

COLLABORATE

Proponent Group

The Premier Network of Golf Instructors

PROONENT GROUP NEWSLETTER \$20

JANUARY 2018

SEE YOU AT THE SHOW!

3 DAYS WITH 20 HOURS OF BEST-PRACTICES PRESENTATIONS ON TAP

Over the course of three full days, more than 30 instruction-industry leaders will speak in the Proponent Group room during the upcoming PGA Merchandise Show in Orlando from January 23-26 at the Orange County Convention Center.

For our members who spend a lot of time coaching juniors, Proponent has teamed up with Golf Coaching Praxis to add a Junior Development Forum day on Tuesday, January 23. This new day of learning comes at a nominal fee—specially priced at \$65 for Proponent Group members. Scheduled speakers include **Mike Bender, Henry Brunton, Martin Chuck, James Leitz** and **Trillium Rose**. To register to attend the Tuesday lineup, please contact coordinator Brendan Ryan at 407-233-6946 or brendan@bmgolffmanagement.com. Non-members pay \$99 to attend.



Brad Faxon will speak on Timing and Tempo



Damon Goddard, trainer to Jordan Spieth, will co-present with Tim Mahoney on techniques for increasing athleticism.

We are also very pleased to again offer our Wednesday and Thursday presentation lineups at no cost to our members. For the fourth consecutive year, the Thursday line-up is co-produced with **Dr. Rob Neal** and **Karen Harrison** of Golf Biodynamics.

Speakers on Wednesday and Thursday will include Jordan Spieth's fitness coach **Damon Goddard**, who

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OUR BIGGEST PGA SHOW LINE-UP AWAITS

(Continued from page 1)

will present in tandem with Troon Golf's Worldwide Director of Instruction, **Tim Mahoney**. Also taking the stage will be National Teacher of the Year **Alison Curdt**, TPI's Dr. **Greg Rose**, and PGA National Teacher of the Year **Martin Hall**. Blast Motion's **Mike Duhamel** will be joined by PGA Tour standout **Brad Faxon**. This year at the show, Austin Country Club's **Anne Marie Gildersleeve** as well as Whispering Pines Golf Club's **Chris Rowe** make their Proponent Group presentation debuts.

For Associate Members looking for career guidance and a peek at what's coming next for the industry, don't forget to join **Andy Hilts** and **Lorin Anderson** from 3 to 4:30 pm on Wednesday afternoon.

PGA and LPGA members will receive education credits for each session attended. *See you in Orlando!*



Anne Marie Gildersleeve



Martin Chuck

2018 PGA Show Proponent Group Events

All sessions will be held in Room W109B at the Orange County Convention Center

Tuesday Jan 23 *NEW ADDED DAY FOR 2018*

Junior Development Forum

Presented by K-Vest

Hosted by Golf Coaching Praxis

All day pass for Tuesday's Junior line-up below is **\$65** for Proponent members. (Non-members are **\$99**.)

To register for the Junior Forum contact:
Brendan@bmrmanagement.com

8:30-9:00am	Managing the Expectations of Parents (Henry Brunton)
9:00-9:30am	Using Feel to Accelerate Player Development (Trillium Rose and Tony Morgan)
9:30-10:30am	The Role of Technology in Development (Martin Chuck)
10:30-11:00am	Junior Golf and Club Companies: What You Need to Know (Jacob Davidson)
11:00-11:45am	Putter Fitting for Juniors (E.J. Kim and Alan Hodde)
11:45-12:05pm	Biomechanics in Action (Dr. Rob Neal)
12:05-1:15pm	Panel Discussion (Host: Trillium Rose and featuring: Cheryl Anderson , James Leitz , and Brady Riggs)
1:15-2:00pm	College Golf and Beyond (J.C. Deacon and Mark Leon)
2:00-3:00pm	Developing Elite Players (Mike Bender)
3:00-3:30pm	College Golf by the Numbers (Brendan Ryan)
3:30-4:00pm	Self-Efficacy (David Grecic)

Wednesday Jan 24

9:00-9:50am	Increasing Athleticism on the Golf Course through the Training Floor (Damon Goddard and Tim Mahoney)
10:00-10:50am	Tapping Into Your Best Golf: The Art and Science of Bilateral Stimulation and other Psychological Tools Used in Golf Instruction (Alison Curdt)
11:00-11:50am	From Little Red Book to Little Orange Box: How to Blend Traditional Student Relationships with Today's Technology (Ann Marie Gildersleeve)
1:00-1:50pm	Short Game: The Science of Timing and Tempo (Mike Duhamel of Blast Motion, with Brad Faxon)
2:00-2:50pm	Keys to Teaching Success at a Private Club (Chris Rowe)
3:00-4:30pm	Associate Members Meeting (Andy Hilts with Lorin Anderson)

Thursday Jan 25

8:00-8:50am	My 4 Keys to Being an Effective Coach (Martin Hall)
9:00-9:50am	Performance and Strategy (Iain Highfield and Matthew Cooke)
10:00-10:50am	Using Technology in Coaching (Kevin Sprecher)
11:00-11:50am	Wedge Craft: Friction, Spin and Launch (Dr. Robert Neal and Layne Savoie)
1:00-1:50pm	A Good Release: The Shoulder or the Wrist? (Tyler Ferrell)
2:00-2:50pm	College Golf: By the Numbers (Brendan Ryan and Dr. David Grecic)
3:00-3:50pm	Power Development for Golf (Dr. Greg Rose)

A MONTHLY LOOK AT THE JOB MARKET

MEMBERS ON THE MOVE

Members who have recently moved into new positions include:

Tony Consolino is the new Director of Instruction at The Legends G&CC in Clermont, FL

Amelia Rorer is now the Teaching Professional at Waynesborough CC in Paoli, PA

If you've recently made a move, please let us know at lbombka@proponent-group.com



Tony Consolino



Amelia Rorer

UPDATED BUSINESS INSURANCE GUIDE NOW ON MEMBERS' WEBSITE

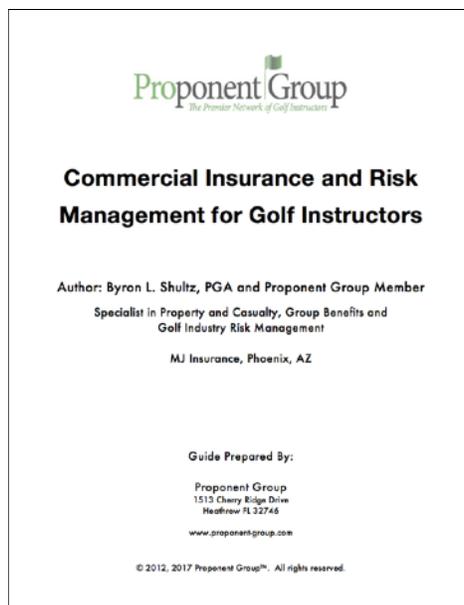
Years ago, my wife was teaching at a club in New York and helping conduct a clinic. During the clinic a young boy climbed into a golf cart parked alongside the range, hit the accelerator and plowed into a golfer, causing serious injury. The club and its head pro were sued. Thankfully they had proper insurance to deal with this very serious issue. Such mishaps happen more often than you might believe. If you are operating without proper insurance coverage an occurrence like this could be devastating to your livelihood.

Proponent is fortunate to have **Byron Shultz** at our disposal. He is an insurance expert who is also a PGA member and former director of instruction at Phoenix CC. Byron now works full-time in the insurance industry, specializing in golf-related policy issues.

He's just helped update our Commercial Insurance and Risk Management for Golf Instructors Guide. In it you can find up-to-date guidance and explanations on Worker's Compensation, General Liability, Commercial Property and Business Vehicle insurance issues.

Byron explains the proper way to insure your teaching technologies and details the difference between professional liability and general liability coverage—including why your PGA insurance may be inadequate.

To access the complete guide, log in to the members' website and go to the Business Guides menu where you will be able to download the entire document. You are also welcome to contact Byron Shultz directly at 602-772-3300 or byron.shultz@mjinsurance.com.



WHAT OUR MEMBERS ARE WATCHING

MOST VIEWED PROPONENT VIDEOS THIS MONTH

One of the most popular benefits on our member website is the Webinar/Video Archive, loaded up with presentations from Proponent events over the past 11 years. Check out the top speakers in the industry, sharing their insights to help you improve.

In December, these were the 10 most-watched videos on the Proponent website:

- 1) **Mike Bender, Martin Hall, David Leadbetter, Lynn Marriott, Cameron McCormick and Pia Nilsson** - Summit "Super Panel"
- 2) **Lorin Anderson** - 10 Trends for the Next 10 Years
- 3) **Mike Adams** - Analyzing Your Students' Body Functions
- 4) **Iain Highfield** - Incorporating Mental Game Techniques in Practice for Your Students
- 5) **Mike Adams and Mike Malaska**: Full Swing
- 6) **Dr. Michael Duffey and Eric Handley** - Assessing and Teaching with Ground Forces
- 7) **Lorin Anderson and Jeff Penson** - Secrets to Creating Long-Term Students
- 8) **Mike Bender, Martin Hall and Gale Peterson** - Faults and Fixes Panel
- 9) **Dr. Paul Schempp**- How the Best Teachers Become the Best
- 10) **Dr. Tim Lee** - Science of Acquiring and Retaining Golf Skills

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ENDLESS POSSIBILITIES

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PERFORMANCE PUTTING

TRACK IT ALL THE WAY

CLUB DATA (first batch)

Club Speed, Backswing Time,
Forward Swing Time, Tempo,
Stroke Length and Dynamic Lie.

BALL DATA

Launch Direction, Ball Speed,
Speed Drop, Roll Speed, Skid Distance,
Roll Percentage, Effective Stimp, Side Total,
Total Distance, and Total Break.

TRACKMAN
UNLEASH YOUR POTENTIAL

2018: A YEAR OF CREATING MORE VALUE



By Andy Hilts, Director

A few weeks into my new role with Proponent Group I've come to a conclusion: There is a tremendous opportunity for all of us to provide value beyond helping our students play better golf.

It's a mindset that will serve any instructor well, particularly as we see the competition for students at an all-time high. More and more golf professionals

are specializing in teaching and coaching the game. Certainly many Proponent members are already well ahead of the competition, but it's still important to reflect on your current skill set and potential for improvement. How are you currently distinguishing yourself from your peers? How are you creating more value—not only for your students, but for your facility?

We all know that the typical golf facility fails to recognize the value a fine instructor provides to the club. We also know that the better people play, the more they play. More play means more revenue to the facility. I encourage you to shout this from the rooftops. Find a discreet way to brag about yourself and the successes of your students. Create awards like student of the month/week/year.

Are you making a big effort to share the successes of your students not only with the world via social media but, more importantly, with your facility leaders? The communication channels are all there—your newsletter, handicap board, dedicated academy email, private social media group, your own bulletin board, and more. Don't be shy.

I have heard stories from more than a few Proponent members who brought new students to the club for lessons and that introduction brought those new students to the membership director—it created new members. Five new members at \$20,000 each is \$100,000 in revenue to the club. Question: What's your club's initiation fee and how many new members have you been instrumental in generating?

By the way, a typical private club member stays for seven years

so the lifetime value of that student who becomes a member could be well into six figures over their membership span.

Whatever type of revenue generation you are bringing to the club, I suggest you do your best to measure it. When facility management comes to you wanting to adjust how much you are making, your hard data will end any potential fallout quickly.

It's also worth evaluating (and increasing) your "lifestyle value" to your students. What steps are you taking to build these relationships? Do you know the names of your students' kids, spouse and pets? Do you know what they do outside of work and golf? What are their passions? Do you host events?

My financial advisor runs a series of "Discover Denver" events that allow me and my family to enjoy experiences outside of the financial world. She hosts trips to the Botanic Gardens, the zoo, art museums and ballgames. Getting to know her and her other clients in a social setting only builds more trust and ensures I will keep my investments with her.

Of course, you don't need to go off-property to provide additional value to your students. Ask yourself: What is the total student experience—from driving in to the academy parking lot to scheduling their next lesson before they depart? Pay attention to all the details. Clean golf balls, uncluttered facilities, temperature-controlled space, free sunscreen, high-quality fresh hitting mats, cleanliness, decor, and so on. Does your student's experience feel more like Burger King or Capital Grille?

Creating a world-class experience doesn't mean giving it away but a little bit of free stuff goes a long way, especially if it helps promote your brand. That bottle of water (with your brand on the label), coffee/tea, beverages... it all makes a difference. I loved hearing Brian Jacobs at the last Summit share the rules and student promises that came with the logo golf shirt he provides them each year.

We are the activators. We are the front line to these super-consumers of golf on a daily basis. We are the tip of the sword that creates more golfers and more golf. Your customers have many options for golf instruction. Provide the additional value required in today's marketplace to your student and to your club and you will be recognized as a more valuable and much more permanent asset. **PG**

PROONENT GROUP CALENDAR

“Big D” to Host Proponent Summit 2018

**Dates and Venue to be Announced at the
PGA Merchandise Show.**

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BOOK DEMO NOW!

PRIVATE, ONE-ON-ONE LESSONS – SECOND BEST TEACHING FORMAT?

COACHING ADULTS IN GROUPS: MORE FUN, MORE EFFECTIVE, MORE PROFITABLE (AND MORE COMMON)

By David Gould, *Staff Editor*

Remember back 20 years, when plastic cleats came on the scene as a rival to metal spikes? Reaction by golf's top influencers—tour players—was harsh, foretelling a swift exit for soft-spikes. But the concept turned out to have many advantages over its green-puncturing and carpet-destroying predecessor. In a very short time those colorful, whirly-shaped plastic cleats became standard.

In golf instruction, the private 50-minute lesson—one after another, all day long—is starting to look like a rusty steel spike. The private lesson is simple, utilitarian and certainly traditional, but it's peering over its shoulder at a rival concept loaded with positive attributes.

"Switching to group coaching programs for adults—we've been doing it that way with juniors forever—is a move dedicated instructors are increasingly looking to make," says Proponent Group member Henry Brunton, a pioneer of the practice who learned of its merits from Dr. Rick Jensen. "And why not? It's more appropriate to how humans learn motor skills, it's more enjoyable for students, it's far less draining on the teacher, it makes improvement more accessible for the golfer and it ends up earning the coach a much higher income."

The highly influential Brunton, a Canadian whose summertime base is Toronto and whose winter site is Eagle Creek Golf Club in Orlando, will also tell you it's better for the game of golf. He cites research by Golf Datatech and other sources showing rigid price-resistance to instruction for all but a slim minority of golfers. "If you go to a range and see 40 people hitting balls, no more than a half dozen of them are legitimate candidates for private



Under the supervision of Elena Callas King, an adult learning group works together on their greenside bunker shots at Common Grounds G.C. in Aurora, Colo.

instruction," says Brunton. "An effective group learning program throws open the doors to a much wider audience—probably 80 percent or more of golfers who desire to improve would give that kind of coaching a try, knowing they won't have to pay a whole lot for it."

Brian Jacobs, a Proponent member from Rochester, N.Y. who spoke on this topic at last year's Summit, will sing the praises of adult group programming all day long. However he does add a cautionary note.

"It takes a high level of energy and enthusiasm to do this," says Jacobs. "Coaches who work this way will tell you we aren't burned out at the end of the day, but that's because our students and the overall

atmosphere recharge us as we go” Along with bringing the energy, you must also be able to assess the ‘what and why’ of golf swings on the spot, in Brian’s view. “The trick is to change ball flight quickly,” he says, “because you’ll be moving on from one golfer to the next relatively quickly.”

In short, the format is geared toward higher-quality coaches who continually educate themselves, pile up certifications and base their careers on long-term relationships.

Proponent member John Perna discovered the value of communal golf improvement while working under Dr. Jim Suttie in Naples, Fla. years ago. He noticed how Suttie’s clients would finish their session with Doc then hang around, practicing and watching other students being coached. “All around us were serious golfers with serious ambitions, but the atmosphere was amazingly loose,” recalls Perna. “Guys wanted to be in that setting, because we laughed and cracked jokes basically non-stop—it was the culture under Doc’s leadership.” Perna also realized that creating a fun, relaxed culture would be impossible if the lead coach didn’t know his craft inside and out and wasn’t continually achieving excellent results with students. “Doc had success,” notes Perna, “and by keeping things loose and light-hearted he built on his success.” Clearly, Suttie achieved far better results than a coach with equivalent skills whose training center had a tense or grim feel to it.

So, having serious ambitions is still a good thing, and you can tell a serious instructor when you see them hire a branding expert to help with career growth and pathways to optimal success. Elena Callas King, a Proponent Group member working at Common Ground Golf Course in Aurora, Colo., did just that, and the results pointed her toward group-based teaching.

“The consultant I hired used a bunch of different approaches, one of which was to interview my students,” recalls King, whose facility is owned by the Colorado Golf Association and thus heavily geared toward growth of the game. “That was somewhat nerve-wracking for me, but it turned out to be amazingly helpful.” Between the interviews and a personality test administered to Elena, herself, it became clear that “community” was important to teacher and students alike. “Developing relationships is what the tests showed to be my priority. My ideal client turns out to be an adult 50 or older,” says King, “someone who could be a par shooter or a raw

beginner, but by personality would be committed to long-term growth and development.”

The consultant’s work was completed by the end of the 2015 season, giving King a chance to craft the first version of her group-based programming in time for 2016. “I knew it would work,” she says, “but still I had a fear that nobody would want to do it and I’d be stuck with no customers.” In most cases the teaching pro who does this will have early adopters who form a base. The advice Henry Brunton gives is to take one day of the week—Monday or maybe Tuesday—and set that off as group-coaching day. As for people who are fixated on privacy and having the instructor to

themselves, they may never change over, but King nonetheless invites that type to her supervised-practice sessions—which are essential elements within the group paradigm.

Perhaps the ultimate tool for changing people’s minds is the package of value found in a well-priced group learning program. King’s initial one was priced at \$400 a month, based on golfers making a minimum four-month commitment. For that fee you got an initial 90-minute assessment, one private 45-minute coaching session, unlimited participation in regularly scheduled two-hour sessions of supervised practice, plus two monthly on-course sessions lasting two hours each and using a 4:1 student-coach ratio. In good part the on-course work King was offering reflected concepts learned from the Vision54 team of Lynn Marriott and Pia Nilsson. “On-course is where I feel the most energy, and where everyone involved gets the most enjoyment,” says Elena. It’s also, in her opinion, where the most rapid and long-lasting improvement takes place.

It’s likely that the timing of this wave of change—as it increasingly sweeps up younger instructors—is based on the number of years that Jensen, Brunton, Nilsson, Marriott and their fellow Proponent member Will Robins have been honing their core concepts and preaching the value of a new approach. These five have been leaders in the move toward a group-based, skill-acquisition model that also teaches people how to get the ball in the hole and get their scores out of the 100s and into the 90s, or out of the 90s and into the 80s, etc. Sarah Dant is a Tennessee-based Proponent member who was spurred to move away from the private-lesson model by a realization that the group’s founder, Lorin Anderson, would do fist-pumps upon hearing.

“I did some math one day,” recalls Dant, “and figured out that I couldn’t retire comfortably if I



continued earning my living as a private-lesson instructor.” Bingo.

Since revamping her practice, Dant has gone from averaging \$110 an hour to \$200 an hour, meanwhile helping more people and experiencing an immense upgrade in job satisfaction. “Teaching private lessons all day was sapping my soul,” she laments. “Some nights I’d just lie on the floor and cry. And I was over-teaching people—when you’re in the group-training environment you can’t over-teach.” Others agree, saying intermittent feedback in small doses is far more effective than large doses of input. Having combined what she learned from Jensen and Brunton with the principles of The Scoring Zone, devised and taught by Robins, Dant forged a career path manifestly preferable to what she’d been doing previously. Recently she entered a partnership of sorts with Robins, going out on the road to help him run TSZ golf schools.

One challenge she pondered was how to sell the idea to the golf-operations people. A fellow group-oriented instructor, Mike Dickson of Congressional Country Club in Bethesda, Md., advised her not to try. “The head pros are going to scratch their heads and walk away if you try to explain this to them,” advises Dant. “Mike told me to say as little as possible, and if they ask just say you’re implementing this little group thing, as an experiment. Try using the term ‘boot camp’—my head pro seemed to like that.” Eventually Dant’s head golf professional at Poinciana came up to her and asked, “What the hell is going on over there?” It was his reaction to the runaway success of the program.

Dant agrees with Brian Jacobs that a sharp eye and an agile coaching mind are needed to succeed with this approach. “I couldn’t do it seven or eight years ago,” she admits. “But I would tell someone who is trying to develop group-training

skills to keep sight of what happens when you’re working one on one and you have all the time in the world—people tune you out, usually after two or three minutes!”

She learned at Vision54 to “talk less and ask more questions,” falling into a pattern of asking the golfer what they’re experiencing when they swing and how they are feeling about the result. “Then they own the feeling, and they can explore what to do next,” Dant says. “If you train with Pia and Lynn they make you give a lesson where you do nothing but ask questions.” Elena Callas King finds that games and contests set up between students provides an ideal structure and energy in the group setting, helping the coach make his or her point then move down the tee line.

If you judge by King’s experience, these programs don’t just work—they work wonders.

“Students form

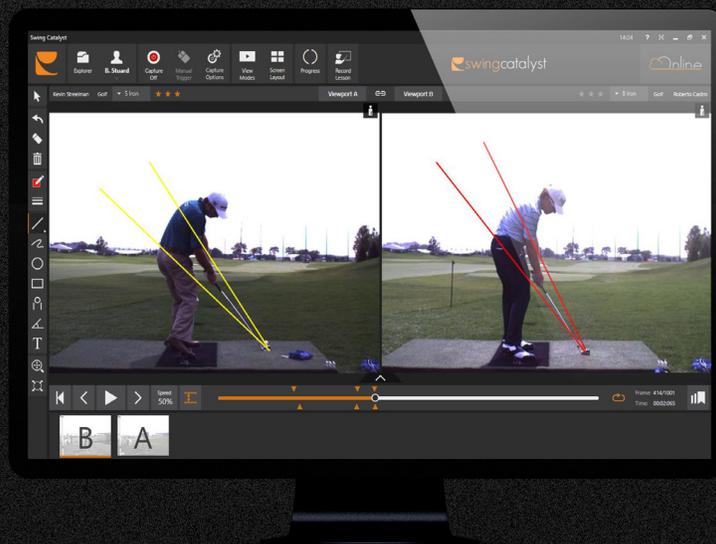
friendships with each other,” says King, whose annual income increased 15 percent in year one and more still in year two of group-based teaching. “They turn golf into a self-discovery practice, and apply what’s happening for them in golf to everyday life. They spend all kinds of time and money at the golf course. They will tell you, ‘I almost quit, then I found you and I found my group—none of us have ever experienced golf like this.’” They also generate intense word-of-mouth that brings new people in.

The 50-minute private golf lesson will always be with us—even the coaches most dedicated to group training still use it when appropriate. But there’s a wealth of evidence to suggest that a better way of coaching, training and learning has arrived, just in time to enhance the working life and long-term wealth of teaching professionals who are willing and able to adopt it. **PG**

The Takeaways:

- The private golf lesson is a century or two old—it’s appropriate for part-time instructors who spend most of their time in the shop
- Only 12 percent of golfers seek professional coaching each year —price-sensitivity is a major reason
- Motor-skill acquisition is a slow process, but it doesn’t require major information downloads, except at the beginning
- Golf is an individual sport most notably in a tournament setting—training and practice can be as communal as you want it to be
- Without lengthy experience and superior skills, coaching adults in groups can be risky
- Games and competitions in the supervised-practice setting greatly help with skill development and meanwhile they make it much easier for the coach to keep moving down the tee line
- Teaching one-on-one all day drains the instructor—teaching groups seems to do the opposite
- Instructors who teach traditionally should make a gradual move to the group concept
- Golfers engaged in coaching programs spend more time and money at the golf facility, but golfers engaged in group coaching probably spend the most of all—for one thing, they move seamlessly, as a group, from their session to the 19th Hole.

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HIRING SEASON: ARE YOU PREPARED?



By Lorin Anderson, *Founder*

In more than a decade spent tracking golf-instructor hiring, I've never seen a run like we've had this past month or so. More than 10 teaching jobs have gone up on the Proponent Group Job Board during this span, a record number for a single month. It could well be a sign that we're getting some traction on the recruitment side and that

clubs and facilities that have been reticent to add staff are ready to start pulling the trigger.

The PGA Show is always a time where lots of formal and informal interviewing goes on. On that note I would simply say that if you're doing some hiring, make sure you're prepared to gather the info you truly need about each candidate, so you can make the best possible decision before making a job offer.

A few areas where you want to focus are: **Hire for more than just talent.** A golf operation is a small group, sometimes just two or three teachers working together. Spend enough time with the candidate so that you can gauge if this is someone you want to have alongside 50-60 hours a week in season. Have a meal with them, play golf with them, watch them interact with the rest of your staff. If you hire just for teaching talent it can throw off the entire team if the personality isn't a fit.

Hire with diversity in mind. You really want to have a team that includes differing viewpoints, different skill sets, and different experiences. If you hire clones of yourself, you will have a harder time being innovative and creating better systems for your business, because everyone will come at it

from a similar viewpoint and that can be detrimental to the health of your business.

Add talent instead of filling a need. Too often hiring means checking off some boxes for various skills and when enough of the boxes are checked, a job offer will be made. Instead, search for raw talent. As someone once told me who had hired hundreds of people at a large corporation: "I hire the person with the most horsepower in their engine and we can always train them to do the job." What he meant was try to find the candidate who is just plain smarter and has lots of intellectual curiosity. For example, a young instructor who may not have as much experience as someone else but throws themselves into shadowing other teachers, going to industry summits and studying YouTube instruction videos every night, is probably signaling that he or she will continue to grow as a teacher and can be molded into whatever your staff needs.

Don't underestimate cultural alignment. Do you pick up a candy wrapper in the parking lot when you arrive at your facility in the morning? Do you stay an extra half hour in the evening if the training aids need to be stored and towels need to be returned to the locker rooms? If this is your culture and your expectation, find out how your job candidates will fit into these expectations. Nothing will sour a staff to a new hire faster than behavior that doesn't fit the team's work ethic and culture.

This may be surprising, but I don't know many teachers who truly enjoy the hiring process. It can be a time-sucking, difficult task and there can be a lot of confusion about where to find the best candidates, what questions to ask in the interview and how to weight the criteria. Don't forget that Proponent Group is always here to assist with what we call The Job Cycle. We're here to support our members in both the job search and the hiring process. Let us know how we can help. **PG**

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The “Other Side” of a Successful Teaching Career

YOUR BUSINESS IS A MACHINE, AND THE “PUNCHLIST” KEEPS IT HUMMING!

By David Gould, Staff Editor

Last summer at Proponent Group headquarters, a long and labor-intensive day was spent creating a vital asset for members—the “Proponent PunchList.” Staff members gathered around a conference table with stacks of notes we’d been gathering for many months, dug in, and banged out the document.

A powerful feeling of satisfaction permeated the room when our work was finally completed, given what a painstaking process it had been. We knew how eager we were to produce this tool and deliver it to members, but we also knew we had procrastinated a while, due to the gnarly nature of such a comprehensive, detail-driven task.

Do you see where we’re going with this?

No one denies that the 12-page, 35-point PunchList is one of those do-your-homework, take-your-medicine propositions—that’s why it’s divided into sub-categories and timetables. It’s also why the suggestion is always to take “shallow dives” into its pool of tasks, knocking out some now, some later, and

“Spectacular achievement is always preceded by unspectacular preparation.”
— Robert H. Schuller



The Proponent PunchList

Our Exclusive Member Workbook and Scorecard is Your Essential Tool for Operating a Successful Instruction Business

Congratulations. You’ve established yourself as a full-time instructor and are achieving success. You’ve also made a forward-thinking move by availing yourself of Proponent Group’s support and services. It is now more possible—and more necessary—to bring advanced management techniques to your teaching and coaching practice. But it’s no small challenge to take care of your existing students and continually hone your coaching skills even as you work to grow your business and your income. The Proponent PunchList addresses all these activities, meanwhile helping you achieve a reasonable work-life balance.

If you are a new member of Proponent Group, you are best off using the PunchList initially as an assessment tool. Within it are 30-plus sub-categories of management and business strategy. In most cases a new Proponent member will find they are proficient in many of these areas, adequate in some and in need of considerable help in others.

Your goal is to see you get more from your business’s current strengths while helping you address any possible weak areas so they no longer pose a threat to future success.

You don’t have to tackle all of these PunchList items at once, nor should you. For each sub-category we provide a suggested time interval or



cycle when review is most appropriate. We do suggest you go back over the entire list annually, and use your yearly review to re-prioritize your greatest opportunities as well as your most vital needs.

Under many of these items you will find **Assets to Assist**. These are guides, templates, video presentations and other tools stored in the member-only section of the Proponent Group website. You can readily deploy and customize these assets to help you complete a given task. What follows is the PunchList in its entirety, sequenced according to our recommendation as to how frequently the various tasks should be taken up.

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

“Winter is a season of recovery and preparation.”
— Paul Theroux

some a bit later still.

And hey, there are surely items in the document that you attend to without the PunchList having to prompt you. For example, you may not need the reminder to “Check on Your Personal Health” by scheduling an annual physical, or to “Continue Your Education,” and “Upgrade Your Teaching Technologies.” It’s clear from everything we see at the PGA Show, at Summits and on Proponent Group’s private Facebook forum that our members are attending to these important career-building activities.

On the other hand, the PunchList—under the heading of what is advisable to do annually—will counsel the member reading it to “Protect Your Identity” by, for example, changing all passwords or even signing up for a service such as LifeLock, which will actively monitor your bank and credit accounts 24/7 and alert you if any new accounts are opened using your identity. That sort of diligent, dutiful task is not what a creative, outdoorsy and people-oriented golf instructor wakes up in the morning itching to do. Same with “Scrub Your

Complete Database” or even “Review Your Contract.” If a Proponent Group member were to follow these instructions and then later send a message telling us that he or she enjoyed doing it, we would have to wonder about them. The pleasure is in having done most of these things, given how much more smoothly daily life runs as a result, and how

“We see on occasion the flash in the pan, the sudden success. But *continued* success is dependent upon tremendous attention to detail.” – Frederick Lenz

accumulating on the member-only Proponent website.

Now, while the PunchList is itself a digital file on the site, we’ve set it up so that you download it as a PDF file and then print it out, entering your name and the date of the download by hand on the front of document. That way you can keep it handy, scribble notes, check off the various

Proponent Group		Proponent PunchList	
Every Six Months (cont'd)		Your Notes	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Plan for Public Relations Opportunities</p> <p>Every six months or so, review upcoming special events, anniversaries, milestones or other newsworthy events that your local media may want to report on.</p> <p>Assets to Assist:</p> <p>Instructor Public Relations Guide</p> <p>Inexpensive Public Relations and Brand Building (Karen Moraghan) - Video Archive</p>	_____	
Annually		_____	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Review Your General Business Strategies</p> <p>Each year when you're out of your peak season, take time to review your teaching business's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. From this review, lay out a prioritized plan for leveraging the positives and mitigating the negatives. Think about your key differentiators: Did you strengthen your position in your local market this past year? Alternatively, did your competition raise their games? This is the time to set some realistic growth goals for your revenues and meanwhile review all your expenses to see if any trimming is appropriate.</p> <p>Assets to Assist:</p> <p>How to Protect Your Business in a Changing Market (Lorin Anderson) - Video Archive</p>	_____	
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Proponent Group		Proponent PunchList	
Annually (cont'd)		Your Notes	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Plan for Your Taxes</p> <p>Golf instructors can have fairly complex tax returns due to independent-contractor status, incorporation issues and a variety of small business deductions you may be eligible to receive. Meet with your tax professional annually to review any changes in your business that may affect your tax situation.</p> <p>Assets to Assist:</p> <p>Golf Instructor's Tax Return Guide</p>	_____	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Manage Your Current Endorsement Contracts</p> <p>Communicate on at least an annual basis with all companies you have an endorsement deal with. Send photos showing you using the product. Send a thank-you to your management contact at the company and offer to assist in any area where you may be helpful. If you have no current contracts, spend a little time strategizing possible affiliations that may be mutually beneficial.</p> <p>Assets to Assist:</p> <p>Panel Discussion: How to Get a Staff Contract - Video Archive</p>	_____	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Purge Files</p> <p>Shred invoices older than 4 years and tax-related documents older than 7 years. NOTE: Always keep a file copy of all business and personal tax returns—forever.</p>	_____	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Conduct Employee Reviews (if applicable)</p> <p>At the end of your busy season or at the end of the calendar year, it is recommended that you review each employee's performance. As part of this process, create a plan for continued growth</p>	_____	
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for many of us it provides for a sounder night's sleep, free of nagging thoughts and worries.

Under many of PunchList items the member will find what we call Assets to Assist. These are guides, templates, video presentations and other tools stored in the member-only section of the Proponent website. You can readily deploy and customize these assets to help you complete a given task. In fact, the main impetus for creating the PunchList was to organize for you the ever-growing toolbox of assets we saw

“The mechanic seeking to perfect his work must first sharpen his tools.”
– Confucius

boxes and perhaps delegate to staff members some of the duties specified on the list.

The quotations scattered throughout this article might have helped us PunchList writers to settle down to the task of producing it a bit quicker. They're offered here as inspiration, and a

reminder that a great teaching career is mostly about great teaching, but it's supported along the way in vital fashion when you attend to the sort of details any sound business needs to run smoothly and reliably. **PG**



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WHAT I'VE LEARNED: RANDY HENRY

RANDY HENRY'S DYNAMIC GOLF, COEUR D'ALENE, IDAHO

INTERVIEW BY PAUL RAMEE, JR

The resort town of Coeur d'Alene, Idaho has been known throughout golf for two exceptional things—the famed floating green at Coeur d'Alene Resort and the custom golf club factory and headquarters bearing the name Henry-Griffitts. These days, it's also the summertime teaching headquarters for Golf Channel Academy coach Randy Henry, and the center of activities for Randy Henry's Dynamic Golf.

Randy's name has appeared on the Golf Digest list of 50 Best Teachers in America and he's also earned the magazine's nod as No. 1 Teacher in Idaho. Throughout his long career he has coached winners on the PGA, LPGA and Champions Tours as well as some of the world's top collegiate and junior golfers. In the 1980s, Randy founded Henry-Griffitts, the custom-club company that popularized the lie board, designed the first fitting cart and later pioneered interchangeable heads and shafts.

Players like Peter Jacobsen, Scott McCarron, Homero Blancas, John Brodie and Sandra Palmer cite Randy as a major influence on their golf success, and a patient, creative teacher who has become a close friend as well. Devoted golfers like NBA Hall of Famer Bill Russell could cite their

association with Randy as a game-saving experience. As a teacher, clubfitter, club designer and all-round innovator, Randy Henry has left a deep imprint on golf, both the game and the industry—his fellow Proponent Group member Paul Ramee got Randy to delve into some of the details of how it all happened.



Randy, how did you get into the golf business?

I started playing golf just like everybody else, came to love the game and enjoyed competing. In 1974 I was headed back home to Idaho from a golf tournament in Spokane, Wash., when the car I was riding in got hit by a drunk driver traveling the wrong direction. My back was broken in nine places and I was in the hospital for a long time, eventually undergoing a 16-hour surgery that involved multiple steel rods and pulleys and other

Explaining how the static and dynamic lie angles of an iron affect impact conditions and ball flight has been part of Randy Henry's working life since the mid-1980s. He's had the pleasure of spending many of those work days in the scenic surroundings of Idaho's northern lakes region.





The essential, unchanging message of Henry-Griffitts has been that skilled golf instructors should be the ones to handle a golfer's equipment needs—doing the work and earning the proper reward for optimizing both swing motion and ball flight.

things. When I came out of the hospital I found I couldn't play golf the same way as before and had to make changes. I became interested in the equipment part of the golf motion and ball flight, as part of my effort to play golf again.

You were done competing, obviously.

Right, so I became a club pro and worked in a few different places in the Northwest. Eventually I moved up to our family's summer house in Hayden Lake, in the Panhandle of Idaho right near Coeur d'Alene. That's where we started Henry-Griffitts.

You say a club pro, but your emphasis was on teaching, right?

Yes. And this was happening at a time when the Senior PGA Tour, now the Champions Tour, was adding events and offering bigger purses. I spent a lot of time on that tour, teaching and coaching. I had a big advantage because I could put the correct equipment in the players' hands. I found this made teaching very easy. Henry-Griffitts had a lot of success on the old Senior Tour. Lots of guys were playing HG equipment, and we weren't paying any of them to do it.

Tell us about those early days of custom-fitting, as you remember them.

I remember being out on tour with Homero Blancas, at a tournament where Lee Trevino was doing commentary for NBC. Trevino came up to Homero and congratulated him on how good he

had been hitting his driver. They started talking about the club itself and Homero hands it to Lee, who immediately says, "Homero, how long is this thing?" When Homero told him it was 45 inches, Lee shook his head and said "There isn't a person in the world who can hit a 45-inch driver, what are you, crazy?" A year later, there wasn't anyone out there *without* a 45-inch driver.

How about back home, working with the average golfer?

We found that off-the-rack clubs were too strong for 90 percent of the people playing them. That led to weak swings—really, it tended to be the main reason why people developed those weak swings. I found that when I weakened the clubs, I got stronger swings. The amateur player would go from hitting weak uppercut fades to hitting draws. The swing motion changed and ball flight changed. We figured out that equipment affects motion.

Talk to me about the role of the teacher in the fitting process.

My belief is that the only person who can effectively fit clubs is the teacher. The teacher knows the golfer, knows their body, knows what they're trying to do to hit solid shots.

Who benefits the most from custom-fitting, the tour pro or the amateur?

The 50-year old up to 70-year-old who is given a club with weaker specifications and immediately



Randy's insights on how golf swing and golf equipment go together were on display at a recent Proponent Group panel discussion on clubfitting.

becomes stronger in their motion. They see their ball flight improve immediately. You can change the ball flight of a tour player with custom fitting, but the amateur is going to see great results quickly, in both how they move and what the ball does.

You've talked a lot in the past about "compensating moves" by the golfer whose set of clubs isn't right for him or her.

I've also said pretty often that golf is like a boxer getting hit in the head. He learns to duck after a while. So if a guy keeps hitting it out to the right, he will start to swing left or aim left, but that pattern changes if you can put a club in his hands that makes the ball go in the direction it "should" be going, based on setup and path and so forth. Basically, if that golfer swings left, the ball really should be going left. When it doesn't go left, the skilled instructor can teach in such a way as to address that issue, but it makes your teaching so much harder. When we do a fitting, we get 90 percent of our students to hit a draw immediately with their natural swing.

Some teaching professionals are cool toward clubfitting because it's a one-off process. You teach people every week or every other week, over a long period, but you only fit them once. What's your thought on that?

You're talking about a relationship, between the golfer and the pro who is working with them. Sometimes the fitting aspect can take two or three or maybe four sessions, because you find you have to teach while you are fitting. I will make a tennis comparison and say that if you're working with a guy who is hitting lob shots off his back foot, you have to teach him to hit a forehand. Separating the two processes—teaching and fitting—is condemning them to what they have. Big manufacturers don't mind when those two things are separated, because it leads to people looking at new equipment every year. When the teacher is involved that golfer will get better because you can control the situation.

Reflecting on the progress of Henry-Griffitts through the 1980s and '90s, you really were on the cutting edge, despite being a small company.

That's true, but now we can't fight with the larger companies. For example, we thought about patenting the lie board, but knew that the larger companies would likely fight our patent and with deeper pockets, win, so we didn't. We wrote articles in magazines highlighting our prior use, so it showed that we were the first in a lot of respects.

Didn't you have some very early ground-force measuring gear?

We developed one of the first weight displacement devices. It showed us that people who moved the

In speaking to groups of golf professionals, Randy will often talk about the talented athlete who is a poor golfer—this paradox was a key inspiration for his storied career as a fitter and teacher. Years ago, Olympic decathlon champion Rafer Johnson came to him hitting nothing but grounders and topped shots: A change of club specs and a lesson or two brought out Johnson's natural talent for ball-striking.



same way tended to have the same ball flight, and tended to also use the same type of equipment.

What about your early work with simulators?

I worked with Bill Bales at aboutGolf. We were working with high-speed video cameras, which at that time cost over a million dollars to get your hands on. So now we had technology to tell us what the ball was doing, what the club was doing and, with the high-speed cameras, what the body was doing. We were able to identify different types of swings and we identified 12 different types. We also found that a lot of teaching pros who were having success working with tour players had swing types that matched the swing of the players they were teaching, which was interesting and seemed to make sense.

Who were some of your early collaborators on this type of teaching that integrated clubfitting?

When we first got started, Jimmy Ballard was the man. He called us and wanted to come up and see what we were doing. He told us, "This makes sense to me." The early adopters of HG were instructors who were confident in their teaching, but were not getting the results they felt they should be getting. The golf club was the missing puzzle piece, which they came to realize. Tag Merritt was one of my favorites, an innovator who

was one of the first to use video. Some of my best friends were players on tour who were naturally curious. Homero Blancas, Peter Jacobson, John Brodie, players like that. As their teacher, I wanted them to know their swing better than I did. My job was to teach them well enough that they didn't need me anymore.

How does your teaching change when you move from outdoor to indoor?

Obviously, the use of modern-day simulators makes it a lot easier. There will always be some question as to their accuracy, but for the most part the information is able to allow the person to react to the shot. They can see the good shots and you can reward them for it.

In a lot of ways your career has been about overcoming entrenched ideas and beliefs—would you agree?

I would. For example, Henry-Griffitts was the first club company to come out with an offset driver. Bruce Devlin was the first guy on tour to use one. Bruce played offset irons and he saw the driver and said it made sense. I couldn't get a 30-handicapper to play an offset driver, but I could get a veteran tour player to do it, because tour players end up being very practical—they just want to play better. **PG**

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WELCOME PROPONENT GROUP'S NEW MEMBERS FOR DECEMBER

DANIEL CARRAHER, UNF Golf Complex, Jacksonville, FL – *Full Member*

KATIE MILSTEAD, Trent Wearer Golf At Meridian Golf Club, Englewood, CO – *Associate Member*

JANEAN MURPHY, Oakhurst Golf Club, Porter, TX – *Full Member*

FUTURE CHAMPIONS TOP 25 MASTER JUNIOR COACHES ANNOUNCED

Future Champions Golf has announced their first ever list of the Top 25 Master Coaches. These coaches have been selected for the 2017 list for the dedication and success with elite junior golfers and all have a proven track record of developing junior golfers into successful college players. The Master Coach list includes teachers who have been listed on the FCG Top 25 Elite Junior Coach list for at least two years previously.

Proponent members ranked among the Top 25 Master Coaches include: **Cheryl Anderson, Henry Brunton, Virgil Herring, Elena King, Cameron McCormick, Brett Packee, John Perna, Tim Sheredy, Chris Smeal, Larry Ward, Trent Wearer and Joey Wuertemberger.**

Proponent members who earned a spot on the Top 25 Elite Junior Golf Coaches list include: **Bill Abrams, Craig Bocking, Daniel Carraher, Mike Fay, Jeff Isler, Bill McInerney, Chris Rowe, Bill Schmedes III, Brech Spradley, Rob Stocke and Allen Terrell.**

GROWTH OF THE GAME TEACHING PROFESSIONALS LIST ANNOUNCED

Golf Range Magazine has announced their Top 50 Growth of the Game Teaching Professionals for 2017. In addition, they also established a new category of Elite Member Status for teachers who have made the list at least five times.

Proponent members who were bestowed with Elite Member Status include: **Sarah Bidney, Brendon Elliott, Ralph Landrum, Mike Malaska, Bernie Najar, Rob Noel, Laird Small, Deb Vangellow, Nicole Weller and Steve Whidden.**

Proponent members who made the new Top 50 list include: **Bill Abrams, Craig Bocking, Mark Caldwell, Alison Curdt, Jim Estes, Chris George, Mary Hafeman, Doug Hammer, Megan Padua, Will Robins, Brian Rogish, Trillium Rose, Chris Smeal, Adam Smith, Rob Stocke, Brandon Stooksbury, Renee Trudeau, Larry Ward and Kevin Weeks.**

From top to bottom: Bill Abrams, Nicole Weller and Brandon Stooksbury.



Proponent Group

The Premier Network of Golf Instructors

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David Gould Staff Editor

Lori Bombka Operations Manager

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THE PREMIER NETWORK OF GOLF INSTRUCTORS

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