



# Proponent Group

The Premier Network of Golf Instructors

PROPONENT GROUP NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2017

## STELLAR LINEUP FOR OUR 10TH ANNIVERSARY SUMMIT

Since the Summer of 2007, when Proponent Group opened its doors and began providing golf instructors with leading-edge information to help you manage your careers and businesses, we've observed an annual tradition. Every fall we've hosted a Summit event to bring members together for a unique networking opportunity filled with valuable information you couldn't get elsewhere.

Over the past decade we've been blessed to have the absolute sharpest minds in the industry share their ideas and methods with our membership. To celebrate our 10th anniversary, we have asked the six most popular speakers all-time – as chosen by past Summit participants – to return for an encore: We're calling it our Super Panel Session. It will include both indoor and outdoor segments and cover a variety of topics. The participants will include: **Mike Bender, Lynn Marriott, Cameron McCormick, Pia Nilsson** and **Martin Hall**, who will also moderate the session. All are Proponent members who have coached players to major-championship victories and all have built extremely successful teaching businesses. We can't wait to have them all together for the first time ever.

To add to our 10th Anniversary celebration line-up we are also very pleased to announce that LPGA Tour Commissioner **Michael Whan** will be with us for a "Fireside Chat" about the state of the game from a global perspective. Whan has traveled the globe for the past seven years and has completely reenergized the women's pro circuit. He will share his thoughts on where the game is today and where it may be heading.

We're just getting started, so stay tuned for more Summit speaker announcements as the summer unfolds.

Simply put, you'll want to be in the room for this year's event to be hosted by Heathrow C.C. in Orlando on **November 5-7**. Turn to page 4-5 for more Summit details and for registration information.



LPGA Commissioner Michael Whan

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## TEACHER CERTIFICATION PROGRAMS SURVEY RESULTS

Simply put, there is no shortage of continuing education opportunities for golf instructors. In fact, since our last update of our Teacher Certification Program three years ago, 14 new options have been added to our survey. These programs cover the gamut from fitness to swing technique, to putting stroke mechanics to mental preparations.

We know you love learning as our typical member went to five seminars or certification programs last year alone and nearly 200 members completed this survey. To help you make the most of your time and resources, Proponent Group conducts this exclusive survey of our members to find out how these programs stack up with each other.

The chart below lists the programs starting with the most attended. Among programs listed for the first time, **Swing Catalyst**, **Eyeline Golf 4 Putting Elements**, **K-Vest** and **SAM PuttLab Online Certification** already have more than 15 percent participation from our members.

Among all programs with at least five percent participation rates **Vision54 Coaching Program** and **Stack & Tilt** were the only two to receive perfect scores in all three ratings for teaching skill enhancement, reputation enhancement and outstanding value.

**TPI Golf Fitness** once again was tops in participation at 63 percent reporting they had gone through the program.

### Golf Instructor Certification Program Ratings

Certification Program	% of PG members certified	Additional % of PG members likely to become certified	% of certified who said it significantly added to their skill set	% of certified who said "it somewhat or strongly enhanced" their reputation	% of Certified who said "it was a good or outstanding value"
TPI Certified Golf Fitness Instructor Program	63	9	74	84	72
U.S. Kids Golf Certified Instructor Program	44	15	59	79	86
TrackMan University	31	28	93	91	91
Swing Catalyst	27	13	41	50	90
Eyeline Golf 4 Putting Elements	22	16	42	45	94
Aimpoint Technologies	18	24	81	81	89
Bioswing Dynamics	18	21	68	68	75
K-Vest	18	15	81	89	96
SAM PuttLab Online Certification	18	21	63	74	63
Vision54 Coaching Program	14	32	100	100	100
Biomechanics of Golf (Dr. Mike Duffey)	10	11	31	33	60
The Golfing Machine	9	6	57	57	64
The Plane Truth Golf Instruction	9	7	93	86	86
GolfPsych (Dr. Deborah Graham/John Stabler)	6	9	100	44	100
Operation 36 Junior Coach	6	21	50	78	90
SPI SeeMore Putters Institute	6	1	44	56	100
Forces and Motion (MacKenzie and Cheetham)	5	30	38	38	88
Lynn Blake Certified Instructor Training	5	5	38	25	50
Stack & Tilt Authorized Instructor Program	5	5	100	100	100
Lowest Score Wins (David Wedzik)	4	10	100	83	100
New Rules Golf Coach Program (Charlie King)	4	6	50	33	83
Fluid Motion (Steve Yellin)	3	9	100	50	100
Impact Zone Certification Program	3	3	40	60	100
Little Golf T.R.A.I.N. (Weller and Dr. Donnelly)	3	11	100	100	100
Wright Balance (Dr. David Wright)	3	10	100	100	100
Katherine Roberts Yoga for Golfers	2	7	33	67	67
Extraordinary Coaching (Fred Shoemaker)	1	14	N/A	N/A	N/A
Spirit of Golf/Peak Performance Mind Coaching	1	7	N/A	N/A	N/A
Tathata Golf Certification	1	11	N/A	N/A	N/A
The Putt Doctor (Dr. Craig Farnsworth)	1	16	N/A	N/A	N/A

NOTES: RED indicates more than 90 percent positive responses. N/A indicates not enough data.

Source: Proponent Group Survey May 2017

## 'LEAN 18' BRAND LAUNCHED BY JEFF AND CATE RITTER

A landmark report recently issued by the non-profit Global Wellness Institute showed the full extent of consumer demand for wellness services and products.

Entrepreneurs with strong backgrounds in health and well-being have taken note, stepping up to fill niches in this \$3.4 trillion industry. One such expert is Cate Ritter, wife of Proponent Group member Jeff Ritter and a specialist in the emerging field of Functional Diagnostic Nutrition.

Cate and Jeff have together completed a golf-specific nutrition-and-wellness project branded as LEAN 18 and they are reaching out to Proponent members who may wish to become involved. The core of the initiative, currently, is a LEAN 18 ebook and nutrition program. The book runs some 150 pages and is designed as a comprehensive resource for anyone desiring a healthier, happier lifestyle on or off the course.

Although produced under the umbrella of Jeff's proprietary MAKE THE TURN golf brand, this new book carries minimal identification with MTT. "We're looking at this as a viable brand unto itself that anyone can leverage with their audience," says Jeff.

So, if a Proponent member wanted to align himself or herself with the message and content of LEAN 18, they could set up a button on their own website with a "learn more" description plus the opportunity to purchase a digital copy. Most likely, on the purchase option, a golfer would click through to an e-commerce-enabled page on either Make the Turn's website or on catesnutrition.com, the Internet home base for Cate's activities.



Cate Ritter



GO LOW, GET LEAN! HEALTH & WEIGHT LOSS SOLUTIONS.



BY CATE RITTER, FUNCTIONAL DIAGNOSTIC NUTRITION® PRACTITIONER

"Since the book is the first impression for whatever LEAN 18 becomes in the future, we wanted to make it both substantive and upbeat," explains Cate. "I tried to write it in a voice that didn't sound like typical 'nutrition-nerd' advice-giving." In its format the e-book is extremely easy to browse through, equal parts bright photography and sharply written text. And as a "lifestyle extension" to the guidance teaching professionals provide their golfers, you could hardly do better than this debut from LEAN 18. Email [cate@catesnutrition.com](mailto:cate@catesnutrition.com) for more information. – David Gould

## 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 10 years. Check out the top speakers in the industry sharing their insights to help you improve.

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

- 1.) **Dr. Rick Jensen** - The New Coaching Model
- 2.) **Mike Malaska** - The Invisible Swing
- 3.) **Lorin Anderson** - Associate Members Career Growth Meeting
- 4.) **Brendan Ryan** - How to Structure Effective Practice
- 5.) **Iain Highfield** - Incorporating Mental Game Techniques in Practice for Your Students
- 6.) **Mark Sheftic** - Teaching with Boditrack
- 7.) **Nick Clearwater** - The SwingTRU Motion Study: How Big Data is Improving Golf Instruction
- 8.) **Will Robins** - The 5 Hurdles to Overcome When Transitioning to a Results-Based Coaching Model
- 9.) **Mike Malizia** - Teaching Today: Are You Prepared to be Your Best Coach?
- 10.) **Cameron McCormick** - The Journey to High Performance

# PROPONENT GROUP 10th ANNIVERSARY SUMMIT



## *Celebrating Career Success for Teachers*

November 5-7, 2017 (Sunday - Tuesday)  
Heathrow Country Club  
Lake Mary, Florida

*Join us for our biggest Summit yet in our 10th year of showcasing what's coming next in golf instruction and highlighting fresh opportunities to grow your teaching business.*



Martin Hall



Cameron McCormick



Lynn Marriott



Pia Nilsson



Mike Bender



Michael Whan

Join us in Orlando to:

- Get answers to your teaching and business questions from our 10th Anniversary Super Panel of Mike Bender, Martin Hall, Lynn Marriott, Cameron McCormick and Pia Nilsson.
- Discover the amazing power of a well-designed website.
- Gain insight into where the game is heading from LPGA Commissioner Michael Whan.
- Learn how to increase revenues with smarter upsells.
- Check out the latest teaching technologies at Demo Day and expand your network of peers.

*Registration is Now Open. Log In and Click on Summit Registration.*

## OUR 2017 SUMMIT PARTNERS



# PROPONENT GROUP 10th ANNIVERSARY SUMMIT



November 5-7, 2017

Heathrow Country Club, Orlando, FL

## SUMMIT DETAILS

**Host Site:** Heathrow Country Club is one of the finest golf facilities in Central Florida, with a sister property less than a mile away at The Legacy Club. Both are conveniently located 45 minutes from Orlando International Airport.

**PGA/LPGA Education Credits:** Agenda will be submitted to the PGA and LPGA for continuing education for association members. Approximately 13 hours of education will be included in the summit.

**Lodging:** A special Summit rate is available at Hyatt Place Lake Mary/Orlando North for only \$109 per night SINGLE OR DOUBLE occupancy. Contact the hotel directly at 407-995-5555. We also have a room block at the Courtyard Marriott Orlando Lake Mary/North for \$99 per night. Please contact the hotel directly at 407-444-1000. Our room block will likely sell out as it has in past years, so book your room early.

**Cost:** Our "Early Bird" package includes all meals, all education sessions and participant gifts for only \$475 for our Full and International members. Associate members are encouraged to attend for \$525.

Optional golf Sunday afternoon at the Tom Fazio-designed Legacy Club is an additional \$50 (tee times are limited and will be filled first-come, first-served). **NOTE: All Summit rates increase \$50 after August 31.**

**Registration:** Login to [www.proponent-group.com](http://www.proponent-group.com) and at the top of the Members Only menu on the left-hand side of the page you will find the Summit Registration link.

## THE AGENDA

### Sunday, November 5

- 1pm Optional Golf at Legacy Club Fazio Course
- 2-4:30pm Associate Members-Only Session: Making Smart Career Decisions (Speakers To Be Announced)
- 6:30-9:00pm Welcome Dinner at Heathrow Country Club After dinner Fireside Chat with LPGA Commissioner **Michael Whan**

### Monday, November 6th

- 7am Breakfast
- 8am Trends That Will Affect Your Career (**Lorin Anderson**)
- 9am To Be Announced
- 10:30am Break
- 11am Super Panel Round Table (**Mike Bender, Martin Hall, Lynn Marriott, Cameron McCormick and Pia Nilsson**)
- 12:30 Lunch
- 1:30-3:30pm Super Panel Outdoor Session (**Mike Bender, Martin Hall, Lynn Marriott, Cameron McCormick and Pia Nilsson**)
- 3:30pm Teaching Technology and Training Aids Demo Day
- 6pm Cocktails and Dinner at Heathrow

### Tuesday, November 7th

- 7am Breakfast
- 8am The Amazing Power of a Well-Designed Website (To Be Announced) Secrets to Upselling Your Services (**Brian Jacobs**)
- 9am Break
- 10am To Be Announced
- 10:30 Lunch
- 11:30 To Be Announced
- 12:30 To Be Announced

**Registration is Open. Log In and Click on Summit Registration.**



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# CTA'S ARE VERY SMART BUSINESS



By **Lorin Anderson**, President

A “CTA” is marketing speak for a Call to Action, and it is an amazingly effective tool for growing your business. But, as we’ve discovered while studying the coaches who teach at Golf Channel Academy locations, many teachers don’t use CTAs as effectively as they should. This is truly Marketing 101, golf instructors can be more than a bit timid

about asking for someone’s business.

Every outbound communication you create—in the club newsletter, in an email blast, on your website, in a social media post or as a YouTube video—should include a specific call to action. Too often a post will show a tip or a comment about something going on in the game, but it won’t tie directly back to a specific instruction program or related purchase.

A good example: One of our members recently wrote a book and on social media he was posting about ideas and themes the book covers. Unfortunately his post didn’t include a call to purchase the book. I would suggest that every one of his posts for the first 90 days the book is available should conclude with: “For more information on this topic check out my new book...” and conclude with a direct link to wherever the book could be purchased. A similar prompt should also be part of his email signature—again with a live link.

It is even better if the CTA includes some added value or a bonus for acting on it in real time. This might include a “free driver fitting” if you sign up by a specific deadline for the next demo day. Or, “the first five people to sign up for Saturday’s bunker clinic get a 25 percent discount on their next sand wedge purchase.” Or, “refer a friend to our annual three-day

golf school before June 1 and you both get a free golf shirt.” It can be just about any offer you choose, but **ALWAYS MAKE AN OFFER** because well-crafted CTAs are proven to get customers to act more often and more expeditiously.

The CTA is your final instruction to your reader when you are providing them with information about the game or about your teaching business. In the digital world we all live in today, your CTA is asking for a click to book. No matter how creative you get, it still boils down to this one request.

On the way to getting that click-through, there are three elements nearly all highly successful CTAs include:

1.) A no-obligation statement that removes or reduces risk. In many cases, CTAs ask for a free trial rather than a purchase. In other words, “try us, you’ll like us.” This gives people the confidence to buy.

2.) Tell people what to do next. Successful CTAs all contain some version of “Click the button.”

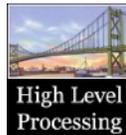
3.) Encourage an immediate response. That’s standard marketing. Don’t give people an option to wait and think about it for too long. Create some urgency to act.

CTAs only work when the golfer can easily follow through. Give them a simple way to sign up for the offer. A website landing page that is reachable in one click and contains more information plus a “Book Now” button are vital to maximizing sales. Too often this critical step is left out when creating the offer. Make sure you provide an easy path to complete the sale.

Be sure to tie your content and message to the value you’ll create for the golfer if they follow through on your CTA.

The formula is simple—for all promotional efforts: Put a compelling message in front of the right people at the right time, encourage action and make the booking or purchase process seamless. When you do this you will see your business grow. **PG**

## PROONENT GROUP PARTNERS



# THE GOLF COACH SELF-MARKETS, JUST BY ENGAGING WITH GOLFERS

By **Ian James**,  
RetailTribe CEO

It was 5 p.m. on a Friday evening in April and we were at a range where we had helped the director of golf design and promote a fun event. All 72 hitting bays were occupied by golfers taking aim at their targets. There were even players watching as they waited their turns. At the end of the event, members of the facility's management team were in high-five mode, saying again and again what a great success it had been.

I stood there with a question: *How many leads had this event generated, either for membership or participation in coaching programs?*

A couple of months earlier I was hosting a revenue workshop with an ownership group. One of the head professionals in attendance proudly told of a twice-monthly event he had run for women golfers—members as well as their guests—the previous season. It was full every time. The women had a blast each time. The event has been a big winner and it would be again this year.

I posed the question: *How many leads had this event generated, either for membership or participation in coaching programs?*

You likely know the response I got, in both cases. It wasn't simply that the answer was zero, it was the fact that there wasn't even a process by which to engage any of the event participants, to encourage them to ask about membership and/or coaching. When challenged, both professionals said they "generally wait to be asked" about membership and coaching. Well, OK—but how are they creating the opportunity for people to step up and do the asking?

I used to visit Jonathan's Landing, down in Jupiter, Fla., quite often. The head professional at the time was Fred Harkness, and he was very easy to find. If Fred wasn't in a meeting or on the golf course, he was over at the range, walking



**Are your conversations with golfers leading to further instruction program bookings and new membership sales? Are you having enough of these conversations?**

the tee line. That simple act used to be seen as a critical part of a professional's or a golf coach's activity. Face-to-face time was of paramount importance to Fred's success, in his view. He used every encounter *to learn more about the golfer he was talking to*. The goal was to discover what was holding them back or what opportunity for growth they might display. In those conversations there were opportunities for a lot of "asking," by the people Fred spent time with.

Imagine how much opportunity there was to walk the line with 72 bays occupied! Think about the opportunity to engage with 36 relatively inexperienced women golfers every fortnight.

At RetailTribe, we market an online, digital customer-engagement solution. We're good at it, but, much more powerful than any web page we might design, or social post we may dream up, is the face-to-face engagement between a golf

*(continued on next page)*

**"...there wasn't even a process by which to engage any of the event participants, to encourage them to ask about membership and/or coaching."**



Likes, Hearts and Thumbs Up are great, but how you do measure the number of consumers who “trust” you.

professional and a golfer. In fact, the unseen component of our solution is our library of “physical-engagement events,” along with the portfolio of promotion assets we have. Whether it’s a “Splash for Cash,” a

“Chip 4 Charity,” a “Par 3 Shoot-out” or what have you, we know that if we can put a real, live expert golf coach next to a golfer discovering a new opportunity, then it’s much, much easier to convert that golfer into a customer / student.

Brian Thelan of Seabrook Island on the South Carolina coast is a fairly new client of ours. Brian this year bested his Season Opening Equipment Bonanza revenue by 300 percent over previous years. One of his colleagues at another golf course wanted to know how RetailTribe had helped him do that—he asked for our number and called us. We were honest: Brian had done it. He scheduled, promoted, and ran the warm-up engagement events. He and his team engaged with golfers and demonstrated the value they could deliver. The PGA professional who was researching Brian’s success came to the conclusion that what Brian had done was “a lot of work for not very much” (!!!).

I suppose business success, like beauty, is in the eye of the beholder. Working with golf coaches who are employed by a company with three ranges in its portfolio, we walked the coaches through a plan of activities they could run over the ensuing three months to create new students for their programs. To paraphrase the response of this dozen or more golf coaches: “It’s not our job to market,” they said. “We coach. Management creates the customers.”

Working with a very large golf facility on the West Coast, I was shocked at how little pay the golf coaches earned. Yet, the response was, they didn’t want to embrace the marketing responsibility—they just wanted to coach.

This is a lose-lose situation for everyone. For the instructors, it means being trapped in a job where your earnings are restricted. Where, frankly, you’re not valued highly enough. Where your job tenure is fragile. For the golf facility, it means impacting far fewer golfers than they could. It probably means fewer golfers, playing fewer rounds.

Physical, face-to-face marketing by an expert is the most efficient form of marketing you will find in our industry. Imagine you wanted to get eight students into a short-game coaching program. How many emails would you have to blast out to get those eight people booked? Meanwhile if you ran, alongside your Saturday morning play, a Chip 4 Charity event, and engaged with 50 percent of the field individually for just five minutes, how many could you convert into a short-game coaching program?

### There are so many stories of win-win success

Bill Harvey, a golf coach from New Mexico, tells a wonderful story. He was trying to explain to the mother of one of his junior golfers that he was having trouble finding enough juniors to justify running another camp. Not to have her child denied the



For every hour you spend working, 6-10 minutes should be on active, face-to-face marketing.

opportunity for more game-improvement, the woman swung into action. “She took me by the hand to the swimming pool,” says Bill, “and one by one we chatted with each parent. We left 60 minutes later with a full roster of players for our camp.”

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Matt Clay, at Del Mar Golf Center in California, has built a large junior program by creating engagement activity with school principals, athletic-department staff and board members. I am betting that within Proponent Group there are literally hundreds, possibly thousands, of these stories of win-win success.

In all of these stories you will discover that one key facet of face-to-face marketing is its capacity for creating a relationship and establishing trust. Think about your online marketing as a sort of match.com. Use it as a chance to create that all-important first date—a trip to a local tavern where a safe drink can be shared, while both parties ponder whether this is a relationship worth cultivating.

Using online marketing to promote participation in a Chip 4 Charity event, with a golfer who is right there on-property, is the equivalent of that safe drink at the bar. It's five minutes of engagement with a golfer, in which you can demonstrate that you care about them personally, that you're an OK person and that

you know what you're talking about. Most importantly it is an opportunity to create a deeper relationship and to establish one-on-one trust.

For the golfer, it's not trust that you know about a golf swing. It's not trust that you can hit great golf shots, or even that you can explain how to play a golf shot. *It's trust that they can do something better and enjoy themselves, as a result of their engagement with you.* Then it's a trust that you can hear them and their requirements, fears, needs. It's trust that you really care.

Yes, you have the Internet, but you still need those "first dates." Every golf coach needs to be continually building and developing new relationships with golfers every week. At least 10 percent of the hours in any week should involve match.com-type dates, where the coach and the golfers meet—it's all the same except the cocktail is replaced by a golf club and ball.

Follow this concept and wow, does your marketing then come alive. **PG**

## It Works! (Value of the Teacher—Proven)

At the most recent Proponent Summit I highlighted the need for coaches to understand the financial impact on your facility's business. I asked if you knew how much a golfer was worth to your facility and if you knew how many you'd acquired or retained for your facility. I emphasized that this was critical to your future.

Etienne Olivier isn't a member of Proponent or a customer of RetailTribe but he has attended one of our Revenue Workshops, wherein we explore the same questions. Etienne runs an academy at a prestigious golf club in a gated community.

Last week he called me to describe a recent experience. He had received notice from the "community management board" that his rent was being doubled, effective May 1. He asked for a meeting with the board and at that meeting:



Etienne Olivier  
EOGA's Managing Director

a) With a flip-chart he asked them to calculate the average value of a new member to their club, using the calculation I had shared in my presentation;

b) Having established the value of a single golfer (a much bigger number than they had ever appreciated) he then listed each golfer he had introduced to the club through his academy in the previous 12 months;

c) He then multiplied that number of golfers by the value per-golfer, to showcase the value his academy, at a minimum, had delivered to the golf club.

**The result:** *Rental increase withdrawn, and the general manager instructed to work more closely with Etienne on new-golfer acquisition and current-golfer retention.* I wish you a fine start to your season, and every success.

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## WHY QUIT WHEN YOU'RE HAVING A GOOD TIME?

# PEERING TOWARD RETIREMENT, TEACHING PROS SEEM WELL-POSITIONED

By David Gould  
Staff Editor

Mark Twain famously offered this advice about choosing a field to enter: "Find a job you enjoy and you'll never have to work a day in your life."

Hard to argue with Twain's logic, but it does raise a question about that point in time somewhere beyond age 60 when people are expected to begin retirement. A *Time* magazine article from earlier this year presented research on Americans who continue to work past age 65. It stated that "the age at which workers decide to retire varies widely across different professions," and then theorized as to why.

Included in *Time's* coverage was a list of 50 jobs, ranked in order based on the extent to which older workers remained in them. On that list, "Teachers and Instructors" came in 30th—with 5.8 percent of their ranks composed of wage-earners 66 and up. This was among 250 occupations and professions the study looked at.

At the very top of that list, oddly enough, you'll find the tax-prep profession—people over 65 represent 14.2 percent of all active tax preparers in the U.S. Next come ministers, priests, rabbis and the like—those who are post-retirement-age and still working represent 13.6 percent of all clergy. Standing at No. 3 on the list were farmers and ranchers, at 12.7 percent.

Those percentages are a bit misleading to the low side, because if you glom together all U.S. workers in all occupational categories, it turns out that nearly 30 percent will keep working, for at least a while, past age



65. This is according to data from the Life Insurance Management Research Association (LIMRA), which further notes that about half of all workers get out early, retiring between ages 61 and 65—with another 18 percent calling it quits before age 61.

Studying *Time's* top-50 list, one notices certain patterns. The jobs people stay with into their later 60s and 70s tends to involve work that:

- physically is not highly demanding
- pays well or reasonably well
- can be performed outside the corporate structure
- is performed more effectively thanks to long years of experience
- is based on a significant trust factor between provider and client

People whose work generally fits the above description, and who rank high on the top-50 list, include real estate brokers, psychologists, physicians, dentists, property managers, attorneys and writers.

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**Mark Twain famously offered this advice about choosing a field to enter: "Find a job you enjoy, and you'll never have to work a day in your life."**

As most Proponent members would agree, “teachers and instructors” also enjoy work circumstances in accord with the bullet list above.

And if you think about a 70-year-old tax preparer and a 70-year-old golf instructor, these are service providers whose clients of long standing really don’t want to go see someone else—there’s too much history and personal interaction built up over the years. At the same time, each can carve out increasingly larger amounts of leisure time by opting not to take on new customers, or by taking them on very selectively.

“A golf instructor like Harvey Penick or Tommy Armour probably could not have stopped teaching completely even if they tried,” suggests Proponent Group member Jim Endicott, whose later-life agenda appears likely to keep him actively teaching. Now in his mid-50s, the Florida-based Proponent member pictures a “15- to 20-year work phase ahead of me, with the emphasis on teaching.” His current independent-contractor position is director of instruction at the Royal St. Cloud Academy of Golf, south of Orlando.

Interestingly, Jim’s career includes a temporary but quite lengthy hiatus from the golf business, following long service directing and teaching at golf schools for both John Jacobs and Golf Digest. “I came in off the road, basically, and took a partnership in a real estate sales and property management company,” says Endicott. “It gave me a chance to coach my kids in Little League and be with my family.” He continued with the real estate firm for a span of years, then sold his interest in that and bought a

**There's a big difference between needing to work and choosing to work—what most people seek is to reach a point in life where they could quit if they wanted to.**

landscaping company, which for several years he operated successfully though without a great amount of enjoyment.

The Little League coaching experience was in some ways the basis for Endicott’s current coaching position with the St. Cloud High School golf teams. He enjoys his work with the high schoolers immensely, meanwhile he’s in demand for private lessons and is figuring out how to balance

the two responsibilities. One’s spouse is always pivotal in deliberations about the “golden years” and how they’re spent—Endicott’s wife is in a classic post-child-rearing phase where she’s working toward a certificate to teach school.

That would make two income streams, an appropriate scenario given that full-on retirement for the couple is not yet fully funded. Meanwhile for Endicott what he’s doing now doesn’t really seem like work. “Guys who are friends of mine and a little older have either packed it in or are getting ready to,” says Endicott. “They say to me, ‘You’re really going back to teaching golf?’ I can tell they’re a little envious.”

Another Proponent member with long years of experience, Matt Kluck, has taken the reins of a school golf program—Kluck is coach of the men’s and women’s teams at Washington & Jefferson College, south of Pittsburgh. “When I went to work for the college I was thinking this might be my ‘retirement job,’” says Kluck—who, like Endicott, went through a segment of his career when he traveled extensively, working the golf-school circuit as a guest instructor. “But not long after I took it my private coaching practice got busier, so I’m pursuing both.”

During any period when the travel demands ebbed his entrepreneurial instincts would kick in, leading Kluck into book-writing and product-design—at one point he held several patents for his designs. “I’ve diversified within this field, and that’s led to multiple income streams, which I always put a high value on,” says Matt. “At the same time, I have to be honest that guys my age got into this business at the right time. Golf instruction really took off in the late 1980s and ‘90s—I’ve said many a quiet thank-you to David Leadbetter and those other marquee teachers.”

*(continued on next page)*



Now age 60, he works out, stays in shape and feels he's still learning the subtle nuances of his craft. Since 2007 he's been an independent contractor—that's a true advantage at most points in a career, but particularly in the later stages, because of the flexibility that comes with it.

"As long as I can stand up I'll teach," says Kluck. "I've never taught on a Sunday in my life, but the other six days I would teach 10 or 12 hours and not mind it." That said, he's toned down the endurance test of late. "Now I'll do two half-days in a row, then three full days, with a makeup day to follow, if it's needed," he says. "I charge \$150 an hour—the pay got better for teaching golf and I got better at doing it—it's turned out to be a nice combination."

Still in his late 40s, Proponent member Mike Malizia doesn't see the day when he won't want to be working with students.

"I'll always teach," Malizia predicts. "When I get older I'll probably slow down, but I may not even do that." In conversations with Butch Harmon at PGA Tour stops, Malizia would often hear Harmon declare that once he hit 65 he would drop out of sight. "Butch is now closer to 75 and he's still at it—that's what happens when you're

## The Lowdown on Social Security, if You Work Well into Your 60s

*Most Americans begin collecting Social Security before their full retirement age, which is 66 for many and rises to 67 for those born after 1960. In 2014, 57 percent of men and 64 percent of women took that benefit early—age 62 is the earliest you can do so. (Starting to collect early results in a lower per-annum dollar amount, though it adds to the number of years a retiree receives checks, thus tending to cause an equal total benefit between people starting early and those who wait).*

*It's often depicted as a big sacrifice to keep earning income once you put in for Social Security benefits, but that may be overstated. In the first place, the absolute maximum number of years you can face this conundrum is four, because once a person reaches full retirement age they can earn as much money as they like and still receive their full Social Security benefit. So, if your teaching practice is humming along, there really isn't a good reason to put in for Social Security much before you're 66 (or 67, depending on year of birth).*

*But if you do start collecting, the first \$17,000 or so of teaching income is allowed with no penalty. After that, the government deducts \$1 from your benefit payments for every \$2 you earn above that \$17,000 annual limit. So, if your income is \$45,000, your penalty will be \$28,000 divided by two, or \$14,000. For people with decades of strong earnings that would still result in \$5,000 or more of benefit money, added on top of your earned income. — D.G.*

passionate about what you do, which every effective coach has to be." It's Malizia's belief—and this fits with human nature—that what people really want is to reach a point in their careers where they could quit if they wanted to. Armed with that peace of mind, motivation can be even easier to find.

As part of the research for this article, the entire database of people who've ever been Proponent Group members was studied, so as to estimate how many resigned their memberships due to retirement. During Proponent's 10 years of existence, a few hundred instructors have left the membership for various reasons. "Among those who have dropped off over the years," says company president Lorin Anderson, "I can think of less than a handful who fully retired from teaching and weren't leaving for

health reasons."

In his 1951 farewell speech to Congress, General Douglas MacArthur said "old soldiers never die, they just fade away." In comparison to old soldiers, veteran golf instructors don't even fade away—they keep doing what they love to do. **PG**

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# ALISON CURDT

WOOD RANCH GOLF CLUB, SIMI VALLEY, CA

INTERVIEW BY PAUL RAMEE, JR

Several decades ago, professionals seeking new ways to improve golf performance started to look beyond physical movement alone. Their term for this new direction in training became, unfortunately, “the mental game.” In some ways this was progress, but it represented a false completion of the scope of study.

Think about it: When a person’s condition or behavior is examined in ways that transcend the body, the “mind” as we tend to define it is only part of what’s left to look at—the human psyche in all its complexities must also be accounted for.

Every childhood exposes an individual to experiences, negative and positive, that get recorded and stored. Their imprint remains and is carried forward into adulthood, with the result that past experiences—and the feelings that go with them—can become triggered by present-day situations.

Proponent Group member Alison Curdt, a Class A LPGA member and a PGA Master Professional in Instruction—also a doctoral candidate in psychology at California Southern University, with an emphasis in sports psychology—has designed a golf coaching practice that examines and works with the whole human being in ways nobody else seems to do.

A practicing psychotherapist in the state of California, she see clients in her office at Curdt Performance Therapy and she sees them on the

lesson tee at Wood Ranch Golf Club in Simi Valley. If you’re one of Curdt’s students, you can avail yourself of “Off-Site Mental Sessions” at her therapy studio in Woodland Hills one week and the next week meet her at the Wood Ranch practice range—with clubs and balls and launch monitors and all that good stuff.

“Issues such as depression, performance anxiety, ‘choking’ during a performance, and mindfulness focus are just a few of the aspects Alison has helped her athlete-clients with,” explains the Curdt Performance Therapy website.

When the LPGA bestowed on Curdt its 2015 National Teacher of the Year award, it may have had some inkling of her breakthrough work in the inner psychic life, or indeed the award may have been based strictly on the excellent results she achieves.

Either way, the frontier this Missouri-bred professional has crossed raises the stakes on beyond-the-mechanics coaching. For nearly a century, it’s been understood that all experience of self-scolding, shame and self-chastisement—ultra-



**Curdt appeared with Michael Breed on Golf Channel during the 2015 KPMG Womens PGA Championship, which she qualified to compete in.**





**Curdt's training as a licensed Clinical Psychotherapist provides her with an array of tools to assist students with emotional issues that may interfere with their best golf.**

-common among golfers—flows directly from the Freudian super-ego, one of three centers (with the ego and the id) of all human psychological experience. Calling this “bad self-talk” and offering quick tips on how to counter it, without even glancing at its psychic origins based on early experience, is incomplete science to put it mildly.

Working in a sport that attracts affluent participants, instructors like Alison end up encountering that rare and seemingly inscrutable breed—people who have everything that money can buy yet are unhappy, often deeply so. Her university training in psychology, her intuitive nature and her unusual form of curiosity regarding cause-effect make her just the right teacher for that environment. Curdt has given many a golf lesson in which the student would confide and confess uncloaked truths of their inner emotional lives—panic, seething anger, numbness, phobias and the like. These are stimuli that obviously would hobble anyone's attempt to focus on swing mechanics or their ability to accept less-than-desirable results on the course.

As we find in this dialogue between Alison and Paul Ramee, Curdt's own personal experience has been marked by some minor and not-so-minor personal trauma since she left Florida State University, where she was a mainstay of the woman's golf team for four years. Or you could put it this way: Stuff happened to her that, through her training and sheer openness to the reality of emotional experience, she recognized as true psychic ordeal—that alone indicates a rare capacity for understanding the human journey.

### **Take us back to the beginning, and your early involvement in golf.**

I grew up in St. Louis in the 1980s, with a brother who was two years older. When he was nine and I was seven, my brother was able to start participating in organized sports, which made me jealous. He got to play on all these teams and have all this fun and I couldn't. My father made it up to me by sneaking me out to play golf (you were supposed to be at least eight to go on the course). He got me a couple of clubs and I absolutely loved it.

### **With golf, there's nothing like getting an early start.**

It does help, and as I got older I got more and more involved in playing and competing. I was able to play in some city tournaments and junior events. Eventually I made it to the NCAA Division 1 level, at Florida State University. My ultimate goal was to play professionally but I was also very serious about my academics and my PGM training. I completed a double major in Psychology and the Professional Golf Management program.

### **What came next, after graduation?**

I went to work in California, at Westin Mission Hills Resort and Spa in the desert, where I had previously interned. Then in 2006, a couple years out of school, I had a life-changing experience. The house I was living in burned down and I lost everything. I literally had no possessions. That's a traumatic thing to undergo and it left me with no idea what to do. I decided to give up golf and move back to St. Louis.



**Curdt knew quickly that playing and teaching were her passion and that she would focus on building her own unique instruction brand.**

**We know now that your decision wasn't permanent.**

Well, right. It wasn't. After a couple of months in St. Louis, I wanted to get back involved, so I secured a teaching position at a GolfTEC in El Segundo, Calif. and moved back to the West Coast. Then I was recruited by Sherwood Country Club, in Thousand Oaks. My title was Head Teaching Professional and First Assistant.

**So, a mix of teaching plus regular golf operations?**

Right, and that works for a lot of people, but it just isn't right for me. It became very clear that I was happiest when I was helping people directly with their golf games. Meanwhile, when I was working on the day-to-day golf operation I was unhappy. It affected my mental well-being and even my physical health.

**Interesting. What advice would you have to people who are doing something that truly does not make them happy?**

First, I think it requires a high level of self-awareness in a person and I understand that not everyone is in a position in their life to make a big change in their career. Some have the obligations of supporting a family or need the assurances associated with being an employee. But I could see, in myself, that unhappiness and frustration was affecting my body language, my communications with people and my performance.

**Was there a tipping-point event—something that pushed you over the edge?**

I came to the end of the 2013 season and took stock of things. I was to the point where I was unhappy with the day-to-day operations and responsibilities and knew that I had no upward mobility at the club due to being a female. With being stagnant in my position and feeling antsy to move forward in my career I decided to make some changes. So in 2014 I left the traditional life of a golf professional and started Alison Curdt Golf, and since then I've been out on my own.

**How did you come upon the clinical-psychology segment of what you do?**

I am a licensed Marriage and Family Therapist in California with over 3,000 hours of training and client contact. I created Curdt Performance Therapy and obviously my ideal demographic is athletes, but anyone who performs can be helped by my programs and I have the chance to work with some musicians and actors. I typically teach golf during the day and then have office hours in the late afternoon or evenings. It should come as no surprise that many athletes have anxiety/depression conditions that greatly affect their performance. My background helps me work with these athletes on a much deeper level.

**Do you leave the golf fundamentals on the range and the clinical approach to the office? Or do the two ever overlap?**



**Curdt was named the LPGA T&CP National Teacher of the Year in 2015. She has also made the Golf Digest list Best Young Instructors in America, and was recognized in 2016 as the Northern California PGA's Clubfitter of the Year.**

I use the clinical approach every day in my teaching and with 100 percent of my students. A big part of it is listening to who they are as a person and interpreting what they are saying. At any point in the process if I don't understand what's being shared, it's up to me to seek clarification. I use emotional techniques as well as basic therapeutic dialogue, and also breathing. One tool I use is EMDR, or Eye Movement Desensitization Reprocessing. This is a tool that is now commonly used to treat PTSD—people who have endured trauma and the resulting depression and anxiety.

#### **Does your particular clinical approach have a basic theoretical root, within psychology?**

For the most part my technique is based on a client-centered approach. It's a way of interpreting the whole spectrum of heightened feelings or energy, with an eye to how it gets triggered—what factors underlie the stimulus. We work through the issues and create ways to not trigger these arousals in the present-day forms that they take. For example, if a player had a coach in another sport growing up yell at him or her and tell them they were not good enough, they could have confidence issues and it could affect how they deal with pressure.

#### **What is next for you with respect to your future?**

I am playing in the KPMG Women's PGA Championship at the end of June, which I'm looking forward to. I've

done some public speaking and and I would love to do more. I'm scheduled to speak at the PGA Fashion and Demo Experience in Las Vegas later this year.

#### **Any thoughts of "franchising" what you do?**

There may be some logic to that—for example, right now I am the only PGA professional out there who is trained in EMDR—however, being in two places at once is difficult and right now the idea of training others seems like too big a distraction. It would take away from the time that I dedicate to practicing and playing. I value that very highly and I'm not ready to give that up.

#### **Anything fellow Proponent members could learn from how you have gone about branding yourself?**

I developed a logo and a website, basically. It was all new to me. The biggest ROI was based on word-of-mouth. In other words, giving good lessons and being patient. The first few months were slow. But I guess I developed some of those so-called "raving fans." A student would tell their friend about me and, sure enough, each month I gave a few more lessons, and it grew from there. I also went to a local newspaper and wrote some articles, and I gave some free clinics to a few women's associations, that sort of thing. I really believe you have to plant seeds in all areas of your life, water them and let them flourish. But then you can't rush the results, you have to be patient. **PG**

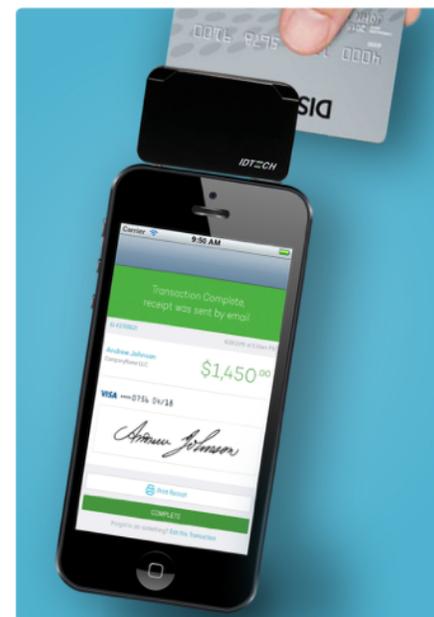
# WHY MONTHLY COACHING PROGRAMS ARE BECOMING THE NEW PARADIGM

Monthly coaching programs are becoming more popular with coaches and students. For coaches, they offer a steady stream of reliable revenue versus the traditional one-off private lessons. Coaching programs are offered in a variety of options: they may be individual private lessons or group lessons, available for both adults and juniors. One very popular option we are seeing more often is the combination of both clinics and private lessons.

Coaches set up their programs for students to attend multiple clinics a month (or even unlimited), and then have one or two private lessons each month. It's best to offer several different options to fit students' budgets and time commitments. Students really see the value because they are getting ongoing coaching, which is the most effective way to improve their game.

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# EVADING THE FINANCIAL CATASTROPHE OF LONG-TERM CARE COSTS

Imagine receiving a letter from the bank informing you that your house will be repossessed if you don't pay the balance of your mortgage within two and a half years. What would happen to your finances? Thank goodness this hypothetical is highly unlikely. However, there's a far more realistic scenario you could face that could lead to the same financial stress. The scenario will likely affect 70 percent of Proponent Group members at some point in their lives. And since fewer than 10 percent of Americans have planned for such a predicament, protecting against the massive financial fallout it can produce is one of the most important areas for our clients to consider when developing their financial game plans.

What comes to mind when you hear the phrase Long Term Care? Most picture a frail, half-lucid grandmother parked in front of TV reruns in a lonely hall of a nursing home. While that is certainly an example of a Long-Term Care ("LTC") scenario, it's the exception to the rule. Only 28 percent of LTC recipients live in a nursing home – and

**There's a far more realistic scenario you could face that could lead to the same financial stress. The scenario will likely affect 70 percent of Proponent Group members at some point in their lives.**

40 percent of those receiving LTC are under the age of 65. In other words, an LTC need can arise at any time to a healthy person who up until the occurrence of their accident or illness had been enjoying an active life.

So what exactly is Long Term Care?

The universal definition of LTC is a situation in which someone has a cognitive impairment or needs help with two of the six "activities of daily living," such as eating, dressing, or

getting out of bed. A cognitive impairment

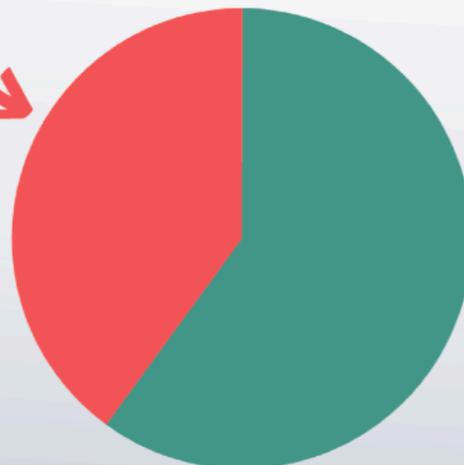
usually results from Alzheimer's, dementia or stroke. The CDC reports that the number of Americans living with cognitive impairment is equal to twice the population of New York City and continues to rise.

At the beginning of this article, you were asked to imagine the distress you'd experience if you had only two years and a half years to repay the balance of your mortgage debt. How and where would you find the hundreds of thousands of dollars required that quickly? And if you were in your later years, how would such an

*(continued on next page)*

**Long-term care**  
is not just for the elderly!

**40%**  
of those receiving  
LTC are between ages  
**18-64**



## How much could Long-Term Care cost?

TYPE	Annual Cost <sup>1</sup>	Duration	Total Cost
Home Health Aide	\$46,332	4.5 years	<b>\$208,494</b>
Adult Day Services	\$17,680	4.5 years	<b>\$79,560</b>
Assisted Living Communities	\$43,539	4.5 years	<b>\$195,925</b>
Nursing Home (semi-private room)	\$82,125	2.5 years	<b>\$205,312</b>
Nursing Home (private room)	\$92,378	2.5 years	<b>\$230,945</b>

Average cost of a home in 2016: **\$208,226<sup>2</sup>**

1. 2016, Genworth Cost of Care Survey, [genworth.com/about-us/industry-expertise/cost-of-care.html](http://genworth.com/about-us/industry-expertise/cost-of-care.html)  
 2. 2016, National Association of Realtors, [nar.realtor/research-and-statistics/housing-statistics](http://nar.realtor/research-and-statistics/housing-statistics)

enormous burden ravage your savings, peace of mind, and quality of life? If you or your loved one needs to utilize a nursing home, the average annual cost is \$92,378 and the average stay is 2.5 years. That's a total cost of around \$230,000. Half of Long Term Care recipients remain in the comfort of their home, which is half the cost of a nursing care facility. But when you factor in that home care averages two years longer than nursing care, the total is \$208,000 – which just so happens to be the cost of the average house in America. As you can see, Long Term Care is a huge threat to your retirement nest egg – one that must to be protected against.

### The Medicare Myth

The real crisis surrounding Long Term Care isn't necessarily the insurmountable cost of care as much as it is the widespread misunderstanding that Long Term Care costs are covered by Medicare. In reality, Medicare only provides limited benefits that apply to very specific situations. You now know that the duration of the average Long Term Care need is over two years. Medicare, however, only covers 100 days of care and only if the care begins immediately after a hospital stay of 3 days. As a result, Medicare only pays around 20 percent of the total amount of Americans' LTC expenses. And for many, it won't pay a dime – leaving many Americans on their own at the rock bottom of a mountain of debt.

**As a result, Medicare only pays around 20 percent of the total amount of Americans' LTC expenses. And for many, it won't pay a dime, leaving many Americans on their own.**

Others hope Medicaid will come to their rescue. Medicaid is a welfare program for the indigent. But to qualify for Medicaid, a family making a claim must be completely broke. While it varies by state, you typically only qualify for Medicaid if you have income at or below the poverty level and have assets of less than \$2,000. As you can guess, that often means selling the house, the furniture, the cars, family valuables, and depleting savings. We don't think any family should be subject to plundering their life just to receive the care they need.

So, if there's a 70 percent chance of needing Long Term Care, the average of which exceeds \$200,000 – and government programs don't cover you unless you're totally broke – why have less than 10 percent of Americans protected themselves from such a threat?

Answer: because while there's a 70 percent chance that you will need it, there's a 30 percent chance that you won't. It may sound like a foolish game of financial Russian roulette, but keep in mind, when people calculate spending tens of thousands over

the lifetime of a traditional Long Term Care policy they can't help but wonder, "what if I never need it and if I'm just throwing this money away?"

Or more likely, "what if I receive benefits but they're only for a fraction of what I paid in?" The outcome of this dilemma – this

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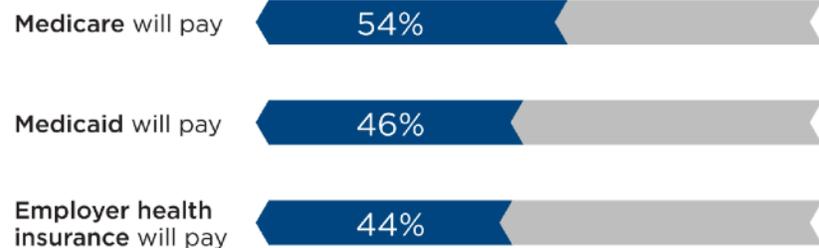
notion of “use it or lose it” – paralyzes people in making a decision and they end up foregoing LTC protection. Such a decision could expose a person to the full cost of care – which often requires the ransacking of retirement accounts and inheritance funds. Heartbreaking, yes, but the worst-case scenario can be even more devastating. It ends with a sufferer bereft of all assets and a ward of the state via the Medicaid program.

### The Solution

At WealthWave, we teach our clients to make shrewd decisions about their future and take advantage of products and strategies that allow them to properly plan for Long Term Care. The industry has developed intriguing new products that can protect against Long Term Care threats without the use of traditional Long Term Care insurance (which, in addition to the “use it or lose it” feature, also has other drawbacks). These new, alternate solutions provide true insurance protection against the threat of LTC but can also guarantee that your premium payments doesn't go to waste. In most cases, our clients are assured that their premium dollars will grow into a larger benefit which can be used as a Long Term Care solution or as a death benefit to their families (or a combination of the two). Other strategies allow clients to leverage their money in case they need LTC without the risk of losing money if they never need LTC.

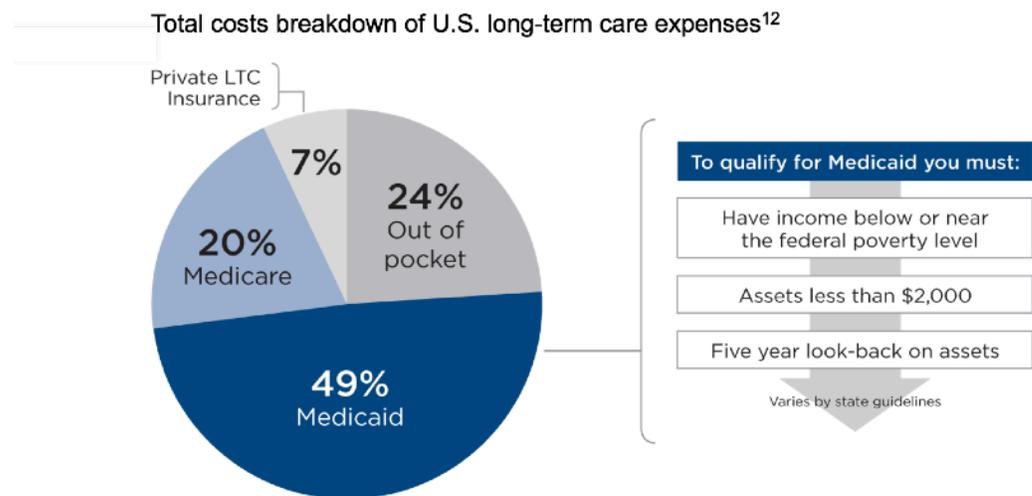
## How will you pay for long-term care? The MYTH

Percent of Americans who believe private and government insurance programs pay for long-term care expenses:



Source: AAHSA, American Association of Homes and Services for the Aging

## How LTC cost are paid for – The REALITY



<sup>12</sup> National Clearinghouse for Long-term Care Information.

### Special Considerations for Proponent Members

While everyone needs to properly plan for the threat of Long Term Care, Proponent members should pay special attention to this subject. Injuries play an increasing role in new LTC claims, evidenced by the fact that 40 percent of people receiving LTC are under the age of 65. In 2015, 19 percent of LTC claims resulted from injuries. So not only could LTC put a major dent in your retirement income, it could also lead to a significant disruption of your business income. We can help you protect your family and your business. **PG**



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## CURIOUS ABOUT MATT AND COREY'S BOOK?

# PROONENT EXCLUSIVE: A PEAK INSIDE "BETTER, FASTER"

Newly published—and certain to find a receptive audience of golfers and instructors—is *Better, Faster: The Modern Golfer's Blueprint for Getting More from Less.* The authors are Proponent Group members Corey Lundberg and Matt Wilson, with an assist from Golf Digest editor Matt Rudy.

It was probably destiny that this tandem would build on their online collaboration as the "Curious Coaches" to co-write a book distilling their carefully developed research and beliefs. The finished product, currently available in paperback format, is polished and punchy and enjoyable to read. The excerpt that follows comes from the first third of the book and will likely entice many a member to order their own copy of *Better, Faster.* You can do that by going to either [curiouscoaches.com](http://curiouscoaches.com) or [amazon.com](http://amazon.com).

So many golfers hit a good shot and have no idea what they need to do to reproduce it. When they hit a bad one, they don't know what went wrong. That's when paring down the difficulty and instability of tasks can be helpful. What skill are you actually trying to learn? Are you clear on what you need to do, and do you know when you're doing it right or wrong?

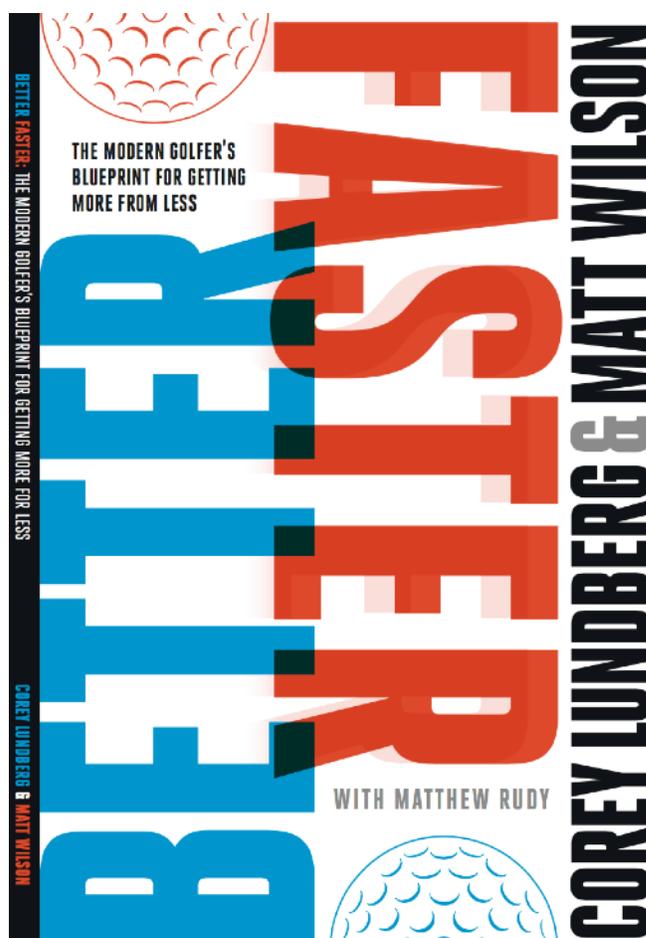
Here's a common example. Say you have a massive slice that shows up on the tee, and you have no idea how to fix it. For this, the first step is to clarify a concept. What about the club delivery is producing the miss? In this case, the face is pointing too far to the right of the path. This discrepancy between face and path is the concept the player needs to understand.

The way out is to experiment with different ways to produce an opposite result—a face that's closed to the path. This new swing might produce a pull hook at first, but the goal isn't to hit perfect shots. It's to concentrate on using one club from the same lie on the same shot and getting one sensation. The task is pretty easy, and the directive is simple and straightforward.

Once you gain that understanding of your big miss, you're on the way to self-diagnosing and self-coaching on the course. This is the first step—doing it on the range. Now it's time to add new levels of difficulty.

One essential piece of skill development often gets overlooked. So many golfers practice one way of performing a shot, but when they get to the course, they aren't ready to make the subtle changes to their

**Once you gain that understanding of your big miss, you're on the way to self-diagnosing and self-coaching on the course.**



technique required for the demands of a certain situation. Our students hear it from us a lot: If all you have is a hammer, everything looks like a nail.

The best players don't have one solution to use for an on-course situation. They have many.

Once you've developed the base version of a skill to an acceptable level, it's time to take it and use it for a variety of situations. For example, you might use the same short

game shot to attack a variety of different lies and hole locations, or use a variety of different shots to go at the same pin.

If you asked every golfer you know if confidence is an important element to their performance on the course, you would get a resounding and unanimous answer. Of course it is.

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If that's the case, why do so few golfers take action to develop this essential component? You work on your ball-striking skills, short game and putting. You should be spending equal time developing practice strategies designed specifically to improve your confidence on the course.

To do this with our students, we decrease the difficulty of a practice task while adding more instability to it.

For example, partial wedge shots can produce uncertainty because you're not comfortable with a specific distance. How much speed will you need to produce to hit a shot 63 yards instead of, say, 71? We lay out a set of cones in ten yard increments from 30 to 100 yards, and prescribe tasks designed to answer those questions. Our players walk up to those scoring shots on the course with the swagger and certainty that only come from practice aimed specifically at building belief.

Even if that's all you did—practicing to build that “I got this” attitude—you'd be better off than if you spent all your time grinding away on some specific mechanical element of your technique.

This is where skills get integrated into your on-course game. In traditional practice, you're doing the same things to solve the same problems over and over again. This can help you re-fine your technique, but it doesn't do much to get you ready for the course—where you get one chance to make the right decision and hit the best shot.

Instead of practicing the same solution over and over, we want you to practice finding the solutions. This means spreading balls out over different random lies and going through the process of picking shots and executing them just as you would on the course. The shots are hard and the environment is unstable, because we're working hard to transfer those skills into your real game.

Chapter 4 is filled with great challenges that will specifically help you do this. As you succeed through the different levels of these games, you'll be systematically building what we call a “performer psychology”—a mindset that has intense focus on processes and solutions, not just individual mechanics.

What happens at the end of this journey—when you've found a practice plan that clicks? You enter what the researchers in psychology call a state of flow. It's when you become so engrossed in what you're doing that you don't notice time clicking by. According to an extremely influential study by Dr. Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi for his book, “Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience,” athletes and other performers get into the flow state (or

the zone, as you've probably heard of it on sports TV) when they are able to focus on one thing and give their total attention to it. The task at hand is challenging enough to demand their full attention—not boring or so challenging that success would be almost unlikely.

To see this all happen in front of you, on a little stage, watch a teenager play a video game he or she is totally engrossed in.

The game makers are geniuses at producing the perfect challenge points and feedback loops for players—cycles that offer hard-but-not-impossible obstacles, instant feedback about how you're doing and progressive levels of difficulty. The games are designed to get a player hooked by the exact brain mechanisms designed to absorb new information. (For a fascinating look at how those games are made, and how they are changing the way we think, check out “Reality is Broken,” by Jane McGonigal.)

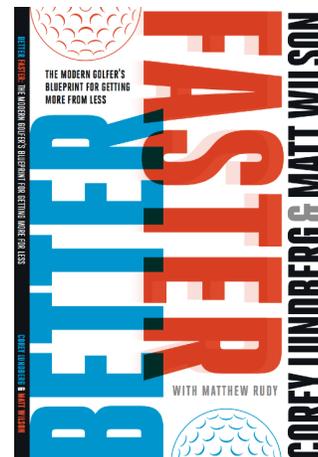
There really is a switch of sorts in our heads that engages us in “peak learning.” But it does come with an important condition that is almost impossible to trick or fake out. The task also has to matter. Apathy is worse than boredom. If you don't care about what you're doing, and it doesn't matter to you if you get better or not, you're not going to have the motivation and attitude it takes to get into that flow.

Need proof? Watch that same video game teenager who has no interest in golf get sent to a lesson against his or her will. We've seen it hundreds of times at our facilities. That's a mountain even the best teacher in history would have a hard time climbing. We're going to assume you're here because you want to be (you bought the book, after all!). And all of the research and observation of people

doing lots of other things besides golf is nice, but what does it look like when it's put in practice, for actual golfers? Does it actually work?

You're not getting some beta testing version of “Better, Faster.” The practice plans and strategies in this book have been fully developed from the programs we've put in place in Texas and California. They've produced Division I college players, tour golfers, club champions—and just plain old happy-to-be-five-shots-better players.

The proof is in the results. And now it's your turn. PG



**What happens at the end of this journey—when you've found a practice plan that clicks? You enter what the researchers in psychology call a state of flow. It's when you become so engrossed in what you're doing that you don't notice time clicking by.**

## WELCOME PROPONENT GROUP'S MAY NEW MEMBERS

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## GOLF INDUSTRY BY THE NUMBERS

Here are some fresh golf industry metrics you should be familiar with:

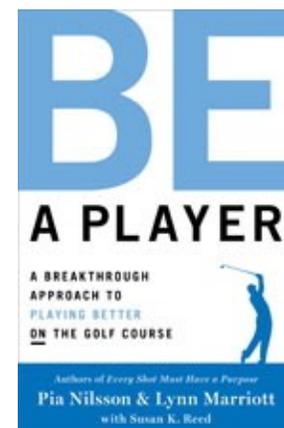
Junior golf increased participation in the U.S. by **600,000** since 2011. As reported by the Sports Fitness Industry

Association and the National Golf Foundation, this is the largest jump in total participation volume among all youth sports – including the major team sports of soccer, basketball, football and baseball.

There are an estimated **6.3 million** golfers between the ages of 18 and 34, who play an average of **14.7 rounds** per year (approximately 93 million rounds) and spend an estimated **\$5 billion** a year on equipment, merchandise and playing fees. *Source: National Golf Foundation.*

## MARRIOTT AND NILSSON PUBLISH FOURTH BOOK "BE A PLAYER"

Proponent Group members **Lynn Marriott** and **Pia Nilsson**, founders of the very popular VISION54 training programs and authors of the widely read *Every Shot Must Have a Purpose* are back with *Be a Player: A Breakthrough Approach to Playing Better on the Golf Course*. This book takes a focused look at what it takes to create the proper "performance state" when playing on the course and helps golfers and instructors become aware of – and better control – key elements including balance, tension and tempo. To order your copy visit [VISION54.com](http://VISION54.com) or [amazon.com](http://amazon.com).



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