

# COLLADODATE PROPONENT GROUP

PROPONENT GROUP NEWSLETTER \$20

OCTOBER 2018

## RICH LERNER “FIRESIDE CHAT” ADDED TO SUMMIT LINEUP

We are very pleased to announce another outstanding addition to an already packed Proponent Summit in Dallas, TX November 4-6. Golf Channel veteran host **Rich Lerner** will be our opening-night, after-dinner “fireside chat.” He will offer his insights to our members’ questions about all things golf.

Lerner joined Golf Channel in 1997, and has been a versatile mainstay ever since. He currently serves as a play-by-play host for Golf Channel’s PGA Tour tournament coverage, and as lead host for the network’s Live From programming, airing on-site from the game’s biggest events. During Live From, Lerner writes and narrates essays that add perspective to critical moments in the sport, and the players who make them happen.

This year’s impressive Summit lineup includes: **Tim Cutshall, Scott Fawcett, Sam Froggatte, Jeff Isler, David LaPour, Tony Morgan, Dennis Sales, Todd Sones, Colin Swatton, Kate Tempesta, Trent Wearer, Nicole Weller** and **Kevin Weeks**.

We’ve also added a new bonus session on Sunday afternoon to help our members who are in job-search mode with insights into how to survive and thrive during the stress of the job hunt. This session is open to any and all members attending the Summit whether or not you are currently looking for a position or hiring for a position.

To learn more about joining us in Dallas next month, see pages 3-4 in this newsletter for all the details. To register, log on to the members’ website and click on Summit Registration in the left-hand menu.



Golf Channel’s Rich Lerner

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## PGA SHOW SAVE THE DATE: NEW SALES TRAINING WORKSHOPS

Proponent Group is very pleased to announce that we will be changing up our normal PGA Show week events to include a new day of Sales Training Workshops on Wednesday, January 22nd in Room W109B at the Orange County Convention Center.

These sales training sessions have been frequently requested over the last few years and with Andy Hilts as our Director, we now have someone who has done significant sales training and can deliver the information you need to drive more top-line revenues in 2019 and beyond.

The current bull market is now in its 10th year, the longest winning streak on Wall Street in the past century.

Economic cycles

dictate that the market will slow along with the overall economy sometime in the near future. Understanding how to do a better job of selling your services will prepare you for the next downturn and give you a big edge on your competitors. Proponent Group is all about keeping our members ahead of the curve. To grow your business in the future, you will need to have a high level of competence in the sales process. These workshops will give you the baseline knowledge to hone your sales skills.

*Some of the topics that will be explained and trained include:*

- Believe in Your Value
- Offer a Gateway Product
- Have a Clear Sales Process with Each Student
- Learn the Secrets to Pre-bookings
- Maximize Your Referral Business
- Keep Students Motivated to Continue Their Training
- Increase Merchandise Sales

The two Proponent Sales Training Workshops will run from 9am-noon or from 1-4pm. You may choose to attend either session as they will both cover the same content. There will be a nominal fee of \$75 for Proponent Group members to attend. The sessions are exclusively for our members. Mark your calendars now.

Registration details to come soon, along with a full PGA Show Week Proponent Group schedule.



Andy Hilts

## WHAT OUR MEMBERS ARE WATCHING

### MOST-VIEWED PROPONENT VIDEOS THIS MONTH

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

*In August, these were the 10 most-watched videos:*

- 1) **Tyler Ferrell** – A Good Release: The Shoulder or the Wrist?
- 2) **Chris Rowe** – Keys to Teaching Success at a Private Club
- 3) **Dr. Rob Neal** – Biomechanics in Action
- 4) **Martin Hall** – My 4 Keys to Being an Effective Coach
- 5) **Mike Bender, Martin Hall, David Leadbetter, Lynn Marriott, Cameron McCormick and Pia Nilsson** – Summit Super Panel
- 6) **Cameron McCormick** – The Journey to High Performance
- 7) **David Grecic** – Self-Efficacy
- 8) **Will Robins** – The 5 Hurdles to Overcome When Transitioning to a Coaching Model
- 9) **Dr. Greg Rose** – Power Development for Golf
- 10) **Dr. Rob Neal and Layne Savoie** – Wedge Craft: Friction, Spin and Launch

# 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.***



Kate Tempesta



Todd Sones



Scott Fawcett



Trent Wearner



Nicole Weller



Kevin Weeks

Join us in Dallas to:

- Hear from Jason Day's coach about the process he used to take Day to #1 in the world.
- Catch our Super Panel: Froggatte, Sones and Weeks dish on helping students make more putts.
- 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.
- 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.
- Ask Golf Channel's Rich Lerner your questions about the game's top players and events.

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

## PROPONENT GROUP PARTNERS



# 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 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 Hyatt Place directly at 972-691-1659. Our room block will likely sell out, as it has in past years, so plan accordingly.

**Cost:** Our Summit package includes ALL meals, ALL education sessions, free professional headshot and an expanded participant gift package for only \$595.

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).

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

## THE AGENDA

### Sunday, November 4

- |          |   |
|----------|---|
| 1pm      | Optional Golf at Cowboys Golf Club Course   |
| 3-5:30pm | BONUS: The Early Bird Gets the Job.<br>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<br>After dinner "Fireside Chat" with <b>Rich Lerner</b>   |

### Monday, November 5

- |             |   |
|-------------|---|
| 7am         | Breakfast   |
| 8-10:30am   | The 3 Pillars for Growing Your Business <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create Seamless Marketing Campaigns</li> <li>• Leverage Sales Opportunities</li> <li>• Strengthen Your Branding</li> </ul> |
| 10:30am     | Break   |
| 11am        | Putting Panel: <b>Sam Froggatte, Todd Sones</b> and <b>Kevin Weeks</b> answer any and all questions on putting  |
| 12:30pm     | Lunch   |
| 1:30pm      | Transferring Skills from Training to the Golf Course ( <b>Trent Wearer</b> )  |
| 2:30pm      | Junior Live Lessons: Secrets to Teaching the Youngest Golfers ( <b>Nicole Weller</b> )  |
| 3:30-6:00pm | Teaching Technology and Training Aids<br>Demo Day   |
| 6pm         | Cocktails and Dinner at Cowboys Golf Club   |

### Tuesday, November 6

- |         |   |
|---------|---|
| 7am     | Breakfast   |
| 8am     | What's Next for Teaching Buildings ( <b>Tim Cutshall</b> with <b>Jeff Isler, Dennis Sales</b> and <b>David LaPour</b> ) |
| 9:30am  | Training through Technology ( <b>Tony Morgan</b> )  |
| 10:30am | Break   |
| 10:45am | Performance Coaching: A True Plan for Success ( <b>Colin Swatton</b> )  |
| Noon    | Lunch   |
| 1pm     | Birdie Basics: Helping Children Learn and Love the Game of Golf Through Play ( <b>Kate Tempesta</b> )                   |
| 2pm     | Strategizing with Statistics ( <b>Scott Fawcett</b> )   |

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

# NETWORKING STILL MATTERS... A LOT



By Lorin Anderson, *Founder*

One of the very best reasons to attend any certification or continuing education event is to have face-to-face conversations with your peers. In a digitally connected world we are lulled into thinking that watching Youtube videos and scrolling our social media feeds keeps us “in the loop.” Actually, most of it is noise and

it’s the real conversations that often lead to action. Face-to-face interaction conveys a lot more information than just the words spoken and creates a level of trust that just doesn’t come from text messages.

Last month I had the opportunity to spend three days with 45 of my peers from NBCUniversal in a training event that included lots of face-to-face discussion. It was a crash course in getting to know a lot of influential people in our company whom I had never met before and knew very little about. After three days of group projects, meals, social activities and a few evening drinks in the hotel bar, I had enjoyed the opportunity to learn about all sorts of company businesses and individual projects that I’m certain will greatly inform my decisions going forward and will provide me with a new network I can tap into whenever I need to cultivate a second or third opinion.

While I was at the NBCUniversal event last month I had dinner sitting next to an executive from one of our other sports businesses—it provides services to more than six million junior athletes each year. His division has been working on a few ideas to add golf resources to their offerings and by the time dessert was served we had

agreed to have a meeting with our teams to discuss a half-dozen possible ways we may be able to help each other going forward. Best of all, a couple of those possibilities could each be its own significant business that would directly deliver new students to Proponent Group members.

There is no way we would have discovered all these potential opportunities without a face-to-face discussion and by developing a personal relationship.

I can’t guarantee what will come of the networking at next month’s Proponent Group Summit in Dallas, but I can tell you that members at past summits have found that the networking there has had a huge influence on their careers. One member chose to run for national office after a discussion at our summit. Another chose to move his business into an off-course indoor facility after talking to Summit-goers who had done the same. Another was looking to expand his operation and ended up hiring two younger members whom he first met at one of our Summits.

Sure the presentations have a ton of value and alone are worth the annual trip, but the real bonus value comes from the new friends you will make, the bigger network you will be able to tap into and the shared knowledge you gain access to. There is a very specific reason we always include all the meals in our Summit package and why we offer pre-Summit golf. It’s all designed to allow you more time to network with each other, and that is where much of the Summit magic really happens.

There is no doubt significant career-changing moments will happen at the 2018 Proponent Summit in Dallas, but it can’t be you unless you are in the room. Register today to join us in Texas and I’ll hope to get the opportunity to have lunch or dinner with you while we’re there. Who knows what might come of our conversation. **PG**

## PROPONENT GROUP PARTNERS



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**CHUCK COOK**

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

## BOOK DEMO

## HOW ABOUT THAT 20 PERCENT BREAK THEY MENTIONED?

# TAX PREP: TRICKIER THIS YEAR, BUT OUTCOME SHOULD BE POSITIVE FOR MANY TEACHERS

By David Gould, Staff Editor

Reports of major tax reform in the making came hot and heavy in late 2017. Anyone with a decent income was paying heed as Congress vowed to ratchet up their take-home compensation. Conclusive evidence on that point will have to wait until federal returns get figured and filed. That's due to the intricacies of the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (TCJA), which are certainly plentiful and too granular to permit blanket generalities.

Having said that, news arrived last month about a major update to what TCJA is all about. It concerns small business owners and the so-called “pass-through” form of business revenue. In this 182-page clarification from the IRS there are long-awaited details that Proponent members and their accountants would naturally be curious about—especially given the 20 percent tax break this section of the Act promises.

Having these particulars delivered a full eight months after passage of the original law is far from ideal for those who take tax planning seriously. It's a testament, experts say, to how loosely worded and last-minute the section on pass-through companies and businesses was in the first place.

Before addressing this new information, it's worth reviewing the basics of the TCJA. That starts with a reminder that posted federal tax rates have come down. The old 15 percent bracket is now the 12 percent bracket. The next bracket above that used to carry a 25 percent rate, it's now at 22 percent. The one above that, which formerly skimmed off 28 percent, now takes 24 percent. Higher up the rate chart there is minimal change from the old percentages.

The TCJA, like any omnibus tax bill, is naturally going to “giveth and taketh away.” While the chart of rates and brackets for the federal tax you pay looks friendlier, it has to be put in the blender with new changes to the rules concerning the personal



exemption, the standard deduction and the child tax credit. The personal exemption, which last year was \$4,050, is no longer. To make up for its elimination, lawmakers have roughly doubled the standard deduction, from \$6,350 for single filers to \$12,000 and from \$12,700 for married couples to \$24,000. Per-child credits are increased, so the sum total of rates and deductions will be positive for many if not most.

This brings us to the lip-smacking 20 percent tax deduction on owners of basically any business that isn't a corporation—this would include sole proprietorships, S-corps, LLCs, partnerships and anything else a Proponent member could be using as his or her structure. Let it be said right here that no article of this length could possibly cover this topic comprehensively. In fact, what's practical at this point is merely to lay out helpful advice on how to approach the topic with a professional tax preparer so that the two of you can talk about it sensibly and productively. And here are seven key points that will help you do that.

- **It's referred to as the “Section 199A deduction” or the “deduction for qualified business income.”** Politically, this was a way for Congress to hand corporations their juicy new 21 percent tax rate—slashed from 35 percent—and not be hit with complaints from small and medium-sized businesses saying what-about-us?

- **The first data point the IRS provides on Section 199A is about income and eligibility.** The guidance notes the the relief “is generally available to eligible taxpayers whose 2018 taxable incomes fall below \$315,000 for joint returns and \$157,500 for other taxpayers.” So, the ceiling on this benefit is at least reasonably generous.

**In fact, the new law includes an explicit warning to employees who would attempt some kind of in-name-only shift, in order to enjoy the 20 percent deduction.**

- **The concept of the relief is this:** Owners of pass-through businesses usually do pretty well for themselves, but they don’t have corporate lawyers and accountants helping them squeeze down their tax bills. Much of their business revenue passes through and finds its way onto the owner’s personal Form 1040 tax return, where it’s taxed at a high rate. So, on its way “passing through” from the business P&L sheet to your personal 1040 income, 20 percent of it disappears.
- **Some writers and journalists with expertise in tax law have harshly greeted the pass-through portion of the TCJA.** Writing on the Forbes website, veteran commentator Howard Gleckman contends that the “special 20 percent individual income tax deduction for pass-through businesses such as partnerships and sole proprietorships was misguided—and probably doomed to fail—from the beginning.” Looking through the August update, Gleckman notes that officials “attempt to address some of the law’s most wrong-headed features but, as written, the statute probably is unfixable.” So, don’t be shocked if your own tax accountant seems to be at wit’s end about how to interpret Section 199A, so as to (legally) leverage it to your advantage.
- **The initials “SSTB” are important to know.** They come into the conversation pretty quickly—and seemingly in a way unkind to golf professionals. SSTB stands for Specified Service Trade or Business.
- **What sounds like a prohibition against SSTBs receiving this 20 percent small-business tax break is part of the newly issue guideline report.** “Broadly speaking,” the IRS material states, “an SSTB is any business involving the performance of services in health, law, accounting, actuarial science, performing arts, consulting, athletics, financial services, brokerage services or ‘any trade or business where the

principal asset of such trade or business is the reputation or skill of one or more of its employees or owners.” One tax accountant blogging about the above paragraph concluded: “In other words, if the success of your business or practice depends on you and not on something that you sell, you could very well be left out of the deduction.”

• **Not so fast—in a further clarification, instructors who don’t have endorsement contracts look to be back on the good side of the dividing line.** So, if you basically look like a candidate for this 20-percent-off-the-top, but your CPA is sounding antsy about the references to “athletics” and “reputation and skill,” you’ll want to get geeky and point him or her toward Reg. 1.199A-5(b)(2)(xiv). That’s where it says, basically, that you fit the SSTB definition for the purposes of this deduction as long as you:

- don’t get compensated for “endorsing products or services,” or,
- you don’t “receive fees, compensation or other income for the use of [your] image, likeness, name, signature, voice, trademark, or any other symbols associated with the individual’s identity,” or,
- lastly, you don’t receive “fees, compensation, or other income for appearing at an event or on radio, television, or another media format.”

Any Proponent member who would be DQ’d from the Section 199A deduction by the above probably had no shot anyway, based on earning income above \$157,500.

Again, the point here is to define things well enough to prevent your discussion with a tax preparer from wandering aimlessly through unanswered questions. With any luck the points laid out above are sufficient in that regard.

One other stream of commentary sparked by the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act—made louder by these new guidelines on pass-through—is that abandoning employee status for a switchover to independent-contractor status, in order to scoop up the new deduction, is more complex than it may seem. In fact, the new law includes an explicit warning to employees who would attempt some kind of in-name-only shift, in order to enjoy the 20 percent deduction. In another article, upcoming soon, we’ll discuss the longstanding 1099-versus-W2 debate in light of all these recent changes. **PG**

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# WHAT I'VE LEARNED: WILL ROBINS

WILL ROBINS GOLF, FOLSOM, CA

INTERVIEW BY PAUL RAMEE, JR

Like a superhero from a comic book, golf coach Will Robins has an origin story. It dates to December of 2004 and a honeymoon trip with his new bride, Amanda, to an island resort off the Thailand coast. The British-born Proponent Group member embarked on the trip a still-aspiring tour player, but after multiple near-death experiences amid the chaos of an epic tsunami he returned home to California with extensive bodily injuries and a sense that his life had changed course.

Recovery and healing was Will's primary activity, but he mixed in some golf instruction to help the process along. And a golf instructor he did become, but not like most. Seek him out today for a private lesson on swing technique and he'll politely decline. At which point you'll surely hear his highly persuasive alternate vision for how golf performance improves, including how coaches and students can best use their time together.

It's a completely results-oriented program, with a guarantee that goals will be achieved. If they aren't, the student continues training but stops paying. In one of his presentations to a Proponent Group audience, Robins laid out a guiding principle: "Stop giving the player what they want, or say they want,

**Robins' success has been based on guaranteeing that specific goals will be achieved and then building a system that delivers on that promise.**



such as 'fix my slice,' and start giving them bigger benefits, such as all-round better golf, more confidence and lower scores."

The process favored by Robins involves "pulling the results from the player" in a manner that minimizes the amount of how-to information dispensed. The reported results—as measured in score reduction, referrals and revenue—are impressive indeed. According to his website bio, the concept has basically never failed, even in its earliest deployment, which Will describes in this interview. RGX, his training program for golf coaches, is spreading successfully to multiple continents, based on that original model.

Recognized last year as a Golf Digest Best Young Teacher, Robins doesn't have to work quite as hard anymore to convince instructors his approach spells success. That approach is explained in further detail in this interview, conducted by Proponent member Paul Ramee earlier this fall.

**Will, your biography and your coaching concepts are interwoven in a unique way—so, your personal story is fairly well known. But please give us a summary of it.**





Robins has devised a unique scoring system that helps his students make better decisions on the golf course.

I played golf growing up in England, and came to America when I was 17 to play college golf in the Monterey Peninsula before I transferred to Northwood University in West Palm Beach to finish off my business degree. I played two years of golf there then moved back to California and caddied at Cypress Point for three years. Basically from there, I got a three-year sponsorship deal to go play professional golf. I then played in one tournament and that was it—before the Thailand trip, the tsunami and all that.

**And by “all that,” you mean a 9.1-magnitude earthquake 1,000 miles from your hotel off Thailand, which triggered a phenomenal tsunami and floods that caused some 230,000 deaths and long hospitalizations for you and your wife.**

Well, yes. So anyway, I couldn't play and I was offered a job teaching, with the idea that I would do it for about a year before getting back to playing. I played and taught for maybe six months and quickly realized I liked coaching the game more than playing it. This had partly to do with the injuries but it was greatly due to the success I was having on the coaching side.

**You've said in the past that you felt free to go about the process in whatever manner seemed most effective, notwithstanding the many traditions of teaching.**

One thing I realized, after teaching for just a few months, was that I did not want to be standing on the range, spending an hour at a time trying to get these people to get better at a golf swing. I didn't really believe in that and I didn't really enjoy doing it. What I enjoyed was getting on the course with my players and competing with them. So I got 16 players together, and said 'you're going to

each give me \$1,000 and I am going to teach you over the next 12 weeks. You're going to play, practice, and we're going to be a team and whatever help you want, I'll guarantee it."

**What was the response?**

I had guys who never played golf break 100, players who had never broken 100 shoot in the 80s, players who had never broken 90 shoot in the 70s, and so on. So that's when the coaching programs were started and that was kind of the beginning of the journey. At about that time, my best friend was struggling with a business and he was making only \$17,000 a year so I brought him into the fold and taught him my approach. He ended up making \$57,000 that first year working only one day a week. His daughter, my goddaughter, was suffering from a medical condition that required his ongoing attention, so that's why he stuck to his one-day-a-week schedule. Eventually he went more full-time and tripled his income.

**So, very early on, you were a coach but also a trainer of coaches.**

Right. The training I did with my friend was the starting point for RGX, a shortened form of Robins Golf Logistix. It was clear to me that there are a lot of instructors out there who wanted to be effective coaches but they hadn't quite figured out how to get around the obstacles to becoming a good coach. So that's kind of where it all started off.

**Could you speak a bit about the tsunami and the perspective it gave you on life?**

That experience gave me the perspective that golf isn't everything and it's just a vehicle to help others achieve

Will works with golfers of all ages and abilities and is skilled at providing a realistic plan to juniors who aspire to move on to the next level of competition.



their successes and unlock their potential. It made me realize we've all been given certain gifts and we should focus on those gifts as much as we can and help as many people as we can. I remember one day—and this was 12 years ago—making notes on a pad and actually writing down: "Revolutionize golf instruction worldwide by guaranteeing results."

A dozen years later, we now have coaches in South Africa, New Zealand, Australia, and all over Europe and all over America. So we're slowly but surely on that path.

#### **Can you tell us about the certification process?**

We don't have a certification process, because I don't think the actual certification represents an inherent value for the coach. We're a consulting company that helps golf professionals transition from the instruction model to the coaching model.

#### **What does that look like?**

We start by helping them build their financial goals and their time goals. How much do you want to work and how much money do you want to make? So the first part is helping them become successful, and the second part is we're not a franchise, we brand the coaches. Gene Bakkum Golf, Jess Hansen Golf, Parker Hammond Golf, etc. Your golfers aren't buying products, they're buying you. So we figure out how to make you a better coach, a better salesperson, a better mentor, a better listener and a better question-asker.

#### **Sounds like RGX is the B2B brand and the B2C brand is the individual coach's.**

Right. We have a system everything is run through with scorecards and workbooks and everything. But the coaches put their own branding on it and their

logos, so we're trying to remove ourselves from the picture. To me that's the appropriate way to communicate value to golfers, because in most cases golfers aren't going to know what all those certifications are and what they mean. So we have to show the customers that these coaches are good listeners and they solve problems and get results, so go ahead and give them your trust. I have guys with no certifications and no technology and they make five times the money that someone else with a stack of certifications is making.

#### **Are you saying you don't actually question the training and information, just more the business premise of these programs that certify people?**

Yes, that's it. Once you have the skill sets we focus on, you can go and get those certifications. But people think their business will grow once they get these certifications, and I greatly disagree. Your coaching business will grow once you understand how to communicate with people, listen to them, and build products around them to get results. Programs like Operation 36 and TPI are outstanding additions to your business, but they aren't a substitute for the basic entrepreneurial skills I'm describing here.

#### **How did you develop the scoring system you show on your website?**

When I first started coaching I did focus on stats, but it was the traditional numbers such as GIR and so forth. But what I quickly realized was that if people can avoid three simple things—three-putts, lost balls and double bogeys—they will shoot good scores. About 90 percent of the people we teach shoot 90 or higher but I tell them if you make just bogeys out there you cannot add that up and



Consulting other teachers has become a big part of the Robins industry persona, as instructors around the world have engaged him in helping them rethink their business plans.

get to 100. And so my thought was how do I make this whole thing so blatantly simple that anyone can do it. Stats use hindsight and what you use on the course is foresight. You need to actually look ahead and know when it's not safe to take out a driver because it's more likely you'll make a double if you do. So really it was all about how they coach themselves. It shows them what they should and shouldn't be doing and then allows them to just base themselves on checkmarks showing successes and feedback.

#### **What kind of evaluation do you put someone through when they start with you?**

Every player starts by playing nine holes in teams with the coaches, and we help them fill out the scorecard for that round and sort of benchmark where their game is at. Then we sit down with them and review their goals and their practice commitments and show them how to record it in their workbook. It lets them know what they need to work on, so they fill out the workbook as they go. Then we build a plan for them and basically say we'll guarantee that you will complete this goal as long as you guarantee you'll work on whatever you need to work on. We tell them to come to a certain number of sessions over a certain amount of time and then here's your price and here's your product and invite them to become part of the team.

#### **What percentage of people don't follow the plan?**

It's all in the role of the coach to get people to follow the plan. So the approach would be, how would you get the person to sign up? It's all up to how equipped you are to set the right goals for your players. And if the coach does that the right way I would say it's 100 percent of the time. We get younger players in high school who come up to us with all these things that they

want and say they want to play Division I golf. And I show them the practice schedule and show them what it's really like, and usually they think they can do it. After three or four weeks they lose the commitment, because the goal and the effort aren't in alignment.

#### **What do you do then?**

We'll sit with the parents and say look, we have three game plans: one is a D-1 scholarship, one is college golf, and one is to play community college golf. If the player isn't following the plan, we're honest and we tell them their original goal is probably beyond reach. They're spending a lot of money with us, so we are not going to sell them on a fake dream. That isn't good for anyone.

#### **What advice would you give somebody who likes what you say but isn't sure how to adopt the principles?**

It's kind of like golf, it's always the opposite. You know, someone slices the ball and thinks they should do one thing when really they should do the total opposite. In that context, a coach will ask how to build their business and do better. My answer is: Stop talking, stop telling people about your programming, because nobody cares. Until you listen to them and understand them and prioritize them, they don't care what you have because they don't see how it's going to be of value to them. So the first thing you should do is stop selling, and like Brian Tracy says, telling is not selling. It's about asking questions and befriending people like we do here. I really build relationships. I want to support them and truly want to see them get better. You do enough of that and people start to sell your business for you, just by spreading the word. **PG**

## Buying power and serious savings for your business

Controlling costs is as essential to growing your business as a great playing surface and sound marketing. In that pursuit, one of the simplest and most effective tools in your arsenal can be the Ride group purchasing program from GolfNow.

Ride taps into the wide-ranging buying power of Comcast, corporate parent of NBC and Golf Channel. Comcast's supplier network includes broadline food distributor US Foods, a number of independent produce companies, agronomy and technology resource SynaTek Solutions, communications giant Verizon, business supply outlet Office Depot and many others. Virtually everything you need to run your business, sourced from industry-leading suppliers at group-buying discounts.

It's like found money. How much money? On average, partners buying through Ride are saving 17 percent on their regular business expenses, with courses reporting anywhere from 6 to 35 percent savings on the necessities that make their operations and yours hum.

Plus, there are no fees involved in starting your savings today, and signing up is easy.



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# WHAT TO DO BETWEEN LESSONS



By Andy Hilts, *Director*

The latest newsletter from Pia Nilsson and Lynn Marriott of Vision54 had a thought-provoking article titled, “What About In-Between?” It was written as advice to the golfer about the flow of their round and how best to use the intervals between when one shot is over

and the next one is yet to happen.

Given my longtime role as a trainer of instructors, I instinctively took Lynn and Pia’s idea and translated it to what we do as coaches. I’ve always felt that the time period between lessons is extremely valuable and tends to be under-utilized, even wasted in many cases.

For coaches who are back-to-back-to-back-to-back with lessons all day this problem can’t arise, but in a situation where there’s down time, you’ve got to commit to managing it wisely, if you wish to become an effective and financially successful coach. Poor use of in-between time is something I’ve seen most particularly with the instructor who is building up a book of business and starting to become quite busy.

As for those full-book coaches mentioned above, they actually need to create schedule breaks. Blocking a half hour of time on your schedule in the morning and a half hour during the afternoon (as well as a lunch break) allows you to recharge. Even coaches who appear to have endless energy run into challenges if they try and grind through the day without breaks. If nothing else, they’ll tend to fall into a pattern of always running late—a prime source of customer complaints. And while they seem to have unlimited energy you really have to wonder whether the last student of the day got their best effort. Making time in your book to regroup leads to consistent performance. Your customers will appreciate it.

Of course, that extra time has to be used effectively. To make sure you can finish the day and truly leave things at work instead of going home to take care of all your business needs you will need to accomplish as many business tasks as possible during scheduled breaks. It’s easy for the entire half hour to be wasted on meaningless conversations. After you’ve reviewed key takeaways with your students, delivered their homework and booked their next lessons, you need to get away by finding a quiet place on property where you won’t get sucked into conversations that aren’t productive.

Don’t waste this time by simply going long in your lessons and eating up your 30-minute break. The longer lessons go, the more likely we are to give students too much information. As we all know, a confused student does not make for a successful student. Don’t try to wrap up your lessons by “ending on a good one,” as you may be there all day. While there certainly are times when you need to give someone an extra few minutes it can’t be standard procedure. Students appreciate starting on-time and ending on-time. Again, a coach who is constantly behind schedule creates frustrated students.

In-between time should first be used for outbound calls and emails to students who currently aren’t scheduled. Call them and see how things are going, with your goal being to book their next session. Using this valuable time to call people who have left you a message to book another lesson is a misuse of time. Nothing addresses this issue like a good online booking service—set one up, if you haven’t already. Check out ThrivSports.

As Pia and Lynn said in their article, we won’t know what’s really going on “in between” if we don’t look closely at what’s going on and evaluate our behaviors. So, study your habits. Seek the opportunities for productivity and organization that you may have been missing. Do this well enough and you may find time to actually practice your game a bit between lessons. **PG**

## PROONENT GROUP CALENDAR

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## CASE STUDIES OF TEACHER - STUDENT COLLABORATION

THE SHINGLE SAYS 'GOLF INSTRUCTION' –  
SOMETIMES IT GOES WELL BEYOND THAT

By David Gould, Staff Editor

Over recent years a new golf coaching model has been widely discussed and adopted. Instructors have been educating themselves in the science of motor skill acquisition and supporting that process with group supervised practice and other new protocols. Seen through a business lens, the new mindset steers a teacher away from “just selling their time.” Their idea instead is to charge money for helping students climb a competency ladder, rung by rung—learning and training in whatever manner the coach feels is best.

So, you study this model and decide to go with it, then by some odd chance you find yourself watching Bo Moorehead receive his regular golf lesson from Proponent Group member Ty Walker. It's a twice-monthly ritual that's been going on without interruption for more than two decades, at Walker's GOLFTEC teaching studio just south of downtown Denver.

The classic private golf lesson that stays in the book seemingly forever is epitomized by this Walker-Moorehead “marriage,” as the two men jokingly refer to it. Every August, when GOLFTEC runs its August promotion on lesson series, Moorehead re-ups for an annual fee that currently runs \$2,200 and covers 26 sessions.

A person studies a subject or a skill—and receives instruction in it—in order to improve. So, has working with Walker made Mr. Moorehead a better golfer?

This particular teacher-student story is more complicated than that. In the first place, although he isn't particularly athletic looking, Bo was a very good player when he met Walker. “He was a 1-handicap or 2-handicap,” Ty explains. “He was a square-face, square-path, centered-contact machine. Now that he's in his 60s, he's more like a 5 or a 6.”

The business aspect of this coaching case study is ultra-traditional, but Walker has always been a cutting-edge instructor when it comes to technology for teaching—he's won all the teaching awards in his section and lowered

handicaps for legions of players. The two men met at a consumer golf expo where the newly rolled-out GOLFTEC formula and tech gear was being demonstrated, and Moorehead wanted to reap its apparent benefits. Thus began the partnership.

“I'll get down in trenches with a student for one degree of this or two degrees of that,” he says, referring to launch monitor numbers. “Sometimes that's all it takes to get their ball-striking cleaned up, and sometimes it's all they can do at that point in time, so we commit to working together from there to the next plateau.” That's starting to sound strangely like motor skill acquisition.

When a student stays in the book for years and years, something else is going on besides three degrees of face angle or six degrees of hip rotation. Walker's energy and

optimism is legendary, while Moorehead's temperament is placid and vaguely wary. “I get him pumped up,” Ty says. “Bo has a tendency to take a dim view of things.”

With Walker as his coach, Moorehead has won every tournament at his home course—against city-wide competition. When he wins, he will bring his latest trophy to Walker's studio tucked in a duffel bag, to be pulled out triumphantly. Very likely the experience of winning a title isn't complete for this student until he's shared it with his longtime teacher.

“I'm a life coach, not just a golf coach,” explains Walker. “I help my students make their bucket list and then I'll push them to go fulfill it.” Bo Moorehead, who won't get in airplanes, wanted to visit Bandon Dunes. With Walker's encouragement, he drove his Corvette all the way to coastal Oregon and back, clubs in tow. “He was thrilled—he shot a 67 on Bandon Trails and the caddie told Bo he'd never seen a round of golf like it.”

A person's connection to golf can bring them to a place where they are more themselves than in any other realm of life. If they find a golf teacher who becomes their guide to this place, and to a realm of experiences that seem to stand out from everything else, apparently what you end up with is the acquisition of something more than motor skills. PG



Ty Walker (left) with his longtime student Bo Moorehead.



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THE INFO COACHES ARE TALKING ABOUT AND NEED-TO-KNOW

## SCOTT FAWCETT TO SPEAK AT SUMMIT ABOUT HIS ACCLAIMED 'DECADE' SYSTEM

By David Gould, *Staff Editor*

The phrase “course management” dates back to golf’s early days. In more recent times a scientific, quantitative approach to it has emerged. Primary contributors to it have included the Shotlink data generated on tour, plus systems like ShotbyShot, digital shot-tracking devices of various kinds and the “Every Shot Counts” analytics in Mark Broadie’s 2014 book by that title.

The resources a coach or player might need to understand decision-making and the strokes-gained, strokes-lost consequences are readily available, and yet their adoption has been limited—seemingly due to the complexity inherent in gathering and processing the information.

Scott Fawcett, who will make a presentation to Proponent Group Summit attendees in Dallas next month, seems to cut through these challenges with an ingenious approach to the endless question of what shot to attempt in what situation, and why.

The author and well-known blogger Jon Sherman recently described Fawcett’s concepts in highly praising terms, saying: “DECADE is not just a course strategy system. It is a masterclass on golf expectation management and psychology.” While the summary Sherman lays out backs up that high-flown praise, what you get from Fawcett on a personal level is extremely down-to-earth. That’s the case despite his impressive resume, which includes three mathematics degrees, experience playing golf professionally and even a stint in which he played poker for a living.

The understanding of odds—and the discipline around letting them govern decisions—that any professional card player requires strongly influenced Fawcett’s ideas about golf scoring and strategy. A natural sponge for numbers and percentages, he studied all the most current research



including Shotlink stats and the writings of Broadie and others. He also built Trackman performance data into his thinking. The goal, for his own competitive rounds, was to choose targets and plan his shots so faithfully to the risk-reward likelihood differential that his execution would be optimized.

The experiment never went forward with Fawcett himself as its subject, due to an elbow injury that sidelined him from competition. Plan B was to convince another tournament golfer to commit to the program, and Fawcett found one—an amateur from Dallas named Will Zalatoris who was ranked in the 3,000s. Fawcett became his caddie and their first event, the Texas Amateur, produced ultimate proof of the concept

—a victory.

This was followed by a win in the prestigious Trans-Miss Championship and then a U.S. Junior National title. Zalatoris reached as high as No. 8 in the World Amateur Golf Rankings before turning pro and now plays on the PGA Tour. NCAA Division 1 teams began to seek Fawcett’s advice, which led him on a seminar-giving tour of top programs. Among those he convinced immediately was Bryson DeChambeau, who was soon the top-ranked amateur in the world thanks to victory in the U.S. Amateur and an NCAA individual title. DeChambeau has openly cited the DECADE system as integral to his success.

The upcoming Proponent Group Summit is every member’s chance to hear about this unique matrix for decision-making directly from its inventor. There are multiple ways to improve golf performance without significant swing overhauls, and our Summit speaker’s methodology is among the most effective in recent memory. **PG**

### Summit Speaker You Won't Want to Miss!

**WHO:** Scott Fawcett  
**WHEN:** Tue., Nov. 6 at 2pm  
**WHERE:** Cowboys Golf Club, Grapevine, Texas  
**TITLE:** “Strategizing with Statistics”



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## WELCOME PROPONENT GROUP'S NEW MEMBERS FOR SEPTEMBER

**CARLOS BROWN**, Carlos Brown Golf Academy at Buffalo Creek Golf Club, Rockwall-Heath, TX – *Full Member*

**NOAH HORSTMAN**, Beechmont Country Club, Cleveland, OH – *Associate Member*

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**STEVE KEOGH**, Konnectgolf, New York, NY – *Full Member*

**JAIMIE PIERSON**, The Sanctuary Golf Club, Sanibel, FL – *Associate Member*

**EVA ROGERS**, Medinah Country Club, Medinah, IL – *Associate Member*

**PAUL TOSCA**, Mark Polich Golf, Tucson, AZ – *Associate Member*

## AN IDEA TO INCREASE PLAY

It's clear that instructors have to be involved in driving more play, to help courses grow their rounds and keep each facility's bottom line as healthy as possible.

Here's a simple idea: *Get new golfers onto the golf course as soon as possible.* One management company found that if they got a golfer onto the course four times in their first month of instruction, they usually stuck with the game and were generally loyal to the facility where they were learning the game. Package on-course time into your new-golfer programs and see play at your facility increase.

Another piece to this puzzle is creating programming where new golfers can play together so they develop their own "golfing network."

## OUR MONTHLY LOOK AT THE JOB MARKET: MEMBERS ON THE MOVE

*Recent Job Postings include:*

**Palm Springs International Club** in Shenzhen, China is hiring a Senior Teaching Professional.

**GOLFTEC** in Sugar Land, TX and Tucson, AZ are hiring Center Managers.

**Topgolf** locations in Glendale, AZ, Tucson, AZ, Auburn Hills, MI, Austin, TX and Pharr, TX are hiring Directors of Instruction.

**Lucy Davies Golf Academy** in Westlake Village, CA is hiring a Manager.

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

Don't forget that Proponent Group will be hosting a special bonus session on Sunday afternoon, November 4th from 3pm to 5:30pm, focusing on the current hiring process. The session kicks off Proponent Summit 2018 at the Cowboys Golf Club in Dallas, TX., and promises to be valuable whether you are looking for a new position or you are hiring.

## HELP US CONTINUE TO BE YOUR TOP BUSINESS RESOURCE

At Proponent, we are dedicated to helping you succeed. Please help us continue to lead the instruction industry by taking five to eight minutes to complete our 2018 Member Satisfaction Survey, if you haven't yet done so. Thanks for your feedback and the valuable help it provides us in fulfilling our mission.

Survey Link:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/S6Z9DC5>

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**Andy Hilts** Director

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