

COLLADODATE PROPONENT GROUP

PROPONENT GROUP NEWSLETTER \$20

JUNE 2018

A LOOK AT INSTRUCTION FEES FOR YOUR COMPETITIVE GOLFERS

Proponent Group members are typically the “go to” teachers in their locale for competitive players. As such, we get a lot of questions about how our members should charge serious competitive players for their services. It had been nearly six years since our last comprehensive member survey on this topic so we knew it was time to ask our current members how you are handling these competitive students. Here’s what you told us:

For competitive juniors, all our members charge some amount, with **42 percent** charging their normal instruction rates. This was up from **36 percent** in the 2012 survey. Monthly retainers are used by **31 percent**, up from **19 percent** in the previous survey. A discounted hourly rate – usually between 10 and 30 percent off – was used by **22 percent** of members.

When asked how they charge current Tour players, members gave a more complex set of answers. The response we got most—from **32 percent**—was that the normal hourly rate was used. An annual retainer plus bonus was second most popular at **16 percent**. Also at **16 percent** was the “no charge” response. In fourth was monthly retainer plus bonus, at **13 percent**.

For those using a bonus structure with their tour pros, it generally ranged from **3 to 5 percent** of prize money, with bonuses for wins running as high as **7 percent** in some cases.

More than a quarter (**26 percent**) of teachers in the survey now have a written agreement with their competitive players—this is up from **6 percent** in the last survey.

Respondents who teach tour players said they spend about **145 hours** per year, per touring pro.

For much more, check out complete survey results. Visit the members’ website and go to the Business Surveys menu to download.



Proponent Group member Mike Bender working with his student Zach Johnson at The Players Championship

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INCREASING YOUR VALUE:**OUR GROUP-BUYING OPPORTUNITY
CAN SAVE YOUR FACILITY \$\$\$**

Proponent Group is always working on new ways to help you show maximum value to your facility. Today we are very pleased to announce that you and your facility are invited to join the most powerful purchasing program in golf. It's an opportunity that could save your facility thousands of dollars each year.

Thanks to our access to Golf Channel's broad array of assets, you now can sign up for Ride, GolfNow's unique purchasing group that delivers significant savings for your food and beverage service and for your superintendent.

Ride serves all types of facilities from East Lake in Atlanta, GA to 9-hole municipal courses. The program is already at work for over 100 private clubs and more than 700 golf facilities in total.

So what would it mean to your facility if it joins Ride?

- Your facility would buy its broadline groceries from US Foods and you would be classified as a National account
- The majority of your savings will be realized in your invoices, though you may also receive some incentive checks
- You will save about 17% on your broadline spend—this has been our average performance since the program began. Individual product savings typically run from 6 to 35 percent on Ride.
- You would sign a Letter of Participation (not a contract) and we would then connect you with a specific person at US Foods for account set-up.
- There are no membership dues to use the program and more than 55,000 food and paper products are included from 200 national brands.
- Orders can be placed 24/7.

Ride also can save your facility on more than 500 SynaTek agronomy products along with cellular and data services from Verizon, furniture and accessories, Office Max and Office Depot office supplies and environmental management expenses.

To learn more or to sign up for Ride email: ride@golfchannel.com or check out: <https://business.golfnow.com/services/ride/learn-more-about-ride/>.



Ride offers big savings on food, beverage and agronomy.

**WHAT OUR MEMBERS
ARE WATCHING****MOST-VIEWED PROONENT
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 May, these were the 10 most-watched videos:

- 1) **Dr. Greg Rose** - Power Development for Golf
- 2) **Mike Duhamel with Brad Faxon** - Short Game: The Science of Timing and Tempo
- 3) **Dr. David Wright** – Maximizing the Application of Force
- 4) **Iain Highfield and Matthew Cooke**- Performance and Strategy
- 5) **Cameron McCormick** -The Journey to High Performance
- 6) **Dr. Rob Neal and Layne Savoie** - Short Game: What the Experts Do
- 7) **Alison Curdt** - Tapping into Your Best Golf
- 8) **Mike Bender, Martin Hall, David Leadbetter, Lynn Marriott, Cameron McCormick and Pia Nilsson** - Summit "Super Panel"
- 9) **J.C. Deacon and Mark Leon** - College Golf and Beyond
- 10) **Ryan Dailey and Matt Reagan** - The Future of Golf and Your Coaching Business

2018 COMPENSATION SURVEY

A DEEPER DIVE INTO THE COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS OUR YOUNGER MEMBERS ARE CURRENTLY EARNING

Proponent Group includes about 200 younger teachers among our membership. This month our deep dive from the 2018 Proponent Compensation Survey takes a look at how these less veteran teachers are doing so far and how they are managing their blossoming businesses.

First a look at the makeup of our Associate members.

- **30 percent** graduated from a PGM Program.
- **65 percent** are employees, **22 percent** Independent Contractors and **11 percent** already own their own academy.
- **73 percent** are already PGA or LPGA Class A Members.
- **57 percent** teach at a private club.
- **44 percent** teach at a multi-teacher academy.
- **8 percent** are already on the Golf Digest Best in State list.
- **10 percent** are already on the Golf Digest Best Teachers Under 40 list.

As far as technical skills go, two-thirds (**65 percent**) are certified clubfitters. Nine out of 10 teach with a launch monitor and **98 percent** of the respondents film using a smartphone or tablet. V-1 is their most-used video analysis system at **33 percent**. That's a drop of 16 points from the prior year as some 10 other companies also were used for video analysis in the survey.

As you might expect, social media usage for business is very high among this group. Instagram leads with **87 percent** usage followed by **77 percent** on Facebook and **73 percent** using Twitter.

Teaching/non-teaching time is pretty evenly divided: One-third of respondents teach an average of less than 20 hours a week, one-third of them teach 20 to 30 hours a week and one-third teach more than 30 hours a week.

So, how do earnings stack up for these members, admittedly still at the early stages of their teaching careers? Well, you could say they are generally off to a very solid start.

The group averaged **\$104,300** in gross teaching revenues. Pretty good numbers compared to the early stages of just about any professional services business. On average, **\$16,500** of that total came from salary.

Subtract an average of **\$20,570** in expenses for teaching technologies, revenue splits, rent/lease payments, marketing/public relations, continuing education and training aids purchased and you end up at around **\$84,000** before taxes. Not bad at all.

(By comparison our members with more than 10 years teaching experience registered **\$159,700** in gross teaching revenues and **\$22,100** in similar expenses before taxes.)

Additional benefits included **54 percent** getting their PGA/LPGA dues paid by their employer and **40 percent** receiving an education allowance. A little over half (**52 percent**) get either partial or full medical insurance paid for by their employer. Just **44 percent** have access to a 401(k) program.

A MONTHLY LOOK AT THE JOB MARKET: MEMBERS ON THE MOVE

Members who have recently moved into new positions include:

Jeff Nelson is now a Senior Instructor at Sea Island Golf Club in St. Simons Island, GA.

Megan Padua is the new Teaching Professional at Bonita Bay G.C. in Bonita Springs, FL.

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

Recent Job Postings include:

Hank Johnson School of Golf at Timberline G.C. in Birmingham, AL is hiring an Associate Golf Instructor

Golf Channel Academy with David Impastato in Batavia, IL is hiring a Teaching Professional.

Topgolf in San Antonio, TX is hiring a Director of Instruction.



Megan Padua



Jeff Nelson

For complete details visit the Job Board on the Members' website. Please let us know if you have a position to post.

PROPONENT GROUP 11th ANNUAL SUMMIT

Increasing Your Value to Your Students and Your Facility

November 4-6, 2018 (Sunday - Tuesday)
Cowboys Golf Club
Grapevine, TX

Join us in "Big D" for our annual showcase of what's coming next in golf instruction and highlighting the freshest opportunities to grow your teaching business.



Jeff Ritter



Kate Tempesta



To Be Announced



To Be Announced



Trent Wearer



Nicole Weller

Join us in Dallas to:

- Take a Deep Dive into the three pillars for growing your teaching business.
- Hear the world's foremost expert on teaching buildings show what you need in your indoor facility to stay ahead of the pack.
- See a demonstration of how student training can now be automated.
- The Game's top experts on teaching the youngest golfers show you the secrets to their success.
- **BONUS SUNDAY SESSION:** Discover the keys to earning your next teaching position.
- Learn the tricks for helping your students effectively take their new skills onto the course.
- Gain new insight into statistically-based strategies for playing the game.
- Check out the latest teaching technologies at Demo Day and expand your network of peers.
- Plus more topics and speakers to be announced soon!

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

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PROPONENT GROUP 11th ANNUAL SUMMIT

November 4-6, 2018

Cowboys Golf Club, Grapevine, TX

SUMMIT DETAILS

Host Site: Etched into the rolling hills of Grapevine, Texas, Cowboys Golf Club is distinguished as the first and only NFL-themed golf club in the world, and one of the region's only all-inclusive world-class resort golf properties.

The club is conveniently located 10 minutes from DFW International Airport.

PGA/LPGA Education Credits: Approximately 13 hours of education will be submitted to the PGA and LPGA.

Lodging: A special Summit rate is available at the Courtyard and Towneplace Suites by Marriott Dallas DFW Airport North/Grapevine for only \$142 per night SINGLE OR DOUBLE occupancy. Contact the hotel directly at 817-421-6121. We also have a room block at the Hyatt Place Dallas/Grapevine for \$159 per night.

Please contact the hotel directly at 972-691-1659. Our room block will likely sell out, as it has in past years, so plan accordingly.

Cost: Our "Early Bird" package includes ALL meals, ALL education sessions and participant gifts for only \$525.

Optional golf Sunday afternoon at the Cowboys Golf Club is an additional \$50 (tee times are limited and will be filled first-come, first-served). **NOTE: Summit rate increases \$70 after August 31.**

Registration: Log in to 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 4

1pm	Optional Golf at Cowboys Golf Club Course
3-5:30pm	Bonus Session: The Early Bird Gets the Job A workshop designed for members actively looking for a new position. Topics include resumes, cover letters, interviews and more.
5:30pm	Cocktails at Cowboys Golf Club
6:30pm	Welcome Dinner at Cowboys Golf Club

Monday, November 5

7am	Breakfast
8-10:30am	The 3 Pillars for Growing Your Business <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen Your Branding • Create Seamless Marketing Campaigns • Leverage Sales Opportunities
10:30am	Break
11am	TBA
Noon	Lunch
1pm	Transferring Skills from Training to the Golf Course (Trent Wearer)
2-3:30pm	Junior Live Lessons: Secrets to Teaching the Youngest of Golfers (Kate Tempesta and Nicole Weller)
3:30-6:00pm	Teaching Technology and Training Aids Demo Day
6pm	Cocktails and Dinner at Cowboys Golf Club

Tuesday, November 6

7am	Breakfast
8am	What's Next for Teaching Buildings
9:30am	Training through Technology (Tony Morgan)
10:30am	Break
10:45am	Leading a Balanced Life (Jeff Ritter)
Noon	Lunch
1pm	Strategizing with Statistics (TBA)
2pm	TBA
3pm	Summit Ends

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

SUCCESSFUL ON-COURSE COACHING: MASTER THE BEFORE-DURING-AFTER



By Andy Hilts, *Director*

In true Proponent Group fashion, our first regional event in years brought together a group of passionate golf professionals who openly shared best practices for delivering top-notch playing lessons. I personally took away several pages of notes filled with fresh ideas and great insights into the playing-lesson end of the business.

My biggest takeaway from the day was how important it is to set clear expectations before and even during the process of on-course coaching. With so much variability in how a playing lesson can be conducted, it is vital that your students know exactly what to expect. I gathered that many of the attendees at some point in their careers had experienced confused and frustrated students who were unaware of what the intended outcome of the day would be—before that instructor could grasp the importance of explaining it. Setting expectations as to what is going to happen in a playing lesson will ensure everyone goes away without disappointment.

Think about all the different options available in executing a quality playing lesson. Should the pro play? Is the student expecting that? Or is the coach there to observe, assess, and take notes, so as to develop a game plan for future work? Do the students know you are out there mainly assessing their performance, or are they expecting you to get busy swing-fixing after every poor shot they hit? Is your primary tactic putting the student in challenging situations to help reveal their thought process and gauge their ability to execute? Do they know that they aren't going to be playing the whole course? How many holes are going to be played? How about your teaching technology—will some of that be brought along and put to use?

Given all this variability, you can imagine how your students might be guessing incorrectly as to how the process will unfold. Bear in mind, a student who doesn't know the goals and procedures that govern their on-course work with you could very easily end up displeased with the result.

Each version of the playing lesson mentioned above can produce effective results. You may be best off laying out the options, or at least some of them, to see what the student prefers. So, even if you strongly favor a certain approach, if you offer a choice and go with the student's preference first, a pair of playing lessons could be scheduled at one time. That makes everybody happy and it potentially doubles the sale over simply going on-course once.

So, explain in detail how things will go, factoring in the golfer's desired accomplishments and the skill-building you as the coach consider highest priority. Discuss with them the number of holes to be played, what they'll be paying (and possibly why the fee is what it is) whether or not you will bring your sticks and play along, what technology you're bringing, how many people will be in the group and what game plan will come from the lesson. This up-front discussion will help you adjust your agenda to make sure they get what they want from the session, even as you are helping them with what their game needs most.

Setting clearly defined expectations will immediately impact the success of your playing lessons and bring additional business from time on-course with your students... plus potential new students. Which reminds me of an additional nugget from the day: If you do this type of coaching in groups, and if the lesson being scheduled isn't full, have one of your students invite a friend to come along. That's an easy referral opportunity. Not only will an up-front agreement help your playing lessons go smoothly, it will help your entire lesson program overall. How this latter aspect works is a topic for another day. **PG**

PROONENT GROUP CALENDAR

**REGISTER NOW OPEN: Proponent Summit 2018 will be
November 4-6 at Cowboys Golf Club in Dallas, TX**

Early Bird Special: Save \$70 before August Ends!



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CHUCK COOK

DIRECTOR AT CHUCK COOK GOLF ACADEMIES
Ranked #2 in 2017 Golf Digest Top-50 Golf Instructors

BOOK DEMO

FIRST OF A TWO-PART SERIES: NEW THINKING ON WHAT TO CHARGE AND WHY

PRICING CONCEPTS AND THE GOLF INSTRUCTOR, PART 1

By David Gould, Staff Editor

A spaceship lands in a cornfield and out steps a golf instructor from a faraway Earth-like planet. An upscale course nearby invites him to hang a shingle and start teaching. Our interplanetary pro is set to do business but he's unsure what rates to charge, so he figures he'll ask around. Having arrived here in 2018—not 50, 20 or even five years earlier—he's got a compelling question on his hands.

Technology has brought major change to pricing throughout modern economies—it's given the consumer an extensive rate-comparison advantage, but it's also sped up the journey from I-might-be-interested to a click that finalizes purchase and sends money on its way. The online selling of services, with social-media marketing as a catalyst, means you can vary your packaging and programming creatively and make it all understandable. The traditional shingle offered no space for such presentations, and even if it did, only someone standing in front of it would receive your message.

Interesting signals about pricing have emanated from the U.S. economy of late. It “roared into overdrive last month,” said a *New York Times* article on the recent jobs report. Our “longest streak of job growth on record,” reported the *Times*, “dropped the unemployment rate to 3.8 percent, its lowest level since early 2000.” On the CNBC website an influential economist talked about the “virtuous circle” America now enjoys, in which “the labor market is strong, which



supports consumption, which drives production, which in turn keeps the labor market strong.” Another economist interviewed by CNBC said the national unemployment rate “could sink as low as 3 percent by the end of 2019,” a downward move that would “bring it to levels last seen in 1953, the height of the economic boom after World War II.” So, times are good.

We know that the tech factor in pricing has streamlined traditional shopping and buying, but it's gone much further, actually shifting how human brains sort out value and cost. The dynamic-pricing revolution in lodging, airfares and rides to the airport—or anywhere else—means we now run little algorithms in our heads about what we're getting (when we're getting it also matters) and what we're willing to pay. The students who pay you for golf coaching are getting very accustomed to pricing that's not set in stone.

Knowing this, startups are looking to extend dynamic pricing into other

The online selling of services, with social-media marketing as a catalyst, means you can vary your packaging and programming creatively and make it all understandable.

markets. A mobile app developer called Atom Tickets has tested it in cineplexes, seeking to leverage the astounding number of movie seats that go unoccupied each year—4 billion plus, reportedly. This form of time-shifted price-setting appears to skew mainly downward. In other words, if a cinema's top ticket price has been \$12, the algorithm's main purpose would be filling out the house with seats priced at \$9 then \$8 then \$7 and so on, descending as showtime gets closer.

A professor at the prestigious Wharton School, asked his view of the concept, wasn't keen on it. "We're used to paying lower prices for matinees and more on weekends," he noted, "but I don't see people willing to pay different prices for the same movie, offered at the same time, in the same location." A colleague chimed in with a second critique. "If you lower the price 10 minutes before the show starts, you will likely get the same number of people showing up for the movie."

Among Proponent Group members there's been modest curiosity about dynamic pricing for instruction, but no groundswell of interest. And that's the case even though golf tee times—the product next door, so to speak—have been priced dynamically on a widespread basis for years.

Supply and demand, all would agree, is a simple concept. Or perhaps not so much. There is at least one clear reason why golf lessons at peak times aren't being sold at changeable rates determined by sophisticated software, and it boils down to relationships. Airlines and hotel chains are relatively faceless, which keeps the personal aspect out of these transactions. For the teacher and student on the lesson tee that's not the case.

Golf instruction fits pretty nicely with a set of case studies the price gurus have been examining closely, through the relationship lens. They include Bruce Springsteen on Broadway, florists on Valentine's Day and Home Depot during hurricane season.

In 2017 Springsteen created a one-man show, opting to perform it in a Broadway theatre that holds just 975 people. Using a nearly scalper-proof ticketing process, he put the tickets on sale and priced them from \$75 to \$850. One sellout followed another and fans rejoiced to get a



There is at least one clear reason why golf lessons at peak times aren't being sold at changeable rates determined by sophisticated software, and it boils down to relationships.

seat, but some tickets did show up on resale websites—for as much as \$13,000 apiece. According to veterans of the concert business, this represented a stunning error on Springsteen's part, but a prominent economist disagreed. On the subject of pricing, Richard Thaler of the University of Chicago called it a mistake to use pricing policies "that will create moral outrage, even if that moral outrage seems stupid to economists."

Others agreed, convinced that undercharging to the extent he did was a sound business decision on Springsteen's part. It let him protect an immensely valuable asset—his audience's deep loyalty and trust.

Years ago, in a floral market quite different from today's, studies were made of flower shops around Valentine's Day revealing demand for roses roughly double what was available, sometimes more than double. Supply-demand indicated an opportunity to sell bouquets at extremely high prices. Some shops did so, which is why there were so many complaints about price-gouging back in the day. Increased production changed things, but even in the days of lesser supply many shops were known to underprice roses on February 14, versus what the market would bear. They did it in the name of positive customer relations throughout the rest of the year. Then there's Home Depot, which has earned a reputation for responding in swift, dramatic fashion to natural disasters like hurricanes—in ways that actually reduce profit margins for stores in close proximity to impacted areas. Again, this is to deepen trust and loyalty on the part of the customer.

It's simple enough to tie these cases back to the golf instructor, but first we'll circle back to cineplexes and what one economist said about dynamically priced movie tickets. Not

to tell an expert his business, but a key point was missed in discussing filmgoer sensitivity to price, i.e., removal of rack rate from the value proposition. Airlines and hotels did it long ago, which is why no one knows the baseline cost of a plane trip from Dallas to Atlanta—it's not published anywhere. So, if movie theaters stopped openly posting a \$12 set price for adults under 65 on weekends, resistance to pricing as it rose and fell (according to day of the week and hour of the day) would be considerably offset. And that's the psychology at work when tee-time resellers strongly advise courses to dump rack rates, which some of them have done.

The context of all this is price elasticity, to use the term of art. Consumers accept an increased price on a product or service, or they keep their wallets tucked away. It's likewise when a price goes down—they may buy more of a discounted item than they otherwise would. Then there's gasoline, milk, coffee and electricity, which cause complaints when their prices go up but enjoy relatively inelastic demand, maintaining sales volume even as price fluctuates.

Next month in Part 2 of this two-part series, we'll report to you on the latest pricing innovations embraced by (or at least tinkered with) by fitness studios, chiropractors, hair salons and sports teams. We'll also revisit non-traditional golf-instruction pricing concepts espoused by the likes of Dr. Rick Jensen, Will Robins, Ian James, a city-club organization called the Union League and some highly successful elite-junior academies. Certainly the biggest opportunity for higher pricing in golf instruction is associated with group sessions, but there are other openings, as well.

We began this story by describing a golf instructor from outer space, newly arrived on



Earth. He was, of course, purely imaginary—dreamed up as a way to create a completely clean slate for a discussion of pricing. So, go ahead, imagine that you could start from the same premise. Based on what's going on in the world around you—and in the golf industry, too—you would have a business opportunity of considerable value and well worth delving deep into.

(Read Part II in next month's members' newsletter.) **PG**

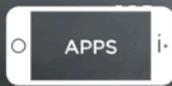
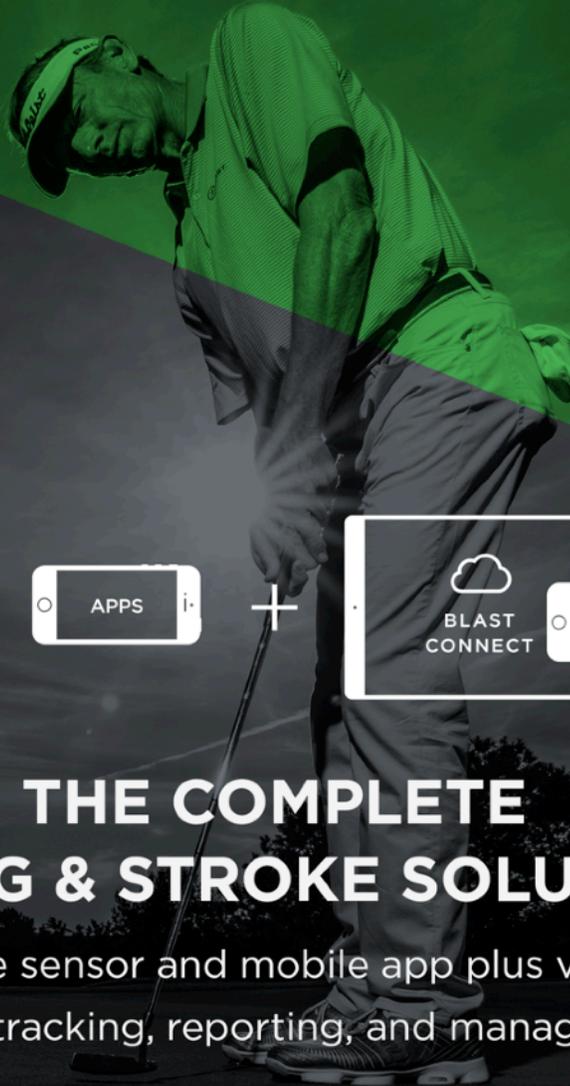
THE TAKEAWAY: EMERGING IDEAS ABOUT PRICING AND VALUE

- 1) Your student is part of the consumer marketplace in which patterns and policies around the price of goods and services is in flux—golf instruction isn't necessarily "on an island" and untouched by these trends.
- 2) Seller-buyer relationships do vary. The more personal they are, the less automatic it is for pure supply-and-demand equations to dictate price.
- 3) Rack rate is being called into question throughout our economy. Can you imagine golf instruction dispensing with it?
- 4) Other types of professional services are rethinking what they charge and how they charge—their experiments bear watching.
- 5) Innovation in coaching and instruction programming goes hand in hand with innovative pricing.
- 6) Like many business practices, pricing is highly influenced by "the way we've always done things." Given no history and a completely blank slate, how would you go about valuing your skills and knowledge as a coach?



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WHAT I'VE LEARNED: DAVID OGRIN

SAN PEDRO GOLF ACADEMY, SAN ANTONIO, TX

INTERVIEW BY PAUL RAMEE, JR



As prize money on the PGA Tour spiked upward in the 1980s, an old pattern seemed to fade. It appeared that touring pros with long careers would no longer take up teaching when their competitive days were over. They wouldn't follow the footsteps of Paul Runyan, Bob Toski, Johnny Revolta or "Lighthorse Harry" Cooper—rich purses, healthy pensions and other opportunities would see to that.

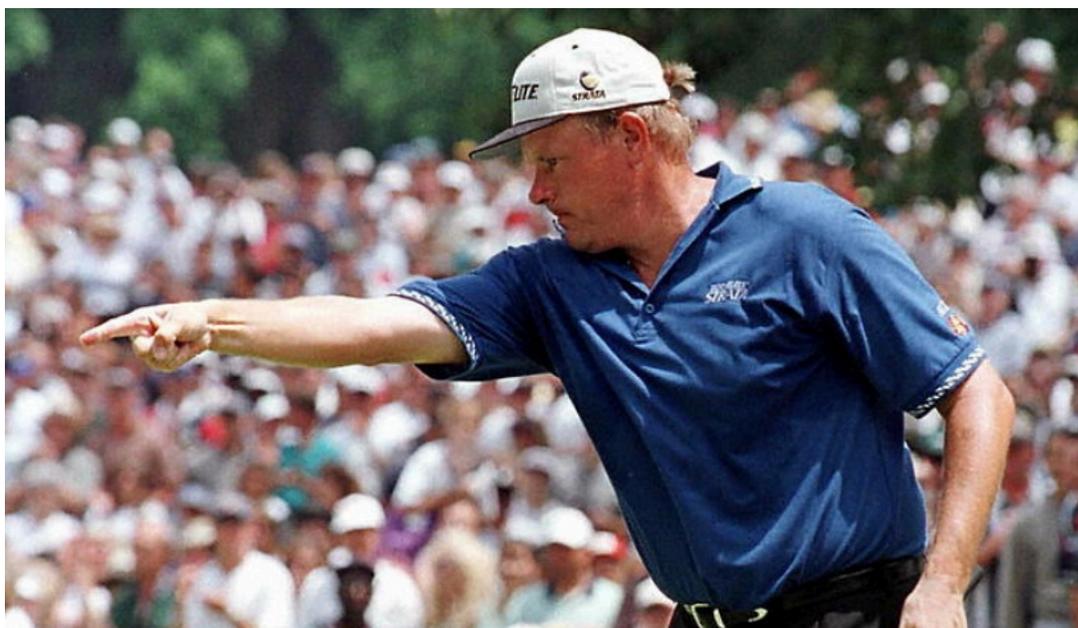
While this turned out mainly true, a select few long-tenured tour pros have indeed gone into instruction. Proponent Group member Bobby Clampett is a good example, as is this month's featured interviewee, David Ogrin. Born in 1957 on New Year's Eve and raised in the Chicago suburb of Waukegan, Illinois, Ogrin is a devotee of golf tradition and a free thinker as well—one of those level-headed dreamers that a Midwestern upbringing in proximity of a world-class city will sometimes produce. A long, enviable marriage, four kids, enduring religious faith and a healthy obsession with the Chicago Cubs have been his constants. Meanwhile, a screen credit in "Tin Cup" and a brief literary career with Golf Digest in his youth bear

witness to Ogrin's slender streak of showmanship.

More or less self-taught as a golfer, he was a mainstay of his high school team and went to Texas A&M University on a full scholarship, graduating in 1980 with a degree in economics. Ogrin turned professional in 1980 and within a couple of years had earned his tour card. He played the PGA Tour from 1983 to 1999, making over 500 starts. His career record shows 32 top-10 finishes including a win at the 1996 LaCantera Texas Open. In 1997, Ogrin set a career-best mark for season earnings (\$593,683), had seven top-10 finishes, finished 36th on the money list and generally played the best golf of his life at age 39.

A Proponent Group member since 2016, he spoke at our Summit on the topic of player development in the era of Topgolf, where at the time he was employed as corporate director of instruction. David's thoughts on playing, teaching and the competitive mindset are presented in this edited transcript of a discussion he and Paul Ramee sat down for last month.

David Ogrin came from a blue-collar upbringing that taught him the value of hard work in building both his playing career and his teaching business.





Ogrin is likely the only person to leverage a PGA Tour win into a job as Director of Instruction at Topgolf.

Except for unusual cases such as Larry Nelson or Calvin Peete, tour players are guys who grew up playing the game. Is that the David Ogrin story?

It definitely is. I started early and I've never stopped. My father was a steelworker and an avid golfer who liked to compete. The year I was born, 1957, he won a prominent tournament in our area called the Chick Evans Amateur. As it turned out, I had the privilege to win that same event as a 20-year-old, in 1977. So, I very much followed in my dad's footsteps. It's an old family story that I would walk behind him to the altar at Sunday mass to receive communion, making practice swings all the way up the aisle.

It certainly helps a future golfer to have their father's encouragement.

I did have that advantage, but I also had a civic-minded mom who ran for a seat on the Waukegan Park District board when I was seven. She got elected, which was a terrific break for me. The city owned a golf course called Bonnie Brook that was overseen by the Park District, and in those years they had no rules restricting family perks for board members. That meant I had virtually unlimited access to the course, all the way until age 15.

And you took full advantage of it?

I went around that track I don't know how many times. I was able to develop my golf skills by playing, as opposed to on the range. It was just a tremendous experience for me personally. On weekends I would caddie at a club called Glen

Flora, also in Waukegan. I looped for my father and some of the other better players, including the club champion. So, my childhood and youth were completely immersed in golf.

Explain to us how you made it from Chicago to a college career at Texas A&M.

I came along in the pre-AJGA era, when college golf recruiting was mainly by word of mouth. My dad happened to be good friends with a guy named Arthur Ellis, who went by the nickname "Ace." His brother was Bob Ellis, the head golf coach at Texas A&M. As I was developing my game through high school, Ace kept his brother up to speed on my progress. On graduation day—April 1, 1976—I received a full scholarship to A&M for golf.

Heading down there, were you fairly confident you could hold your own?

One thing I knew is that I'd managed to make a good impression on my future teammates. I did that by shooting 74-66 during the two rounds I played with them on my recruiting visit, which happened to come in the last week of February. Given the time of year, the upperclassmen were saying, hey, if this guy can come out of the snow and shoot a 66 he's bound to be great. They didn't realize what unusual weather we were having back home that winter, including blue skies and temperatures in the high 60s the entire week before my trip. They figured I hadn't touched a club, and I didn't tell them about the full week of intense practice I'd just put in.



Ogrin's recent instruction appearance on Golf Channel is just his latest national media opportunity, which began with a gig writing for Golf Digest during his rookie year on the PGA Tour.

You graduated in 1980 with an economics degree and turned pro that year. It's interesting how you started your PGA Tour career and simultaneously you seemed to be starting a writing career.

Well, not exactly, but it's true I was given the chance to write a pair of articles for Golf Digest, based on my having played a number of USGA events and along the way getting to know Frank Hannigan. Frank had an early career as a newspaper writer and eventually became executive director of the USGA, with responsibility for their magazine at the time, USGA Golf Journal. Frank suggested I chronicle my year as a rookie on tour, so I said great and he handed the article off to a senior writer at Golf Digest named Jerry Tarde—Jerry would go on to become chief editor of Golf Digest and he's still there, running the magazine. In 1984 I played in my first Masters and wrote a second article called "Diary of a Rookie at the Masters."

Didn't alter your career plans, though.

No, it was very interesting and kind of cool, but my focus was on golf. I ended up playing the tour from 1983 to 2000. I gave the Champions Tour a try in 2008 but after a couple of seasons I hadn't made it to fully exempt status, so my wife and I talked it over and we decided it wouldn't be best for me to go chase it. That's when I got committed to teaching as a next phase.

What was your transition like?

To a certain extent it had already begun. During my mid-40s I was living by an executive course that

sponsored a non-profit for kids, the Central Texas Junior Golf Association. When they shut down the golf course they asked me if I wanted to run the program and I said yes, and took it over. At the same time I had a job teaching at the Bandit Golf Club in New Braunfels, just east of San Antonio. That was my first formal experience in golf instruction. I did that for a couple of years before I started training for my run at the Champions Tour. When that was over I went to a new golf center in New Braunfels called the River City Range. I was there for a year, continuing to work on my skills as a teacher.

So, you were getting opportunities to gain experience.

I did have a lot of good fortune in that regard, including some things outside of teaching. OB Sports Management approached me in 2011 about GM work, so I went to work for them, managing a couple of clubs and giving lessons and clinics to the members. A similar break I got involved a club in Casper, Wyoming, the Three Crowns Golf Club. A good friend, Chris Moore, was GM there. Chris had decided to start a serious teaching program and went looking for candidates. He received 48 resumes and couldn't find the right fit, so he called me to see if I was interested. I went up and met with him and ended up signing on to do three summers of instruction.

But you kept your base in Texas, year-round?

Ogrin's PGA Tour career spanned 17 seasons and more than 500 starts including a victory at the 1996 LaCantera Texas Open.



Correct, and that led to an offer to assist with the Texas Lutheran University golf team. My next career move brought me from Texas Lutheran to Topgolf in San Antonio, as their golf director.

How did that come about?

It's a funny story, how I got that job. The first I heard of it was through a Facebook posting, which said they were looking for a "rock star" to fill the position. I sent a message explaining that I was the literal definition of a rock star, and if they wanted proof they could take a quick trip around the corner to La Cantera Golf Club. Right in front of the clubhouse is a plaque, mounted on a rock, recognizing my Texas Open victory there.

At a Proponent Group Summit in Dallas a few years ago you talked about your job at Topgolf and made it sound like interesting work.

It really was, and I had no intention of leaving, but a director of instruction position opened up with the Alamo City Golf Trail that looked promising. I ended up applying for it and getting the job, and that's where I am today.

You've mentioned how good breaks have tended to come your way. Would you say in looking back that you created your own luck, or is it more a case that good fortune came along and you made the most of it?

I guess I don't view that as an either-or question. I won on the PGA Tour with the highest winning score ever shot in a Texas Open at La Cantera. I

got my tour card even while shooting 81 in my first round of Q School—that just doesn't happen anymore. With things I've done in the golf industry, it's fair to say I knew some people, I got some breaks and then I took advantage. And going all the way back to when I was a kid, I wasn't the only one who was allowed to play the Park District course all they wanted—others could, but I was the one who actually did it.

You talked about growing up before there was an AJGA. How do you view the current state of things, with junior golf so highly organized?

The AJGA has done a wonderful job elevating junior golf to the highest level. So what I like is that it gives everyone a chance to look at the talent pool and see who's good. What I don't like is that the first question any D1 program asks about a prospect is how many AJGA points they have. The South Texas PGA does a great job putting on tournaments and junior golfers have no excuse to not try and play in these. There are so many opportunities to play junior golf tournaments now and it's great. You can never play too much golf. My biggest observation for junior golfers is that they just don't play enough golf. Not necessarily even tournaments, just golf in general.

You were quite independent in terms of getting out there and playing, but I assume you had some coaching. Who did you work with?

It was all my dad, up until I was age 11 or 12. At that point I took a lesson with Don Kennedy at

Deerpath Golf Course in Lake Forest. Don was a respected golf professional and his approach with me was all about fundamentals. He worked on my stance, posture and grip and he told me to go play a ton of golf. I followed his advice, then at some point I made a decision to model my swing after Lee Trevino, with the idea that it would give me Trevino-like ball striking. What it gave me was a bad case of the shanks, which led me back to Don for a cure. He worked me back to a proper grip, stance and posture.

Another example of golf instruction riding to the rescue.

You said it. Some time later I took a series of lessons from Lee Milligan, who was Andy North's teacher. Later, in between leaving Texas A&M and going out on tour, my game fell into a slump, so at that point I went to Ray Geschke, the head pro at Lake Geneva, and he helped get me straightened out. I worked with Hank Haney for two years in 1984 and '85 and then by 1993 I found the coach whom I consider my golf mentor, Jim Suttie. But also around that time I got some coaching on the mental aspect of the game from Chuck Hogan, and that really changed everything. Chuck was a guy who talked about golf in such a different way. He changed the way I thought, which in turn changed the way I played. The result was a real strong streak of play for me in the mid-90s, which only ended when I injured my left knee.

Was there any sort of mentoring for you after you got off the tour, to help you get your teaching practice up and running?

I pretty much learned something from everyone along the way. These great teachers all got to experiment on me before they became who they are today, so I learned a lot during that time and got to see how they grew. Even now, I still go to conferences and hear people speak and I learn new things all the time.

What do you miss and not miss about the Tour?

I miss the guys—players like Rick Fehr, Tom Lehman, Loren Roberts, Duffy Waldorf. I miss the camaraderie of knowing that you're doing something pretty special. You get to play golf for a living where people who are waiting to watch Tiger are watching you. I don't miss being out there and playing poorly, not making cuts, the grind of the

travel and getting on planes all the time. I don't miss the Champions Tour at all.

What does the wise golfer do when the tournament is on the line?

A big lesson I've learned is that you do the things you have control over and don't obsess over the things you don't have control over. You don't always have control over the golf swing, but you can control your breathing, your process, and a lot of mental aspects.

Having played and won at the highest level, what do you bring to your students that someone who hasn't played on tour can't bring?

We as teachers all have access to each other, so there's not much I can bring that you or someone who didn't play on tour cannot. I can bring descriptions and thoughts about my own experiences out there, which indeed is how I start many a statement that I make with my students. It gives a little bit of a different perspective. For example, talking about the mental toughness needed to hit the island green at TPC Sawgrass in a huge tournament like the Players Championship. Amateurs are curious about any similarities between what the game is like for them and what it's like on tour.

What was your greatest strength, in professional competition?

Passion for the game of golf. Not everyone has that, up there in the top echelon. I could always bring the passion.

So what's next down the road for you? What's coming up this year?

There are three major brand names that I'm using currently, to help me do my job better. Those are Golf Channel Academy, PGA Junior Camps, and Operation 36. The brilliance of Operation 36 is due to Ryan Dailey and Matt Reagan, and they deserve every penny they earn because it really is brilliant on so many levels. On the smaller stage, we have a two-day training of our own called Hands-On Golf Fest. The theme of my instruction in this program is how I translate speed and strength training to golf training. It's my independent attempt to bring something significant to the amateur golfer around the fitness aspect of the sport. **PG**

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COVERED FOR DISABILITY? PROTECT YOUR MOST IMPORTANT ASSET

By Matt Luckey, *WealthWave Financial*

Most of our clients here at WealthWave think their home, investments and business are their most important assets. The truth is more foundational: Your most important asset is your ability to apply your decades of experience as a teaching professional and translate that ability into income.

It's that ability to generate income that funds your family's lifestyle and creates value for your business. Most people focus on protecting that income by purchasing life insurance, which can help replace income in the event of untimely death (*see our article in the July 2017 newsletter*). But what happens if you don't die? What if a car wreck or illness doesn't kill you but keeps you away from your business for six months? What if an injury prevents you from making it to the course or your teaching facility for longer than that? What happens to your income?

Statistically, there's a 30 percent chance you'll become disabled and unable to work for at least three months. The 13 percent of Proponent Group members who are facility or academy owners have other partners and instructors who can help fill the void and keep business revenues relatively stable. Even at that, it's important to note that three-owner businesses run a 79 percent chance that one of the owners will be out of commission for at least 3 months—in itself a hardship. As for the other 87 percent of Proponent members whose income relies on their personal ability to get out and teach, they don't have much or any fill-in help to turn to.

Less than a third of Proponent Group members have disability insurance that is provided or partially paid for by their employer. Such group disability insurance can provide income to help get you through an illness or injury. The main decision that must be made by employees who have access to group disability insurance surrounds coverage amounts and duration. Most employers offer short-term disability, which replaces the majority of your income for about three months.

This coverage is usually paid for by the employer and included as part of a benefits package. It's common for people to mistake short-term coverage for adequate disability insurance. Since most disabilities keep you out of work for more than three months, you also need to consider long-term disability insurance. This type of policy provides slightly lesser coverage amounts (typically in the

neighborhood of 40-60 percent of your monthly income) for longer periods of time. Your employers may subsidize long-term disability insurance but you'll typically have to opt-in to the coverage and pay part of the premiums out of your paycheck.

If you're in the majority of Proponent Group members who don't have access to disability insurance through an employer, it's critical that you meet with a professional to help assess your coverage needs. While individual policies are usually more expensive than group plans, they offer much more flexibility and customization.

One of the major benefits to an individual policy is your ability to select "own-occupation" coverage. Many standard policies won't pay benefits if you're able to work in a field other than your specialty. For instance, if you break a leg, you won't be able to go out to the range and provide swing instruction but you might be able to work in the pro shop or perform clerical duties. In that circumstance, the policy may not pay any benefits since you still have the ability to generate income – albeit at a rate nowhere close to what you make normally. So when purchasing insurance on your own it's important to negotiate the exact terms of your policy to ensure you get the protection your family needs.

Members who need to purchase disability insurance outside of their employer also have an additional advantage. At the 10th Anniversary Summit in November, many members expressed interest in securing long-term care coverage using some of the newest products that fix the longstanding problems of traditional, stand-alone long-term care policies (*see our June 2017 newsletter article*). When designed correctly, such products can complement and significantly augment disability insurance policies. Therefore, it's important to not consider disability insurance in a vacuum, but to understand how it fits into your overall financial game plan.

Given the physical nature of your profession, disability insurance is an especially important consideration for any Proponent member. As with all areas of financial matters, the WealthWave team takes a comprehensive, objective, and consultative approach to helping clients address disability insurance needs.

As a Proponent Group member, you're entitled to a free consultation to ensure that your family and business is protected in the event of the unexpected. Please visit us at wealthwave.com/mattluckey to get started. PG



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WELLNESS WORKS



By Lorin Anderson, *Founder*

One would think working in a profession that generally calls for being outside every day would set up our Proponent members to lead a very healthy lifestyle.

Surprisingly, it often does not. Like many other careers, golf instruction makes it easy to abandon the keys to overall wellness. Priority

goes to running the business, squeezing in extra lessons during the busy season or making late-night phone calls to competitive students after their rounds. This list goes on and can quickly add up to a less than healthy lifestyle.

I'm as guilty as anyone. When I started Proponent Group there were many periods when I would work seven days a week trying to build the operation and take care of members. It wasn't good for my personal health, so I took steps to limit the time and energy spent on the business. This is a common issue for entrepreneurs: We have a passion for the work we do and a desire to maximize business opportunities.

But... it can backfire. In the U.S. alone, work-related stress costs businesses \$300 billion annually—that's according to the Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine. Companies that don't use "best practices" wellness programs tend to see their bottom lines suffer. According to a study by Health Enhancement Research Organization, from 2009 to 2014 stock-price appreciation for 45 companies with best-practices wellness programs outpaced the S&P 500, 235 percent versus 159 percent. While it's impossible to say

how much of the difference came from healthier employees, it looks to have been an appreciable factor.

So what does this mean for entrepreneurial golf coaches, out there on the front lines either solo or with a few staff instructors working alongside them? At its most basic, it means you need to develop an awareness of the physical, emotional and financial well-being of yourself and anyone who works under you. There isn't much question that healthier employees improve the bottom line. Even if you don't provide comprehensive health insurance, you may consider partial payment of a gym membership or weekly or monthly group golf. Even walking 9 holes once a week can have a big impact on keeping yourself and your team more active. It's stunning how many of our members never or rarely play golf. Honestly, that's not a good sign for personal wellness.

A lot of Proponent members carve out time to recharge their emotional health using meditation and other stress-relieving activities. Many can even be done using apps on a smartphone at minimal cost.

Financial health is an area we talk about often in our Financial Literacy column. The majority of Americans are woefully underprepared for financial crisis, and that can create tremendous stress. Fortunately, our members generally bring in sufficient revenue to effectively save for those rainy days. But it takes the same kind of discipline you ask of your students. Put it this way: I don't remember anyone ever telling me they wish they had saved less money.

Even without a big budget for wellness benefits, you can help yourself and your team at minimal expense. These investments in your lifestyle not only make you feel better, they protect your business' bottom line. **PG**

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