

Goodbye, Mr. Spalding!

Amptweaker hits a homerun with latest tone-shaping duo

BY BLAKE WRIGHT

JAMES BROWN is one of those genius-types that enjoys the challenge of engineering high levels of functionality into small spaces. Sitting here looking at the new Curveball Jr. it is clearly a three-band EQ... and that would be fine as-is. Then I noticed the three-way voicing control... oh, and there is a boost... and Amptweaker's legacy 'Tight' switch. And this was just the stuff I could make out be staring at the thing! Brown makes no qualms about how a lot of his ideas come to him... he listens to his end-

users. When an idea makes sense, it makes sense... it doesn't really matter where the idea came from. The Curveball Jr. was another Amptweaker product that was born by listening to the needs of the consumer.

The controls on the Curveball Jr. are fairly straight-forward. There are knob controls for Low, Mid and High frequencies — these are boost/cut controls. There also is a mini-knob for overall volume just below these. The pedal also sports two three-way switches — the first controls

the overall voicing of the pedal from US, UK and Thrash, while the second is the Tight control which can go between Fat, Standard and Tight. The US setting is the 'lowest' giving you more of a low-end punch. The low-end becomes looser as you move to the UK and Thrash settings. The Tight setting also firms up the low-end. On the right side of the pedal is another knob control that allows you to adjust the level of a boost that can be accessed by pressing and holding the foot switch, then tapping it.

The red LED will indicate you are in boost mode.

The Curveball Jr. works well both on a pedalboard or in an amp's FX loop. When being used in the FX loop, you can lock in the tone you've dialed in using the foot switch, then for soloing out of that tone, hit the foot switch again to engage the boost mode.

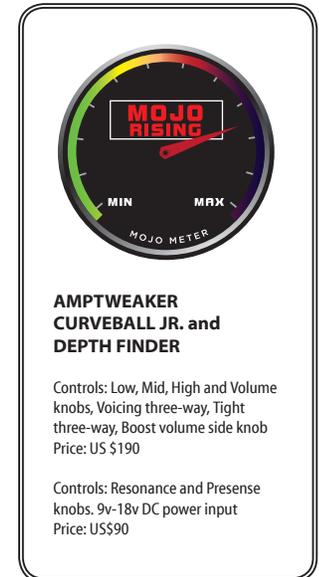
One thing about the Curveball Jr. and a lot of Amptweaker pedals in general, because Brown does pack a ton of functionality into these boxes, the controls can sometimes be a bit challenging to access. Access to the main knobs are somewhat blocked by the pedal's metal foot guard that runs across the top of the pedal and the switches themselves are semi-recessed and small.

The Amptweaker DepthFinder is a utility pedal designed to act as Resonance and Presence controls on an amp that doesn't already have them. As a Yoda figure for all things heavy (I mean, this is the father of the 5150 amp, after all), Brown caters a lot of what he does to those who crave that heavier, distorted tone. To that end, the DepthFinder was fine-tuned to closely match the Resonance and Presence power

amp damping controls on a block letter 5150 amp into a Vintage 30 cabinet. You can add it into the effects loop of your amplifier, or after distortion pedals to get a similar feel to those power amp EQ controls. You can also use it in the loop of one of Amptweaker's other pedals with the SideTrak feature, such as the TightMetal Pro. A trim pot located inside of the DepthFinder adjusts the output level, if needed/desired. What started out as a user-requested mod for one of Amptweaker's existing pedals is now a pocket-sized mod to be used just about anywhere.

Both of these pedals excel at getting more out of a player's current rig without compromising the overall tone of that rig. These sound shapers do wonders for introducing and firming up low-end frequencies as well as conditioning and sculpting highs and mids alike. While the Curveball is designed to work with your complete tonal palette, the DepthFinder can address your amp's sonics directly as well as the total package. Both pedals function as promised delivering a serious amount of control over user soundscapes.

At \$190 for the Curveball Jr.



and just \$90 for the DepthFinder, distortion lovers should devour both of these Amptweaker pedals. A less than \$300 investment will open up a serious assortment of possibilities via a fairly simple control set. 🎸

