

Olajuwon Ajanaku (Eastside Golf Founder)

Mud gets a bad reputation to me.

For some, it's an unattractive sight. For others, it's a sign of something bad. Lower. Lesser. Dirty..

For folks like me from the South, mud is a beautiful thing. You ever seen some good Georgia red clay? Pretty to look at, but always leaves a mark. Any golfer from where I come from – say, a kid from Atlanta's Zone 6 who saw Tiger and got inspired – can tell you, that stuff is gonna leave a stain on your kicks no matter how hard you try.

So why do we do it? Why do we continue to get down into that mud? Why do we choose to face the adversity that comes with looking different or being an outlier amongst the stuffy world of a sport like golf?.

Trust me, it isn't because it's the easier way.

It ain't pretty, but it's facts: No matter how dirty you have to get, you gotta take that shot if you're ever going to take your game to that next level. It can't be avoided, nor can it be negotiated with. Our journey to this collection was filled with adversity, but it was that same struggle that drove us to achieve at the highest level. Going through those hard times and long nights was difficult but transcending the traditional way of doing things is never easy. At Eastside, we feel like golf is a game for everybody. It can be a great workout, a way to connect with friends, or a way to create lasting relationships that transcend from the course to the boardroom. To us, golf is how we transcend the traditional: It's not about what you wear, it's about playing the game your own way. This collection is intended to be a renewable energy source: No matter how many times it doesn't go your way, you should never give up and always give it your best effort the next time.

Now that I'm thinking about it, that's kind of like golf, isn't it? No matter who you are or what you make or what you do, you're gonna eventually get into the mud. That's the game. So, when you look at it, there's only one question that matters: Can you get it out the mud?

We have a big mission at Eastside Golf: Create a cultural movement around the game of golf without compromising our authenticity. That last part is important. Code switch if you want, but we're living proof that you can curate the future by refusing to compromise who you are.

Our brand is a testament to the power of visualization. Where I come from, there's a saying: "Gotta see it to believe it". That rings true across our entire story. We saw Tiger and the legends of the game and now we want to be that inspiration for the next generation of Black golfers.

It's possible and here's how I know: If we can go from winning the only golf championship in the history of Morehouse College to having to ship and send the first ten thousand orders ourselves out of my apartment to partnering with Jordan Brand for their first-ever golf collaboration, then guess what?

You can, too.

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