

COLLABORATE

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Proponent Group Takes Lead in Helping Members Identify New Career Opportunities

At this month's Proponent Group Summit 2012: What's the Big Idea? Proponent Group President Lorin Anderson shared a big idea that Proponent is going to focus on to help our members pursue better career opportunities at a time when almost no new jobs are being created. In his presentation, he pointed out that only 11 courses are scheduled to open in 2012 in the entire United States. This versus an average of around 375 from the mid-90s to the mid-2000s. Even if future course projects began permitting tomorrow, he noted that we're at least four to six years from seeing meaningful growth in facilities.

So if you're a top instructor looking for a better situation, what are you to do? You need to understand that you will likely have to create opportunities instead of waiting for them to appear. Some of our members have already figured out that there are plenty of facilities that would benefit in many ways by having a high-quality instructor on site, but at this time they don't have a full-time teacher on site and they are ignorant to what the benefits really are and how to structure this type of position. Since one-third of our members say they are looking to make a move, Proponent is working on a three-pronged approach to help you locate these new opportunities and create your own ideal teaching position.

1) **Case studies.** We are identifying members who have found facilities with underdeveloped instruction programs and then set up a lease or independent contractor arrangement allowing them to build a full scale instruction program. Watch Elizabeth Granahan and Michele Gajderowicz's presentation from the summit for a fantastic example of how this can be done.

2) **Economic data.** we are gathering data to build an Economic Impact Report showing the typical value a great instruction program brings to a facility.

3) **Proposal Template.** We are creating a template that will help you put together the appropriate presentation for a facility when requesting to take your teaching program there.



The days of massive numbers of jobs being created by new courses opening are gone for years to come.

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SUMMIT 2012: WHAT'S THE BIG IDEA?

Packed House and a Packed Agenda at 2012 Annual Summit in Chicago

By David Gould, Staff Editor

Fine autumn weather, an overflow roster of attendees and fast-paced presentations on varied topics marked this year's Proponent Group Summit. Inside the wonderfully designed amphitheater of the Chicago District Golf Association headquarters called Midwest Golf House—and across the road at Cog Hill Golf and Country Club—Proponent members displayed their trademark camaraderie and zeal for new learning.

Some 108 instructors immersed themselves in presentations ranging from Virgil Herring's revealing and provocative "How to Dominate Your Market" to the shrewd advice in Dom DiJulia's "Why You Need an Advisory Board."

The theme for the 2012 summit—the first since GBN's Instructor Division re-launched as Proponent Group—was "What's the Big Idea?" A big upset had to be endured first, as America's Ryder Cup team cold-topped its final-round matches at nearby Medinah Country Club. Attendees returned from a dizzying day there in need of attitude adjustments, which Proponent Group sponsors provided in the form of a lively cocktail reception and buffet dinner at the Marriott Burr Ridge hotel. Moods quickly brightened as the elite of the teaching profession fell into clusters of conversation and spirited debate.

Breaking from the standard teaching-summit approach, this symposium followed a notably brisk agenda. In two morning sessions there were 15 separate talks running 20 to 25 minutes. Each speaker described their "big idea," backed it up with specifics and concluded with guidance and recommendations.



Every seat at Midwest Golf House was filled during Proponent Group's 2012 Summit.

The stated goal of each was to help hone the teaching craft, design more profitable business models or to do both simultaneously.

Two segments that focused on junior instruction nailed both those goals. In listening to Henry Brunton of Toronto describe "The New Competitive Golfer," audience members gained insight into tournament players age 9 to 13. Brunton shared research and insights about the emotional and physical issues instructors working with this age group must navigate and he

Our Proponent Group Partners:



showed how his New Competitive Golfer program for this age group is a very profitable endeavor for him and his staff.

Building the Big Idea down at the farthest end of the youth demographic, a trio of Proponent members gave chapter-and-verse on “The Power of 6 and Under.” Kate Tempesta, Nicole Weller and Brendan Elliott – all with teaching businesses that are dialed in to this very young age group – explained what this very large opportunity looks like as a business and how to appropriately engage this age group. It was pointed out that when bringing these very young children into your programs you create a tremendous collateral following of parents, grandparents, siblings and others who become part of each kid’s “gallery.”

It was fitting to begin the program with a business-development address by Andy Hilts, head of instruction and education for GolfTEC. Andy outlined the GolfTEC method for success with an emphasis on those two crucial ‘R’ words—Renewals and Referrals. Responsible now for 25 percent of all privately booked lessons in the U.S., GolfTEC has cracked the code on golfer psychology when it comes to continuing as a lesson-taker and recommending friends or associates as potential students.

Attendees next heard a pair of presentations on how to teach more effectively—the ultimate and obvious key to any instructor’s success. Greg Schulze made a powerful case for the avoidance of technical language (even something as innocent-sounding as “open to the target”) in favor of language the golfer was guaranteed to understand without need for clarification.

Bernie Najjar, of Caves Valley Golf Club, then drew upon his unsurpassed resume of experiences and training to present “Create the Perfect Lesson Experience,” a true hit parade of best practices.

Attendees were taken back to their own childhood days, and given valuable tools to meet the teaching challenge of the present, with a fine presentation on the use of games by Matt Gluck and Dr.



Brian Manzella wrapped up the 2012 Summit with an entertaining and in-depth look at the science of impact.



There is one critical building block of any summit for golf instructors—including this Proponent Group event, with its “TED Talk” format resembling a hurry-up offense in NFL football. That building block is the live presentation on-range between teacher and guinea-pig student, which Kevin Weeks (top) and Dr. Jim Suttie (below) executed in brilliant fashion for participants at Cog Hill.

Dennis Sweeney.

As prelude to Virgil Herring’s biographical and analytical talk on “How to Dominate Your Market,” a rapt audience heard first about the fury of Hurricane Katrina and destruction of not just a teaching studio but also most of the Herring family residence. Told in Virgil’s highly personal style, the narrative also hit dramatic points when PGA Tour victories that rightly should have brought bursts of fame failed to do so. The reassessments and new energy that any long and serious teaching career naturally undergoes were explained in vivid style in his memorable presentation.

Also mixing the personal and analytical was Jim Hackenburg’s recounting of how Orange Whip and its product extensions were inspired, devised and slowly brought to market.

Following Jim’s tale of American capitalism crossing paths with devotion to the student came a talk by Ed Oldham that spotlighted one simple and pretty amazing idea. Titled “Flip Your Classroom with Pre-Lesson Videos,” Ed’s mini-lecture challenged Proponent members to rethink the sequence of clinics and lessons, using easily posted videos that are viewed on the student’s own time so that “homework” can be done with teacher present afterwards.

There was a tech component as well to Vicki Vanderpool’s brief discussion of SwingFix, the “Online Branded Academy” platform made famous on Golf Channel and becoming available to teachers everywhere who wish to become involved.

The presentations concluded with a stemwinder courtesy of Brian Manzella, the New Orleans-based Proponent member known for his extreme knowledge of golf motion physics and player performance—also for his voluble and witty Bayou delivery. He didn’t disappoint as he tore through nearly two hours of ideas about recent adjustments to the Ball Flight Laws and golf swing science that can help Proponent Group members refine their own teaching.

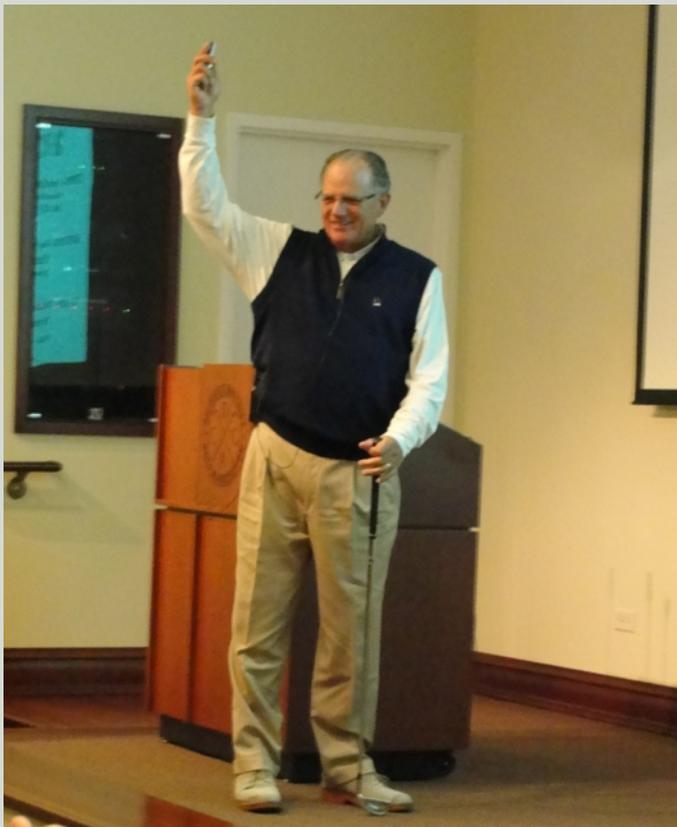
The summit ended with Brian thanking the members for an overall atmosphere of support, warmth and learning. Everyone at Proponent Group appreciated the attendees’ enthusiasm and we’re already looking forward to next year’s event.



The summit's late-afternoon outdoor segment on Monday was a Teaching Technology and Training Aids Demo event, featuring Guru, Imavex, Mizuno, Orange Whip, Provoto, SAM PuttLab, Shot By Shot, swingbyte, Swing Pal, Square It Up, Summit Golf Brands and TrackMan.



The Power of 6 and Under was the theme of Kate Tempesta, Nicole Weller and Brendan Elliott's presentation. They explained what this very large industry-wide opportunity looks like as a business and how to appropriately engage this age group with unique programming.



In the days when a razor-sharp eye and good instincts were the basis for quality golf instruction, PGA Master Professional Bill Davis had both. Building on those talents, plus his casually effective communication style, Bill has immersed himself in the science of athletic technique. In his presentation titled, "Proper Prescriptions Enhance Motor Skill Development," the Jupiter Hills Club pro showed summit-goers how his highly developed expertise in motor skills development governs his work with students of all abilities.



In 2013, documenting the evidence for instruction programs as a facility-wide profit-builder will be a major push for Proponent Group. The work done by Elizabeth Granahan (right) as a teacher, and by Michele Gajderowicz in the marketing and business-modeling, add up to ground-breaking new concepts at Chester Valley G.C. near Philadelphia. These ideas for creating an academy program—and "selling" that to a host facility, will be examined further in upcoming articles and business guides for Proponent Group members.

MARKETING

Rebuilding Your Corporate Group Business—Strategies and Tactics

By David Gould, Staff Editor

Asked recently about her marketing efforts to corporate clientele, Kellie Stenzel began with a disclaimer. “I’ve never been one to look back,” says the Proponent member and PGA Director of Instruction at town-owned Palm Beach Golf Course. “Whatever opportunities are out there right now—that’s what I’ll focus on, not what happened in the past.”

Stenzel is talking about life after the bubble known as corporate golf dramatically popped, along with stocks, real estate and so much else. “I’ve adjusted my game plan,” she says, “to deal with the mood of austerity in this country and also with the reality of corporate people having their decisions questioned so much more than in the past.”

Even amid these conditions, Stenzel continues to host an annual corporate golf event that is a highlight of her year. Gathering up the top minority CEO’s in the U.S. at a large outing in Boca Raton, her team of instructors “comes with its A game” to make the golf element a huge hit and keep the event firing on all cylinders. In the not-so-recent past Stenzel would receive a punch list of golf-instruction deliverables and no dollar figure to work by.

“There was no budget—you spent whatever it took to make everyone happy,” she recalls. Now there are limitations, but very high standards remain and the payoff for participants is still significant. “These attendees network with each other pretty brilliantly,” Stenzel says. “The value they achieve for their businesses by being here and building relationships is huge. It’s our job to make the golf part seamless and enjoyable—people have to play decent golf, they have to enjoy themselves out there—that’s on us to make it happen.”

Laird Small, director of instruction at the Pebble Beach Golf Academy at the famed Monterey Peninsula resort, accepts the same burden: Corpo-

rate people who don’t exactly know how to play golf have to receive help that’s potent enough to give them something they can take on the course. Otherwise, the investment won’t be seen as providing a proper return. Pebble being Pebble, the corporate dollar seems to flow in Small’s direction more readily than it does elsewhere.

“It’s tricky,” he says, of business-driven academy activity. “So many people come to our schools with a lot of rust on them. I have golfers come up to me with the glove I marked to teach them proper grip, and they’ll say, ‘I haven’t played since the day you did this for me.’ Now they’re back at one of our schools.” It’s easily possible, he notes, to “ruin someone’s round” with teaching that ties them up instead of smoothing out their swing action. The phrase Johnny Miller used to use about a “WOOD” tip— that it “Works Only One Day,” absolutely applies to corporate schools and outings in the current environment. Kellie Stenzel’s conclusion is straightforward: “They won’t come back the next year unless you can cover that need in your teaching.”

Of course, getting corporate groups to come back is a secondary problem—the principal issue for many teachers is attracting the business in the first place. Four



Corporate dollars are coming back to golf instruction but its often through small, low-profile events.

legs of the table are required, and three of them are seemingly well in place:

Businesses need to have budget dollars, which large corporations absolutely do have, according to all the economic data about private-sector balance sheets and capital surpluses;

Businesses need to consider rewards for key customers and associates important—that's self-evident from the sports marketing activity that still steams along, with its many invitations and incentives to attendees;

Golf must still be considered a worthy relationship-builder—a value every instructor who retains some degree of corporate-group clientele witnesses.

The perception issue is as big an obstacle as any, according to Proponent member Jon Tattersall. "Banks and other businesses want to make big gestures and bring people together," says Tattersall. "You have to help them keep it low-profile, or wrap it into a charitable cause, otherwise they are taking a risk of getting blowback for leaving the office with their golf clubs."

His advice, echoed by others, is to never lose sight of golf's value as a relationship-builder and as a token of appreciation to clients and customers. Also, remember that the schools and events you run have to be partly about the mixing and matching. The right people have to be with the right people, as one instructor puts it, and what happens when those individuals are paired up needs to have some magic to it, or at least a lot of pleasure.

Thirdly, "the days of just taking orders" have to be forgotten, according to Tattersall, and seen as an oddity that won't come back for years and years, if ever.

"We as golf professionals have to be creative," he says. "You're going to get a lot of no answers. Every time you make a presentation and get that no answer, you have to learning something."

To grow a business, all our Proponent Group members agreed, you have to make new relationships. Golf is one of very few very good ways to do that. Hold



Jon Tattersall has successfully cultivated major corporate clients with innovative instruction and relationship-building programs for more than 20 years.

on to your belief in that fact, and act on it, and what you're able to achieve may surprise you.

Coming Weekly Beginning in Mid-October: "Summit 2012: What's the Big Idea?"

Nearly 20 new video presentations to Help You Grow Your Business and Your Teaching Skills. All were recorded live at the Summit earlier this month. If you couldn't join us in Chicago, you can still see all the cutting-edge presentations in the comfort of your own home or office. Stay tuned to watch and learn.

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT: SWINGBYTE

Swingbyte Wireless Golf Swing Analyzer: Low-Cost, Real-Time Feedback on Mobile Devices

It was described by Golf Digest as one of the “12 Coolest Items” for 2012—now



the Swingbyte wireless 3D analyzer has been adopted for everyday use by some of golf’s leading teachers. Top-tier coaches who include Swingbyte in their diagnostics and training praise both its accuracy and its ease of use.

“Players who are serious about improving are constantly looking for feedback on their swing,” says Proponent member Dr. Jim Suttie. “Swingbyte helps them know what’s going on with their swing without guessing. To me the convenience, precision and affordability put this product in a league of its own.”

About the size of a flash drive and weighing less than an ounce, Swingbyte attaches to the shaft of any golf club below the grip. As the club makes contact with the ball, a sensor transmits a digitized version of the swing to Apple and Android smartphones and tablets. That visual and quantitative data can be studied during practice sessions and archived “in the cloud” for future reference.

With the information Swingbyte provides – clubhead speed; the club’s true plane (from address to impact); face angle relative to swing path; loft and lie at address and impact; angle of attack and tempo – golfers can identify problems and work on their own or with an instructor to correct them.

“I separate instruction into two areas—art and science,” Suttie says. “The instructor develops the artistic process by finding the swing the student can repeat. A device like Swingbyte produces the science part by showing exactly what’s happening in the swing so the teacher and student can find a swing that works for the student.”

Swingbyte complements the technology that Brad Redding, a PGA Master Professional and a GOLF Magazine Top 100 Teacher, is already using as director of instruction at The Golf Academy at The Members Club at Grande Dunes in Myrtle Beach, S.C. “I use high-speed, high-definition video cameras and computer programs. But the neat thing about Swingbyte is that it helps you focus on one aspect of your swing at a time. That

makes practice time more productive for students and their instructors,” Redding explains.

Tim O’Neal, a PGA Master Professional and head golf professional at North Shore Country Club in Chicago, feels the “immediacy” of the Swingbyte feedback helps golfers develop consistency. “When you can see exactly what the club is doing during your swing, and then tee up another ball immediately, you’re going to develop a swing you can repeat and you’re going to get to that point faster.”

Brad Brewer, who is among GOLF Magazine’s Top 100 Teachers in America and owner of the Brad Brewer Golf Academy at the Shingle Creek Golf Club in Orlando, is also a fan. “For someone to be able to make a change in their swing, they need to have a picture in their mind of what that change is going to look like,” Brewer says. “Swingbyte shows you the change, both visually and through the metrics it provides.”

“You can tell a student something all day long, but most people are visual learners,” comments Kevin Weeks, one of Golf Digest’s Top 50 instructors and the PGA Director of Instruction at Cog Hill. “Swingbyte makes it so easy for me to show someone what they’re doing, and that’s when they really do get it.”



Swingbyte attaches to the club shaft and measures a variety of data points including clubhead speed, the club’s true plane from address to impact and face angle relative to swing path.

In addition to garnering the attention of golf’s leading publications, Swingbyte was also featured on NBC Sports’ 2012 Equipment Special and was invited to present at Hank Haney’s Teach The Teachers Global Summit.

As a supplement to the real-time feedback provided by the Swingbyte app, all swings captured on a golfer’s mobile device will wirelessly upload to an online account that features additional analytics and the ability to share swings. The student or coach sees the data via an online account at my.swingbyte.com.

Swingbyte can be ordered through the company’s website, Swingbyte.com, and purchased at more than 1,800 AT&T retail stores. Swingbyte retails for \$149; PGA and LPGA members may order a Swingbyte with their PUD for \$90. To receive a PUD discount code that you can apply on checkout at Swingbyte.com, e-mail your name and facility to golfpro@swingbyte.com.

NEWSLETTER MAKEOVER CONTEST

5 Tips For A Better Instructor Newsletter



Before

After

We tweaked and updated the newsletter of Proponent Group Member Steve Patterson as shown in this Before (left) and After comparison. Your Newsletter could be next – see below for submission directions. Graphic design work is by Lisa Derian of Derian Design.

Five Key Changes to Steve's Design:

- 1) We made Steve's newsletter title, Fairways & Greens, much larger, with a graded tint background.
- 2) We expanded the column width to make it more graceful looking and shorten the "scroll" down.
- 3) Steve's informal portrait photo, previously placed at the bottom, is moved up top.
- 4) Beside Steve's photo we created a "What's Inside" box to "tease" the contents.
- 5) All headline copy was bumped up in size, along with the body text of each article.

The result is a better-organized, more flowing presentation, and more reader engagement.

If you'd like your newsletter considered for a redesign, send a sample copy by email to landerson@proponent-group.com.



STEVE PATTERSON
GOLF

Fairways
& Greens

News, Opinions and Stroke-Saving Ideas
published every other Saturday by Steve Patterson, PGA



What's Inside

- Magazine Article Spotlights Steve's Putting Concepts.
- Rediscovering a Mental-Game Pioneer, Tim Galwey
- The Custom Clubfitting Experience—High Value (at No Charge)
- Need a Laugh? Video Humor on the Range with "Mr. Peterman"
- Schedule Lessons with a Great New Online Gadget

Featured Golf Video

Range' Golf Balls with John O'Hurley
This video could easily be considered for inclusion on Saturday Night Live. What a great spoof! Enjoy.



Colorado Avid Golfer July Issue Article

In the July issue of this wonderful magazine I have an instructional article featured that covers the topic of alternative putting styles. We were able to capture some great putting photos on the green at the awesome 12th hole at Fossil Trace Golf Club that will show the various methods.

As many know I believe conventional putting is the least effective way of getting the ball in the hole and this article covers long and belly putting along with cross handed putting styles. The July issue of Colorado Avid Golfer magazine is currently available at Fossil Trace and other shops and retailers. I urge you to try an alternative putting style soon.

The Mental Game of Golf

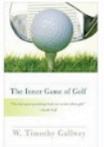
Recently, the church I attend had a used book sale and I came across a book that I had not read in some 25 years called the Inner Game of Golf by Timothy Gallwey. My recall was that I had enjoyed this book way back when and for \$2.00 I added it to the wonderful collection of books I bought that day. Boy am I glad I did as I believe that this is the best book ever written that covers effective mental techniques to playing the game of golf.

I discovered that Gallwey has a revision edition that is currently available used on Amazon.com for as little as \$4.95 plus shipping. If you are interested in improving your thought processes on the golf course order this book today.

Go to this link: http://www.amazon.com/Inner-Game-Golf-Timothy-Gallwey/dp/0812979702/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1341844986&sr=8-1&keywords=inner+game+of+golf

I flipped open the book to a random page and want to share an excerpt: "One of the greatest obstacles to relaxed concentration is over concern with results. When a person thinks that his goal is to achieve an external result, there is usually a will conflict that will interfere with his attaining it. It is not an easy thing to understand in a culture that has valued external success as single-mindedly as ours has, but it's true nonetheless."

I have enjoyed and gotten much from the writings of other sports psychologist but the Inner Game of Golf provides insight and direction that helps me clarify what I need to do to play my best and enjoy the game more. But not only will these ideas help me, the thoughts will certainly be used in my instruction with all players.



Complimentary Custom Club Fittings

Thinking about adding a new club or clubs to your set? I suggest you schedule a complimentary club fitting with me at Fossil Trace Golf Club soon. We feature fitting systems from Titleist, Cobra, Ping and Callaway. Contact me today to set up your custom fitting appointment.

USchedule - Online Lesson Scheduler

When you are ready to meet on the lesson tee there is no easier way to set up your reservation than using USchedule. The opportunity to reserve a time is available to you 24/7 from your home computer.
Visit: <http://fossiltrace.uschedule.com/OnlineAppointments.aspx>

Fairways and Greens,
Steve Patterson
PGA Certified Golf Professional
Fossil Trace Golf Club
<http://stevepattersongolf.com/>

China's Golf Boom—A New Frontier for American Instructors?

By David Gould, Staff Editor

When John Strawn wrote “Driving the Green,” a book that turned out to be the definitive case study of how golf courses get built, he hardly suspected he would one day become an expert on the golf industry in Asia. Likewise, Lee Schmidt didn't begin his golf architecture career hoping to become one of China's most prolific course designers—that's simply how things turned out. Recently back from a trip to the People's Republic, Schmidt took time to share a revealing story. It involves a meeting he had with a Chinese businessman whose first golf experience was a match against a friend who had been playing for some time.

“Of course the friend won,” says Schmidt, who is a partner in the highly successful Schmidt-Curley design firm. “But they made a rematch bet—for \$10,000. The guy telling me this story asked for one year to learn the game and get better, then they would play again, which they did,” Schmidt continues. “This time it went the other way, and he won his 10 grand. Now he's a member of five different country clubs and he's making plans to build his own golf course. That gives you a glimpse of what's going on now in China's golf culture.”

To many if not most Asian cultures, golf has the same hypnotic allure it has to you and me. Over the last six years in China the number of courses has soared from 170 to an estimated 550 or so. Hundreds more are under construction or in planning, although officially course-building is in a moratorium. Has the country hit either a big bump or an actual wall in its economic growth, and in its ability to continue with course construction?

Perhaps, but at least there is now a golf infrastructure. We asked John Strawn to help us understand how North American teaching professionals might fare if they ventured into this environment. A journalist and author whose career path has taken him to the position of CEO of the Robert Trent Jones II design firm and to his current post as president of Arthur Hills/Steve Forrest and Associates, Strawn offers his Asia expertise in this engaging Q & A about golf instruction opportunities on the other side of the globe.



Proponent Group: John, in your travels, how much golf instruction do you see actually taking place in Asia, at this time?

John Strawn: Let me start with what I think is good news from China. Despite Beijing's current moratorium on new course development, there's a tremendous interest in golf among young people, especially college-age students and young professionals. Knowing how to play golf and belonging to a club represent success in modern China. You could

say that golf membership is part of a “triple play” of most desirable accomplishments—owning an apartment or house, buying a car and belonging to a golf club.

PG: Seems like it would be relatively easier to get the house and the car, right?

JS: By far the golf membership is the most elusive of the three. The best guesses I've heard put the Chinese golfing population at only 30,000. There's some mystery around these stats, because new golf development is officially banned. Developers have used various ruses to build courses, including things like marking golf course acreage as an “eco-zone” or a “forest park” on plans submitted to the government. But lately the central government has become more determined—it's very tough now to get anything started.

PG: But still, for the golf instructor there doesn't need to be a constant flow of new projects.

JS: That's right. Wealthy Chinese and members of the ruling elite definitely play and they want to improve. The courses I visited this summer in Beijing were busy, especially on weekends, and the parking lots were full of luxury cars. Most of the clubs attempt to provide instruction, but many of the members have also traveled elsewhere in Asia, Europe and the USA to play golf.

PG: How do you measure the interest among young people, few of whom have actually played golf?

JS: I attend lots of golf trade shows, and simulator manufacturers form the single largest group of exhibitors. There were at least 20 companies showing off their sys-

tems at the last Beijing show in March and those booths were the most crowded. People lined up for a chance to hit shots, and large crowds gathered to watch mostly novice golfers hit shots.

From what I could see, the Chinese programmers are generous with their feedback. I saw swings that for sure would hit lazy slices about 130 yards fly down the simulated fairway about 230 yards. So as a teaching tool, maybe not so great, but as a means of encouraging people to learn to play golf—excellent.

PG: Once they're encouraged to play, and get excited about it—what's going to happen next?

JS: China now faces a situation similar to what Japanese golf confronted three decades ago—many more people wanting to play golf than there are opportunities to play. In North America and Europe, we're used to a system that lets anyone who can afford a green fee and a few lessons take up the game and have access to decent courses. But the barriers to playing in China are high, with only private clubs with pricey memberships available. Right now, there is no inclination in China to build daily fee or muni-type courses.

There are relatively few public driving ranges outside of Hong Kong, so simulators are now a popular option, and borrowing from a Korean example (and Korea is a huge trendsetter in Asian popular culture), putting simulators in bars and clubs is growing in popularity as a date-night activity.

If China is going to be the future of golf in Asia, as many people have thought over the last decade, a lot will have to change. But the interest in the game, which far outstrips what we see in the US among young people, is an encouraging sign of what could be possible.

PG: Is there a brand-name homegrown Chinese golf academy now? Is one of the foreign brand names at all established, anywhere in Asia?

JS: Cheng Jun, the first Chinese professional to win on a big tour when he won the European Tour's China Open in 1997, opened the Cheng Jun Academy in partnership with the well-known Australia touring pro turned teacher, Kal Llewelyn, in 2003. Their academy is at the Tian'an Golf Course, a 27-hole facility near the Beijing Capital Airport, which has a membership that includes many of Beijing's top golfers. Llewelyn and Cheng Jun taught Liang Wen-chong, who is China's top male professional. Llewelyn established his reputation in Australia, but has also taught in India as well as China. Gary Player Academies has established one facility in China, near Suzhou. Nicklaus Academy opened a facility at Ten Times Golf Resort in Qingdao, Shandong Province this summer. That's their only academy in Asia.

Gary Gilchrist has taught at Mission Hills in Shenzhen over the last several years, doing two-week tutorials for young players, and has also taught many Asian players at his Academy in Orlando.

Cindy Reid runs a golf academy also at Mission Hills, and Bloomberg News reported last year that she charges \$600/hour. Shanghai's Silport Golf Club has a David Leadbetter Golf Academy. Formerly the home of the China Open, Silport still has a strong membership but its two courses aren't quite up to the standard of the best new courses.

Dale Lynch, another top Australia teaching pro, worked with a number of Korean and Chinese players in Australia before moving his Academy to the USA three years ago. His biggest takeaway from working with Korean golfers, especially the girls, was that they would do anything asked of them to get better.

Their families, too, would make great sacrifices to support their careers, and the results of this commitment are clearly evident on the LPGA. New Zealand and Australia have both attracted aspiring golfers from Asia, in part because both have strong golf traditions, with affordable courses and teaching academies—again, unlike China, where the game now is exclusively for the elite.

PG: Would you imagine that a foreign brand-name instruction academy would have a big advantage over someone who was talented but little-known?

JS: Clearly, Asian luxury-goods consumers are highly brand-conscious, so just as Chinese developers have shown a strong preference for the top brand-name golf architects—Jack Nicklaus, Greg Norman, Arnold Palmer, Gary Player—they will favor the best-known teaching academies. Right now, Chinese developers still look to the West on all important golf-related issues, although the future window for that preference is probably going to be measured in years, not decades.

But if a teacher comes in and has clearly demonstrable success—i.e., a player he or she has taught wins on a pro tour—that will probably translate into an enduring advantage. So while most Chinese know nothing about golf, the people who are important decision-makers in the golf world know golf's big names, therefore they recognize the names that will have power in the market.

PG: Could you make the case that teachers are needed and a skilled instructor who moves to Asia would be able to make his/her fortune?

JS: The success of the Korean women professionals on the LPGA Tour, and now with the first ripples of the Chinese wave hitting western shores with the major win by Feng Shanshan (LPGA Championship) and a 14-year-old Chinese boy, Andy Zhang, qualifying for the US Open at Olympic Club, shows how important good instruction is. Gary Gilchrist worked with Feng, for example, while Zhang is a product of Orlando's David Leadbetter Academy, where he has lived since the age of 10. For elite players with the resources, coming to train and play in the US (or Australia or New Zealand) will likely continue to be the preferred option for the foreseeable future.

PG: Could a U.S. citizen get the proper work visas to pursue his/her career there?

JS: That would not be a problem, especially if a local firm or person of influence was sponsoring the visit, or the company for whom the US citizen worked was well-known. Coming for visits of up to two months and working “informally” could also be arranged.

PG: Language is obviously an issue; can it be dealt with effectively?

JS: Language would not be a problem. More and more young people speak English, and arranging for full-time translators is easy. However, not every person who claims to speak English really can, so there are lots of opportunities for misunderstanding. For example, an American consultant I know sent an email to his Chinese client saying “I can’t wait to see you,” and that was interpreted as “I am not coming.”

PG: Do you notice any other “frontier” areas where a teaching pro with wanderlust might think about planting his or her flag?

JS: Russia has huge upside for golf, for many of the same reasons the game is popular in China. It’s a part of the package of a modern society’s amenities, and a symbol of success. That’s both good and bad.

It helps the game grow, though it reinforces the idea that the game is only for the wealthy, rather than being a popular sport, as it is in the USA and much of Europe. Swedes can join very good courses for the equivalent of \$1,500. But Russia is building some resort courses, and there is a lot of interest among young professionals in learning the game. Morocco, Turkey and Egypt have all built golf tourism facilities, too, although they tend to take their cues from Europe rather than the US.

PG: The Americans you know who have done well in Asia – do they share certain traits?

JS: Most of the expatriate Americans I know in Asia love the excitement and energy of its cities, which is the part of the culture most of them experience directly.

Dana Fry, for example, is an American golf course architect now living in Hong Kong, and he’s become what the British used to call “an Asian hand.” He told me he can’t imagine living anywhere else now. It takes a real commitment to making the adjustment—it’s not the pace, nor the rhythm, nor the space that we’re accustomed to. But people are people wherever you go, even if they do act funny at times.

The Troon View on Teaching in Asia: Ten Fundamentals

We also had a chance to connect with David Townend, an Australian PGA member who has been on the ground in Asia for 10-plus years and serves as Troon Golf’s director of operations for the Asian region. Here are excerpts from our conversation:



David Townend

- 1) The number of instructors migrating to Asia from the U.S., Europe and Australia is pretty staggering. In China you can find a Western professional teaching at a range in what would be considered a fourth-tier city. These are places that still don’t have McDonalds or Starbucks or even KFC.
- 2) Over the past decade big-name academies like David Leadbetter, Butch Harmon and Hank Haney came into China. Most are gone now. They’ve been replaced by local academies operated by Chinese instructors who learned under the marquee foreign professionals. Troon Golf has had some success with its academy brand in Korea and China.
- 3) Teaching professionals trained in the PGA programs of the Western world will remain in demand in Asia for a long time, due to the lack of any such programs or courses in Asia.
- 4) Whether or not a skilled instructor will make his or her fortune in Asia is entirely up to them. There are barriers to success, such as language and culture.
- 5) Americans who succeed in Asia are the open-minded ones who leave personal baggage behind. They show that they care about the locals and they seldom comment about how things are done in America. Work ethic is very important. The foreigner who comes to China expecting a 9-to-5 workday quickly becomes the target of criticism.
- 6) Most golf instructors have an assistant who translates for them. You have to choose this person well and let them help you develop your language skills. There are Westerners who come to China to teach golf who have done well learning Chinese—usually people in their 20s.
- 7) Staying in one place geographically is important. It lets you establish a core clientele. Most instructors I’ve watched over the past decade move around too frequently to achieve this.
- 8) The newer and more developing areas for golf include Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar and India. Golf will continue to grow in nearly all Southeast Asian countries. Qualifications as a PGA of America member are sufficient for a U.S. citizen to gain the proper working visas to operate in China and most other Asian countries.
- 9) Opportunities will be relationship-driven. Better jobs in big cities like Hong Kong, Singapore and Seoul depend on that factor. Anyone who is looking to take on a new life adventure has to realize that their life may be a lot harder for a number of years before it becomes better.
- 10) If you aren’t adventurous when it comes to trying new foods you should probably stay home. Asia is an exotic place with a unique culinary culture. As guests in these countries we need to impress our hosts that we’re open to giving everything a try.

MEMBER MILESTONES

Welcome September's New Proponent Group Members

Christopher Ardolina, Lake Shore C.C., Glencoe, IL - Full Member

Steve Bann, Saddlebrook Resort, Wesley Chapel, FL - Full Member

Jay Berkowitz, Tuscan Ridge G.C., Paradise, CA - Associate Member

Jef Carr, Asundsholm G.& C.C., Boras, Sweden - International Member

Gary Gilchrist, Gary Gilchrist Golf Academy, Howie-in-the-Hills, FL - Full Member

Jim Goergen, Windermere G.C., Cumming, GA - Full Member

Nick Kumpis, Pelican Hill G.A., Newport Beach, CA - Full Member

Travis Lloyd, CC of Landfall, Wilmington, NC - Associate Member

Kevin Lozares, Palo Alto G.C., CA - Full Member

Corey Lundberg, Club at Carlton Woods, The Woodlands, TX - Full Member

Dale Lynch, Saddlebrook Resort, Wesley Chapel, FL - Full Member

Jon Roy, Golf Association of Ontario, Canada - Full Member

Cathy Schmidt, Terra Ceia Bay G.C., Palmetto, FL - Full Member

Scott Sedgwick, Louisville C.C., KY - Full Member

Doug Strawbridge, GolfTEC - Upper Kirby, Houston, TX - Full Member

Vangellow Named LPGA's 2012 National Teacher of the Year

Proponent Group member **Deb Vangellow**, Director of Instruction at Sweetwater C.C. in Sugarland, TX has been named the 2012 National Teacher of the Year by the LPGA. Proponent Group members named among the LPGA's Section Teachers of the Year include:

Deb Vangellow in the Central Section, **Alison Curdt** in the Western Section. **Dr. Debbie Crews** was named Pro-

fessional of the Year in the Central Section while **Kay Cornelius** and **Nicole Weller** were named Junior Golf Achievement winners in the Central and Southeast Sections respectively. Cornelius was also named the National Junior Golf Achievement award winner.

Golf Digest Names New List of America's Best Young Teachers

The magazine has released their latest biannual revision of the 40 Best Teachers Under 40. Nearly half are Proponent Group members including:

Steve Atherton, Eagle Springs G.C., Wolcott, CO

Corey Badger, Golf Lab, Salt Lake City, UT

Jason Birnbaum, Alpine C.C., Demarest, NJ

Mark Blackburn, Gunter's Landing, Guntersville, AL

Jason Carbone, Baltusrol G.C., Springfield, NJ

Tim Cooke, Long Cove Club, Hilton Head Island, SC

Andrew Dawes, Hershey C.C., Hershey, PA

Travis Fulton, Tour Academy, Ponte Vedra Beach, FL

Andy Hilts, GolfTEC Headquarters, Centennial, CO

Erika Larkin, Stonewall G.C., Gainesville, VA

Cameron McCormick, Brook Hollow G.C., Dallas, TX

Megan Padua, Belfair Plantation, Bluffton, SC

Trillium Sellers, Chevy Chase Club, Chevy Chase, MD

Justin Sheehan, Caves Valley G.C., Owings Mills, MD

Kate Tempesta, Kate Tempesta's Urban G.A., NY, NY

Trent Wearer, Trent Wearer G.A., Englewood, CO

Joey Wuertemberger, Jim McLean Golf Center, Fort Worth, TX

Two Ivy League Schools Choose Proponent Group Members as their Golf Coaches

Harvard University has named **Kevin Rhoads** the head coach for both the men's and women's teams. Rhoads has been the Women's head coach for the past nine years. Meanwhile, **Bob Heinz** is the new head coach at the U. of Pennsylvania. Heinz was a three-time Ivy League champion at Yale in the early '90s.



Kevin Rhoads



Bob Heinz

The Proponent Team:

Lorin Anderson President

David Gould Staff Editor

Bob Mulcahy Consultant

Lori Bombka Operations Assistant

Debbie Clements Accounting



1513 Cherry Ridge Drive

Heathrow, FL 32746

407-878-1235 Phone

321-363-1191 Fax

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