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AimPoint Golf – Ultimate Green Reading Tool (REVIEW)

Posted By [mygolfspy](#) On March 15, 2011 @ 1:26 am In [Product Reviews](#) | [6 Comments](#)



"I can easily see this blowing up on tour and eventually with the average golfer too. Even without using the charts, the ideas from the class are now in my head with every read. And not in a bad way, I feel much more confident that I made the right read." – (GolfSpy Dave)

Will AimPoint Revolutionize The Putting Industry?

Written By: GolfSpy Dave

If you have watched any golf in the past few years on TV I am sure that you have noticed the aiming graphic that is used to show where the player should aim and what path a ball that is going in the hole should take.

What you have also likely noticed is that when the ball goes off that digital path, it doesn't go into the hole. This is usually followed by the tour pro making some kind of hand gesture right or left, showing how the ball should have moved based upon the line they saw.

The cliché of "seeing is believing" is not always the case with putting. We have all had putts that we read right to left break to the right. Putting has the mystical aura of "feel" associated with it, and with some good reason. Think about your long vs. short putts. Many of us will line it up and just have a "feel" for how hard to hit it and on flat putts we are pretty good at this. What gets to be an issue though is using "feel" to judge breaks on putts and where we should be aiming. Why were you high or low on that last uphill left to right putt? Why did the putt that you read as one cup left go dead straight? Perhaps what we saw or felt was the correct line on those putts was not correct. Feel definitely helps in judging distance for our putts, but maybe we need something more precise for figuring out where the putt should actually be aimed.

What if instead of relying only on feel, you could also use science to read the break? What if aiming by feel could be replaced by aiming with math, physics, and three-dimensional geometry? Even better, what if the math was already done for you? Enter [AimPoint](#) ^[1]. That line on TV is not Johnny Miller going all John Madden with the telestrator. That line is based upon science and is the product of AimPoint developer Mark Sweeny's research and innovation. The line on TV and the line you can read on your course are not based upon feel, but science. If you putt on that line at the

correct speed, the ball goes in. Period.

This sounded pretty good to me. Knowing that I could use the same system that is used on TV on any green I play was a strong motivator to sign up for a Level 1 AimPoint class one Sunday last February. I looked through the [AimPoint](#) ^[1] website and the more I read, the more it sounded like something I could learn and use. So, armed with my trusty Byron twisty I headed out to the course for the class.

Aimpoint – Putting Drills

I apologize in advance for the lack of exciting photos associated with this review. I was so engrossed in the class that stopping to shoot pictures didn't really cross my mind. There were ten students in the class with two instructors, Tim Tucker and Peter Brown. After some brief introductions, Tim and Pete had us head over to part of the green that had been taped off with a large rectangle. We were told to go to a pile of balls and make putts with the ball stopping in the rectangle. Although this was a class about reading greens, the system still requires you to hit an accurate putt at the correct pace for it to work.



Key Point #1:

The [AimPoint](#) ^[1] calculations are based upon the speed that would have your ball stop 10" past the hole. If you can't control speed, line becomes a secondary issue.

So this drill was introduced as a way to practice pace and to develop a consistent speed. Next we paired up and moved to lengths of elastic string that had been tied to knitting needles and sunk into the green. We were told to putt the ball down the line. The other person was watching to see

if we actually lined up the putter square to the string line. That way we could know if our putt was off line because of aiming or the stroke itself. Another good putting drill to take with me.



Key Point #2:

Reading the correct line is important, but so too is aiming correctly at that line and actually sending the ball down that line.

So although this is a green reading class and not a putting class, right away we were given two simple drills to make us better putters.

Class Day – AimPoint System and Aiming Drills

The green reading started with the simple concept of uphill and downhill putts. On a simple planar green there will be two putts that are straight: one uphill and one downhill. As you move away from those straight putts, putts will break. The further away, the more break. Made sense to me so far.

Key Point #3:

Every hole has two straight putts, one uphill and one downhill.

Our next drill was to walk around holes and feel with our feet where the transitions from uphill to downhill and downhill to uphill occur. If you can pinpoint the transition point, you have found the straight put, or what is called the “zero line”. So the group of us walked in circles around the holes and stopped once we felt the transition. After marking that spot with a tee, we rolled balls at the hole to see if we were correct in our read. This is a skill that must be practiced. On the steeper slopes I found locating the transition point a bit easier than on the more flat holes. After a few holes, I could tell when I was close. With more practice I think that I will improve in this area. Getting close is huge though because putts to the right of the zero line break left and putts to the left of the zero line break right.



Key Point #4:

Putts to the right of the zero line break left and putts to the left of the zero line break right.

Yes I did repeat myself here, but even without the [AimPoint](#) ^[1] system, this was a huge help for me. If I can get a good estimate of the zero line, I should always at least play the correct direction of break. No more read left, ball goes right.

From here we were issued the AimPoint charts. This is where the math comes into play. You measure how far your ball is from the hole (pace it off), estimate the angle of the ball location from the zero line, estimate the stimp and slope of the green, and then read the correct break number off the chart. Stimp can be acquired from the starter at the course or is easy to estimate if you are 8 (slow), 10 (medium), or 12 (fast). There are four different slope reads on the chart ranging from flat (1%) to severe (4%). You estimate the slope and you have your number. This estimation is also something that will be improved with practice.

Key Point #5:

Trust the chart.

If it says that your 10' putt needs to be aimed 4" left. Aim 4" left. While I practiced with the chart, the break often seemed less than I would have played had I been going with my eye. Granted, I may just be bad at reading greens with my eyes. However when I went with the reads on the charts, I got close if I miss-hit the putt or made it if I stroked it well. It still comes down to the monkey holding the club, but now this monkey knows exactly where to point the stick.

Although the charts are only calibrated out to 20' distances, it is easy to calculate the break on longer putts. They even showed us how to find the (sometimes snaking) zero line of a 60' putt and how the chart could be used to tell break. One of the putts we hit was 60' with a chart reading of 20" of break. There is no way that I would have read it that low. Hitting a ball though, 20" was the right read.

At the end of the 2.5 hour class, I walked away with my aim charts, a Level 1 student workbook, and a feeling of confidence that my green reading will improve if I practice and use the [AimPoint](#)^[1] system. The cost of this course was \$200, which honestly seemed a bit steep to me at first. Two and a half hours of swing instruction from your local golf pro would cost you about the same though. Having taken the class, I feel that what I spent was a bargain. This is a skill set that I can use for every round of golf I play in the future.

AimPoint: Reflections and "Rating"

After the class, I had lunch with Tim and Pete and some interesting points came up. First of all, there has been a significant increase in the number of tour pros using the [AimPoint](#)^[1] system. Some seem reluctant to learn the system, fearing that they will lose their "feel" for reading greens. That seems like a good thing. AimPoint trained caddy to tour pro after reading the chart, "Play it 14" left." Pro aims 14" left and it goes in. Tim told me some great stories about how the game of golf has changed over the years. One innovation came when Jack Nicklaus would go out during a practice round and mark off distances to objects on the course. That way he knew that if a tree by his ball is 145 yards out, he hits the iron that goes 145 yards. Many of the players were using more of a "This feels like a 6 iron mentality" until Jack showed them the value in knowing exact yardage. A similar revelation came later in wedge play. Mapping out exact distances of wedge shots at 50%, 75%, and 100% swings allowed Tom Watson to throw darts at greens well before others were doing the same. All other areas of the game are very data centered, but green reading is still viewed as being only about feel. I think that more and more people will see the science of [AimPoint](#)^[1] and experience how using this system improves reads and lowers scores. A few years from now we may joke about how we putted before [AimPoint](#)^[1].

Conclusion

Go to the [AimPoint](#)^[1] website, locate an instructor in your area, and take a class. You will be happy you did. Tim mentioned to me that they will be **launching 3-day AimPoint clinics at twelve locations across the US this year**. This would be amazing to attend. Instruction in the morning and practice on the course in the afternoon would truly cement in those skills. **After three days, you would leave a far better putter with a great handle on the AimPoint system.**

I could break this review down into a 100 point based scoring system as I have done in the other reviews, but taking a class doesn't really lend itself to that scale. For this review I will leave the scoring to you, but think about these questions. How would you score a class that makes you a better green reader in every future round you play? How would you score the value of that skill? How would you rate a class that allowed you to never have to guess at a read again?

That is what I believe [AimPoint](#) ^[1] has done for me. And this class was only Level 1...

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