creates at address. Her nose is in line with her shirt buttons, creating a straight line from the top of her head to her center of gravity, just below her belly button. The back of her left hand and palm of her right are parallel to the clubface, resulting in a neutral grip.

2 Meena's lower body is in great position on the takeaway. Her hips and legs have the mobility and stability to make a full, solid turn. This is a great strength in Meena's swing.

3 Meena makes a great move off the ball; her legs and hips are turning perfectly, and she has completely eliminated the sway she once had. I'd like to see her right forearm above the left, but it's getting closer to where it should be.

4 Meena's legs create a strong, balanced base, which, combined with her fantastic shoulder turn, is why her swing is now so repeatable.

HAIR AND MAKEUP BY ERIN BRATTAIN

Meena Lee has always been a great competitor and scorer, and despite being just 24, she displays better course-management skills than most veterans. She is calm and calculating under pressure and never gives up. But when Meena came to me before joining the Futures Tour in 2004, fresh from winning the money title on the Korea LPGA Tour, she had a few problems with her swing. She would take the club too far inside on the backswing, she had a reverse pivot coupled with a wicked sway, and she didn't complete her turn. This resulted in shots that could go either right or left without warning.

Over the last two seasons, during which Meena graduated to the LPGA Tour, we have changed pretty much everything about her swing and setup. We widened her stance and had her bend from the hips rather than the waist. It was a minor move that had

a major impact: She can now complete her turn while staying balanced. The resulting ball flight is longer and more consistent.

I'm also a nationally certified strength and conditioning specialist, so I had Meena start a cardio and weightlifting program, and it transformed her physique. She now has the *stamina to play 36 holes a day* if necessary—which was just what she needed at the grueling HSBC Women's World Match Play Championship last year, where she finished second. Meena went on to win her first LPGA title at the BMO Financial Group Canadian Women's Open in Halifax, Nova Scotia, in July, and to finish seventh on the money list—not bad for her rookie season. With a few more tweaks to her swing this winter, I predict Meena will take the tour by storm in 2006. □

Carl Rabito, Meena Lee's swing coach, is a PGA master professional at the Diamond Players Club in Clermont, Fla.



5 Meena's leg action is excellent as she starts down. Her upper body could open a little bit more, but that's a product of the right elbow being below the left. It prevents her shoulders from uncoiling as fast as they need to on the downswing.

6 At impact, Meena's weight is shifting from the inside of her right foot to her left side in textbook manner. Her hips are level to the ground and square to the clubface, and her hands are just in front of her skirt zipper and the ball. She has made perfect, square contact.

7 Meena's swing stays perfectly in sync after impact: Her shirt buttons, her zipper and the triangle of her arms are in the same position relative to each other as they were at address.

8 She finishes in great balance, keeping her left foot on the ground rather than rolling her weight completely to the outside of the foot. Her chest and shoulders are facing the target. Meena's finish is the result of great mechanics.