



February 17, 2014

PGA TOUR and Official Technology Partner CDW Announce Return of ShotLink IntelligenceSM Prize

- *Competition challenges academics to use ShotLink data to make compelling new contributions to golf science*
- *Winning paper to receive \$30,000 in technology from CDW*
- *2012 winner Lucius Riccio of Columbia University studied long approach shot accuracy, used technology prize for new center of excellence at Columbia*

PONTE VEDRA BEACH, Fla. & VERNON HILLS, Ill.--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- The ShotLink IntelligenceSM Prize, a competition developed jointly by the [PGA TOUR](#) and official technology partner [CDW](#) that challenges academics to find the best new application of ShotLink statistics, is returning in 2014 with an increased prize of \$30,000 in technology from CDW for the winning paper.

The ShotLink IntelligenceSM Prize was introduced in 2012 as part of ShotLink Intelligence Powered by CDW, a program offering academic institutions the ability to use golf and the PGA TOUR as a research tool, fostering the development of new insights through big data analysis. ShotLink is the PGA TOUR's proprietary scoring system that captures multiple data points on every shot struck during competition, which in turn has translated into hundreds of new statistics and provided greater insight into player performance. While the core of the ShotLink Intelligence program has dramatically expanded golf analytics, academics have gone further, using PGA TOUR statistics in the study of fields as diverse as behavioral economics and risk management.

The winning paper from 2012, as determined by a panel of judges, was authored by Lucius Riccio, Ph.D., a senior lecturer in discipline at Columbia Business School, who used ShotLink data to determine the PGA TOUR's best long approach shot ball strikers.

The competition returns in 2014 with a \$30,000 technology prize from CDW for the winning paper: \$20,000 will be granted to the school and \$10,000 to the author.

Academics will have the opportunity to analyze ShotLink data throughout 2014 and submit entries during the first quarter of 2015. The winner will be announced in early March 2015 at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Sloan Sports Analytics Conference, of which CDW is a sponsor. The conference will be held at the MIT campus in Cambridge, Mass. More details on ShotLink Intelligence Powered by CDW and the ShotLink Intelligence Prize are available at www.pgatour.com/shotlinkintelligence.

"We are thrilled to again support the ShotLink Intelligence Prize," said Neal Campbell, senior vice president and chief marketing officer at CDW. "Our collaboration with the PGA TOUR on ShotLink centers on offering technology solutions to drive big data analysis, and this program directly advances that work to the cutting edge of the academic community."

Using Data for Academic Enhancement and Business Success

The PGA TOUR began sharing ShotLink data with academic institutions in 2005, establishing a formal process for academics to gain not-for-profit access to the wealth of statistical data collected by ShotLink at PGA TOUR tournaments for academic purposes. The program has grown substantially since then, with researchers from around the world using the data to further academics.

"The ShotLink Intelligence Program has provided an opportunity for the PGA TOUR and CDW to support higher education with meaningful data that is at the core of our sport while offering an interesting, unique and clean data set for the academic community," said Steve Evans, PGA TOUR senior vice president of information systems. "It is rewarding to see new insights derived from the program. Dr. Riccio's paper focuses on ball striking from key distances, which provides new insight into this aspect of the game. When ShotLink was developed, we had a goal to differentiate our players and to try to explain why PGA TOUR players make this difficult game look relatively easy. Lou has done a great job of helping us continue to meet that goal."

Riccio, who teaches business analytics, optimization, simulation and operations management at Columbia University, set out to produce a single, comprehensive measure of long approach shot ball striking by ranking all players and identifying those who

are best in long approach shot accuracy. For the analysis, he used par four fairway approaches between 150 to 225 yards, the yardages for which most pros are playing full iron shots.

Combining rankings of percentage of greens hit and closeness to the hole showed Justin Rose, Lee Westwood, Graeme McDowell, Robert Garrigus and Tiger Woods as the top four ball strikers on the PGA TOUR in 2012, with Rose having the highest green hitting ability and Westwood hitting it closest.

Riccio used the \$25,000 prize from CDW for a new center of excellence at Columbia, the Center for Advanced Sports Analytics within the Engineering School's Institute for Data Sciences and Engineering. "We received two servers that will enable us to process an almost unlimited amount of sports data, not only the wonderful data the ShotLink system provides for the top golfers in the world, but also the new data which is streaming in about basketball, soccer and football," Riccio said. "Our sports analytics students have already used the system to make some significant breakthroughs in understanding and explaining the intricate details that make the difference between winning and losing."

About PGA TOUR

The PGA TOUR is the world's premier membership organization for touring professional golfers, co-sanctioning more than 130 tournaments on the PGA TOUR, Champions Tour, [Web.com](#) Tour, NEC Series-PGA TOUR Latinoamérica, PGA TOUR Canada and PGA TOUR China.

The PGA TOUR's mission is to entertain and inspire its fans, deliver substantial value to its partners, create outlets for volunteers to give back, generate significant charitable and economic impact in the communities in which it plays, and provide financial opportunities for TOUR players.

Worldwide, PGA TOUR tournaments are broadcast to more than 1 billion households in 225 countries and territories in 32 languages. Virtually all tournaments are organized as non-profit organizations in order to maximize charitable giving. In 2013, tournaments across all Tours generated more than \$133 million for local and national charitable organizations and in early 2014 the TOUR's all-time charitable contributions surpassed \$2 billion.

The PGA TOUR's web site is [PGATOUR.COM](#), the No. 1 site in golf, and the organization is headquartered in Ponte Vedra Beach, FL.

About CDW

CDW is a leading provider of technology solutions to business, government, education and healthcare. Ranked No. 267 on the FORTUNE 500, CDW was founded in 1984 and employs more than 6,900 coworkers. For the year ended December 31, 2013, the company generated net sales of more than \$10.7 billion. For more information, visit [www.CDW.com](#).

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Source: CDW and PGA TOUR

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