

COLLABORATE

www.proponent-group.com

Last Call for Summit 2015! It's Time to Make Your Plans to Join Us in "Big D"

This year's summit is about understanding where the industry is heading and where the opportunities are going to be for high quality instructors going forward. It's about new teaching and coaching techniques. It's about understanding all the new technologies that have made teaching and coaching the most dynamic part of the golf industry. It's about expanding your network and sharing information that informs the entire group to raise the tide for all of our members.

We hope you'll join us for our eighth year showcasing what's coming next in golf instruction and highlighting fresh opportunities to grow your teaching business. On **November 1-3 at Las Colinas C.C. in Irving, Texas** you will:

- Learn how "Every Ball Counts" is changing the way golfers practice.
- Discover the keys to building a fair compensation package.
- Learn new ways to create the ideal training environment for junior golfers.
- Avoid costly customer service mistakes that drive students elsewhere.
- Learn how to overcome the three biggest mental issues in golf.
- Learn five new industry trends you can leverage.
- Check out the latest teaching technologies at our biggest demo day ever.
- Make new friends and expand your network from across North America.
- **PLUS – New for 2015** – "Building a Top-Tier Teaching Career" A special pre-summit session on Sunday afternoon *exclusively* for our Associate Members.

If you have not yet registered, visit the members website and click on Summit Registration in the left-hand menu. See pages 3-4 of this newsletter for more details on the full agenda, lodging and meal information and cost. At this time we have room for 25 more attendees before we must start a waiting list.



More than 125 Proponent Members packed Heathrow C.C. at the 2014 Summit

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

PAGE 2

New Insurance Designed for Instructors Now Available

PAGE 3

Bobby Jones Becomes Official Clothier of Proponent Group

PAGE 4

Last Call for Summit 2015 in Big D

PAGE 6

How to Price Your Services

PAGE 10

Retailtribe on Marketing

PAGE 13

State of Instruction: Proponent Marks Eight Years and Counting

PAGE 15

"What I've Learned": Interview with Bobby Clampett, Impact Zone Golf

PAGE 19

Q&A with Golf DataTech's Tom Stine

PAGE 23

Member Milestones and Awards

PROPONENT GROUP NEWS

Business Insurance for Instructors Made Easy— with New Lloyd’s of London-backed Policy

By David Gould, Staff Editor

Among golf professionals, the subject of risk often relates to long shots over water that could cost you stroke-and-distance. With Proponent Group being so business-oriented, this article about risk involves accidents, injuries, liability, equipment damage, affordable coverage and user-friendly tools for getting a solid insurance policy in place quickly.

Last month, Proponent’s go-to person for insurance, **Byron Shultz**, unveiled the details of new coverage that is insured by Lloyd’s of London and customized for the golf academy environment. It’s a two-part protection package, covering General Liability—injuries to students and the like—and Personal Property. Annual cost is \$495 for general liability and \$225 per \$50,000 of business personal property needing coverage—including gear that is rented to customers, such as a TrackMan unit in a hitting bay.

“This is coverage designed to protect the individual instructor as well as instruction companies with multiple on-staff teachers,” explains Shultz, who authored “Commercial Insurance and Risk Management for Golf Instructors,” an exclusive business guide that’s archived on the Proponent member-only website. Based in Phoenix, Ariz., Byron is a PGA Master Professional in Instruction who served as director of instruction at Phoenix C.C. prior to graduating from the Hartford School of Insurance and making his career switch.

Among the strong points of this new policy is its portability—the professional with a winter and summer base of operations doesn’t have to be concerned about varying state insurance regulations. Furthermore, there is no underwriting required. Coverage gets activated upon your completion of the online application and payment of initial premium. “It’s also a zero-deductible plan,” says Shultz. “When a claim is paid it includes your first dollar of cost.”

In structure, this is a master policy issued to Proponent Group for use as a member-only benefit. Meanwhile, its provisions and protections have passed muster with NBC/Universal, which is green-lighting all Proponent members who are also Golf Channel Academy lead coaches to sign up for this coverage. It took considerable time and effort to create the program and get signoff from Lloyd’s of London,

simply because of the fact-gathering and learning curve a big insurance group always needs when entering a small market.

“Golf instruction is a niche that big carriers don’t know much about,” says Shultz, “so they ‘rate up’ their policies—in other words, they charge a higher premium—to cover their own uncertainty.” By doing the spade work that fills in all that missing knowledge, a brokerage can help craft a policy that is well-designed and also well-priced. So, if you have made an effort in the past to cover business risks and been stymied by 10-page applications and long waits for approval and pricing, this new insurance product offers a clear solution. In the case of a Proponent coach who is completing a deal to have his or her academy newly located at a golf facility, the certificate of insurance the facility is likely to ask for can be acquired fairly quickly, easily and affordably.

To find out more, you can go to the new, dedicated, website golfproinsurance.com and gather additional information. You can also contact Byron Shultz directly in his office at MJ Insurance at 602-772-3315.



General Liability and Business Personal Property are two of the largest insurance issues for instructors. These unique new Lloyd’s plans designed for our members will handle both.

PROONENT GROUP NEWS

Bobby Jones to Provide Proponent Members Exclusive Personal Use Discounts on Full Line



Proponent Group's 600-plus Full and Associate members in nearly 20 countries.

Bobby Jones will also provide samples from their men's and women's lines to all Proponent Group members who attend the upcoming Proponent Group Summit in November and they will be our host partner for the opening evening's cocktails and dinner at Las Colinas C.C.

The Bobby Jones brand has been a mainstay of the golf industry for more than 20 years

Proponent Group is proud to announce that it has partnered with Bobby Jones, golf's premier luxury apparel brand, as its official clothier. Bobby Jones will provide exclusive personal-use discounts to Proponent

and is sold in the finest private clubs, resorts and courses world-wide.

ALL current product from Bobby Jones outstanding mens' and womens' lines, which includes polo shirts, dress shirts, pants, shorts, outerwear, jackets and accessories, is eligible for the Proponent

Group personal use discount at outstanding preferred pricing:

- *Without* Bobby Jones logo: 30% off standard wholesale pricing
- *With* Bobby Jones logo: 50% off standard wholesale pricing

Check out all the options at bobbyjones.com. To place a personal use order – or for pricing on bulk orders for outings, golf schools or other student usage – contact Susan Moshier in Customer Service at 404-836-0573 or at smoshier@jonesglobalsports.com.



Bobby Jones' extensive lines for men and women include polo shirts, dress shirts, pants, shorts, outerwear, sport jackets and accessories.

Summit 2015

Connecting with the Future of Teaching & Coaching

November 1-3, 2015 (Sunday - Tuesday)
Las Colinas C.C., Irving, Texas

Register Today

Join us for our eighth year showcasing what's coming next in golf instruction and highlighting fresh opportunities to grow your teaching business.

Join Us in Dallas to:

- Learn how "Every Ball Counts" is changing the way golfers practice
- Discover the keys to building a fair compensation package for you and your facility
- Learn new ways to create the ideal training environment for junior golfers' improvement
- Avoid costly customer service mistakes that drive students elsewhere
- Learn how to overcome the three biggest mental issues in golf
- Learn five new industry trends you can leverage
- Check out the latest teaching technologies
- Make new friends and expand your network of peers from across North America

PLUS – New for 2015 – "Building a Top-Tier Teaching Career" A special pre-summit session on Sunday afternoon exclusively for our Associate Members.



Summit 2015 Agenda

Sunday, November 1

- 11:00am Registration Opens
- 1:00pm Optional Golf at Las Colinas C.C.
- 2:00-5:00pm ***NEW*** For Associate Members Only:
Building a Top-tier Teaching Career
- 6:30pm Opening Night Dinner at Las Colinas C.C.

Monday, November 2

- 7:00am Breakfast Buffet
- 8:00 The State of Instruction: 5 Trends to Watch (Lorin Anderson)
- 8:30-10:00 Compensation Consternation: Why it's So Hard to Get Instructors and Facilities to Agree on Pay (Panel Discussion)
- 10:00 Break
- 10:30-11:15 What a Junior Golfer Needs to Evolve as a Player and Person (Iain Highfield)
- 11:15-Noon Turbo-Charge Your Business Through Improved Customer Relationship Management (Jeff Penson)
- Noon Lunch Buffet

- 1:00-3:00pm Every Ball Counts: Merging Elite Coaching with Golf Intelligence (Darren May and Bill Davis)
- 3:00-5:30 Teaching Tech and Training Aids Demo Day
- 5:45pm Cocktails and Dinner at Las Colinas C.C.

Tuesday, November 3

- 7:00am Breakfast Buffet
- 8:15-9:15 Overcoming the Three Biggest Mental Issues in Golf (Dr. Bob Neff)
- 9:15-10:15 Secret Shopper: Customer-Service Mistakes by Coaches and How to Fix Them (Jackie Beck)
- 10:15 Break
- 10:45-11:45 Panel Discussion: How to Engage More Golfers in Instruction
- Noon Lunch Buffet
- 1pm Lessons We Can Learn from Topgolf's Success (David Ogrin)
- 2pm Why So Many Golfers are Scared to Take Lessons and What to Do About It (Chris O'Connell)
- 3pm Summit Ends

Summit 2015 Participant Details

Host Site: Las Colinas C.C. in Irving, TX is located approximately 15 minutes from Dallas-Fort Worth Airport.

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

Lodging: Proponent has negotiated a summit rate at Aloft - Irving (972-717-6100) for \$149 per night. Aloft will provide shuttle service to and from the Summit. This hotel is within one mile of Las Colinas C.C. Many other hotel chains including Homewood Suites, Omni Mandalay, Hotel

Las Colinas and Dallas Marriott Las Colinas also are located within a few miles of Las Colinas C.C. Contact your preferred hotel directly to book a room.

Meals: Six meals from Sunday dinner through Tuesday lunch are included in the summit fee.

Cost: \$495 for our Full and International members. Associate members are welcome to attend for \$545 which includes the new Sunday afternoon session just for associates. **NOTE:** Optional golf Sunday afternoon at Four Seasons Las Colinas TPC Course is an additional \$50 (tee times are limited and will be filled first-come, first-served).

PRICING YOUR SERVICES

Cost of Coaching: No Simple Matter

What You're Selling, and What You Charge For It

Setting rates that let you maximize profits from your talent, experience and effort is one of teaching's main challenges. Here's the best current thinking on the topic.

By John Torsiello
Contributing Writer

Every summer Fred Griffin and his staff at Grand Cypress Resort's Academy of Golf conduct a competitive analysis of what area golf schools and instructors are charging for their services. This exercise helps the landmark Orlando academy fine-tune pricing and programming for the upcoming season. "There have been years when we've had no price increase," reports Griffin, the academy's longtime director, "and typically when we do raise rates it will be 3 to 5 percent based on the results of our analysis of market conditions."

When to raise rates and how to structure pricing for players of varying skill levels is an ongoing, at times challenging question. The rate you charge a beginner may vary from what an accomplished—or even professional—player might pay. And rightly so, as the better player will demand more focused instruction and often seek off-hours accessibility, especially as they prepare for tournaments and compete in them.

Whomever you are teaching, creating a rate schedule and periodically adjusting it upwards is a task that takes thought and some research. Golf instructors, manning the tee all day, can feel isolated from the world at large and may lack context for what their services are worth. One remedy is to keep in touch with other professionals and service industries to track the trends in pricing of specialized services.

Paul Hunt, president of Pricing Solutions, an international pricing strategy consultancy, is adamant on that point. His view of coaches and their rate schedules is nuanced: The service provided is basically an intangible product, which makes value and costs more difficult to estimate. That said, he sees the golf instructor as "very similar" to business consultants and other independent contrac-



"Differentiation can put you on a demand curve. Focusing on a particular segment of the market, for example the high-income customer, can create opportunities to premium-price your talents."
- Paul Hunt

tors when it comes to determining how they should price their talent and knowledge.

"Teaching professionals must always set prices according to the '3 C's...Customer, Competition and Cost," says Hunt. That starts, in his view, with understanding your customer in terms of income, skill level, goals and objectives. "This is critical to being able to price for value that's delivered to customers, whether it be better scores, creating a fun environment, or whatever you are packaging and selling." The second 'C' he would have coaches consider is the competition.

"Who are you competing against," Hunt asks. "Where are they located, and what is your value proposition in relation to theirs?" As for the third 'C,' that's cost in the form of your own fixed expenses to operate.

Hunt reminds clients that supply and demand is still the golden rule of business and economics. He adds, "Differentiation can put you on a demand curve. Focusing on a particular segment of the market, for example the high-income customer, can create opportunities to premium-price your talents."

Of course, as with any other professional charging for his or her time, experience plays a key role in determining compensation for services rendered. "We have a two-tier structure," says Griffin, "one rate for a head instructor and my rate as director. I don't allow a less experienced teacher to teach alone until that person is completely ready. Until then, he or she works alongside me or head staff."

Jay Lipe, a senior lecturer in the Carlson School of Management at the University of Minnesota, sees a segmented market out there for golf lessons. "You have two basic categories of pricing," says Lipe, "the serious golfer and the not-yet-serious."

Research and timing have been good guides for Proponent Group

PRICING YOUR SERVICES

member Megan Padua, a teaching professional at Belfair Plantation in Bluffton, S.C. She keeps up to date on area demographics and rates charged by local professionals before setting or adjusting hers. "I've also found that the timing of any rate change is important. Instructors that have a full lesson book will receive the most benefit from raising rates," says Padua. To date she has received no pushback from her membership based on a rate increase, which for her generally happens every three years. "The logic of doing it every three years is that by then I will have more knowledge and specializations to augment my students' learning," Padua says. "That makes the value better for the price. I don't want to nickel and dime my students."

Peter Popovich, director of instruction for The Golf Paradigm, says the potential to raise rates is often determined by several variables. One is basic supply, another is the reputation of the instructor for helping students improve and enjoy themselves. Competition factors in, as well, but he avoids paying heavy attention to what others are doing, so as to keep the focus on his own academy's creativity and innovation. "The important thing to remember about raising rates," says Popovich, "is not raise them so high or so often that you alienate your students. People are loyal, especially to a culture you create, but loyal doesn't mean ignorant. If they sense they're no longer getting value for what they pay you will lose them."

Add-ons can be used to create or improve value in your pricing structure. For example, allowing students to send videos for quick analysis as a tune-up while they are away may be done without extra charge (it can be included in their upfront fee). Says Padua, "It doesn't take but a few minutes of time, yet the value to them is immeasurable. It shows them you care about their game and their improvement."

She favors giving more time over discounting rates. "I am a believer in group lessons and other activities that will help grow participation," she says.

Fred Griffin keeps a database of all of his students and sends a monthly email out with certain specials his school is

offering depending upon the time of the year. "In our slow season we have offered a BOGO (buy one, get one) for golf schools, and we have offered a two-day school that comes with a nine-hole playing lesson for free," says Griffin. "We will also offer a discount off the fitting fee if you buy a set of irons."

In the off-season, the Grand Cypress Academy offers its Summer Score lesson package—five sessions for the price of four that includes two hours on the range with swing model analysis, a SAM PuttLab session, plus a nine-hole playing lesson. "We have a local lessons program for two or three students who can sign up and share the time, which gives them a fairly

significant discount over a regular rates," Griffin says. "In our normal lesson rates we offer an add-on of \$35 for a shared lesson."

David LaPour, director of instruction at the Colleton River Golf Academy, also in Bluffton, S.C., has raised lesson rates by 20 percent over the past seven years, by 10 percent at two different junctures, "with no problems." Only during the month of December does he offer a lesson series, the rest of the year his teaching is priced at a flat hourly rate. "We just charge for our time during a lesson, not the amount of people. I feel this is a good strategy and a good deal for the student or students," says LaPour.

Your students are not all made equal, which is another factor that may play into your pricing strategy. Jay Lipe, a golf lesson-taker himself, believes focused golfers will gladly pay extra to get more intense, more technology-driven instruction. He also feels a low student-teacher ratio strongly enhances the value of your service. "I haven't enjoyed group lessons, but I've really enjoyed one-on-ones," says Lipe. "That's probably a function of my personality and my need for more dynamic interaction when I'm learning something new. For me I would only consider a one-to-one ratio."

Some Tips From an Expert on Pricing

1. Price for profit: This is an internal consideration. After all expenses are deducted, what hourly rate generates enough margin for you to thrive, given X amount of lessons a week?
2. Price versus competitors: Obviously, you must know what your competition is charging. If you don't know exactly, find out.
3. Price as a positioning tool: If you charge \$25 an hour this positions you in one pricing tier (low-end). If you charge \$200 an hour this positions you in the high-end tier. If your rates are in the middle then that will dictate that you must work harder to differentiate yourself, because you won't be able to position yourself as the low-ball leader or high-end pro.
4. Err on the high side: Small businesses are notorious for leaving out cost considerations. In the event this happens, if you've priced on the high side you will be able to absorb some of these inevitable, unexpected costs.
5. Never say "We'll start lower to gain business and then raise our prices as demand builds." You will immediately position yourself as low-end and any price increases will alienate much of your initial clients. Instead, price a bit higher to start and "special discount" for a limited time, to get down to an acceptable net price.

— Jay Lipe, Senior Lecturer in the Carlson School of Management at the University of Minnesota.



A number of Proponent Group members work with tour pros, and that can be time-consuming. A Proponent survey of members showed that the average time spent working with a tour player ranges from 20 to 250 hours a year, with the median be-

PRICING YOUR SERVICES

ing 60 hours. Pricing for these specialized clients varies. Some teachers will receive a percentage of a player's earnings, with 2 percent being the average. Others charge for time plus travel expenses, and others agree to a "bonus" structure for tournament wins that range from 7 to 10 percent of winnings. Interestingly, 57 percent responding said there is no formal agreement with the tour pro, and 12 percent said the player pays them whatever they feel the teaching professional's time was worth to them. About 40 percent said they offer discounted rates for mini-tour players whom they work with on a regular basis.

Popovich says that for tour players and high-ranking amateurs, his compensation structure is based on the level they are at, the higher that level is, the higher the compensation. "For example, college golfers might get a lower rate depending on their ability to pay now, yet it would increase once they have the means to do so," he says. "The same with professionals. As a player improves from one level to the next they enjoy the fruits of their labor as should their instructor or coach." LaPour, in coaching tournament professionals, says simply: "I am fair with them." He says all outside golf professionals are charged at 50 percent "as are any non-golf related employees at the club."

So-called "dynamic pricing" is in vogue these days across many industries. For a teaching professional this would mean offering lower rates at off-peak or slow times, higher rates at the most in-demand times. Hunt believes the strategy can be applied effectively by golf teaching professionals and at academies. "Dynamic pricing is increasingly being used in a variety of industries but can be tricky because people don't always consider it to be fair," he states. "You need to communicate well on this subject. If you are going to use it then use it judiciously." He adds: "We call this your 'lakefront property' strategy. Lakefront property is the best location a developer or realtor has in stock. The day of the week or hour of the day could present similar situations for a golf teacher to take advantage of."

Lipe is wary of the concept. "To me, dynamic pricing as a strategy has no place in a golf coach's arsenal," offers Lipe.

"Pros are geared toward relationship-building. Dynamic pricing would likely attract the price-sensitive person, which in turn could cause misunderstandings with current clients who see prices jumping around. I don't recommend it."

Going above and beyond the lesson tee can also enhance your worth. Padua allows all her students to contact her anytime through email, text, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and phone calls. "It certainly takes more time, however, it helps build a relationship of trust." For LaPour, it's an extra demand to have students contacting him off-hours, but still worth it. It gives them access to me," he says, "which is a perk for them and usually helps both parties in the long run."

Says Popovich, "Keeping in touch with students in today's world is much easier than five, 10 or 20 years ago. A quick phone call or text while driving home or back from lunch could be the vote of confidence a student needs to play well. It may only be a phone call to you, but to them it's much more." Griffin encourages his students to stay in touch via email or text, "whatever their preference is, and we offer the V1 analysis, which we charge \$40 for. It is important to keep in touch with your students to help encourage and track their progress."

Lipe believes that technology can only enhance a teaching professional's overall worth. "More video-based lessons, more simulators to show students their swing mechanics are valuable," he says. "As professors we're moving towards online learning, and golf can do the same."

For instructors, lesson pricing is still about what the student believes is just compensation for your time and talent. Know the lay of the land so you can set that fair price, and certainly don't undersell yourself. Improvement, enjoyment and problem-solving are the inventory you are selling, and when all that clicks the value to the

buyer can be off the charts.

*For additional information on pricing, visit the Business Guides section of the members website at proponent-group.com to download *The Instructor's Guide to Pricing*.*

What Is Dynamic Pricing?

Dynamic pricing sets flexible prices for products or services based on current market demands. Businesses are able to change prices based on algorithms that take into account



competitor pricing, supply and demand, and other external factors in the market. Dynamic pricing is a common practice in industries such as hospitality, travel, entertainment, and retail. Each takes a slightly different approach to re-pricing based on its needs and the demand for the product.

Hotels and other players in the hospitality industry use dynamic pricing to adjust the cost of rooms and packages based on the supply and demand needs at a particular moment. The goal of dynamic pricing in this industry is to find the highest price that consumers are willing to pay.

Airlines change prices often depending on the day of the week, time of day, and number of days before the flight. For airlines, dynamic pricing factors in different components such as: how many seats a flight has, departure time, and average cancellations on similar flights. Businesses that want to price competitively will monitor their competitors' prices and adjust accordingly. Competitor-based dynamic pricing can increase sales, especially if they take advantage when other retailers run out of stock. Raising prices during the morning and afternoon and lowering prices during the evening is a common practice within dynamic pricing. – J.T.

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT: BOBBY JONES

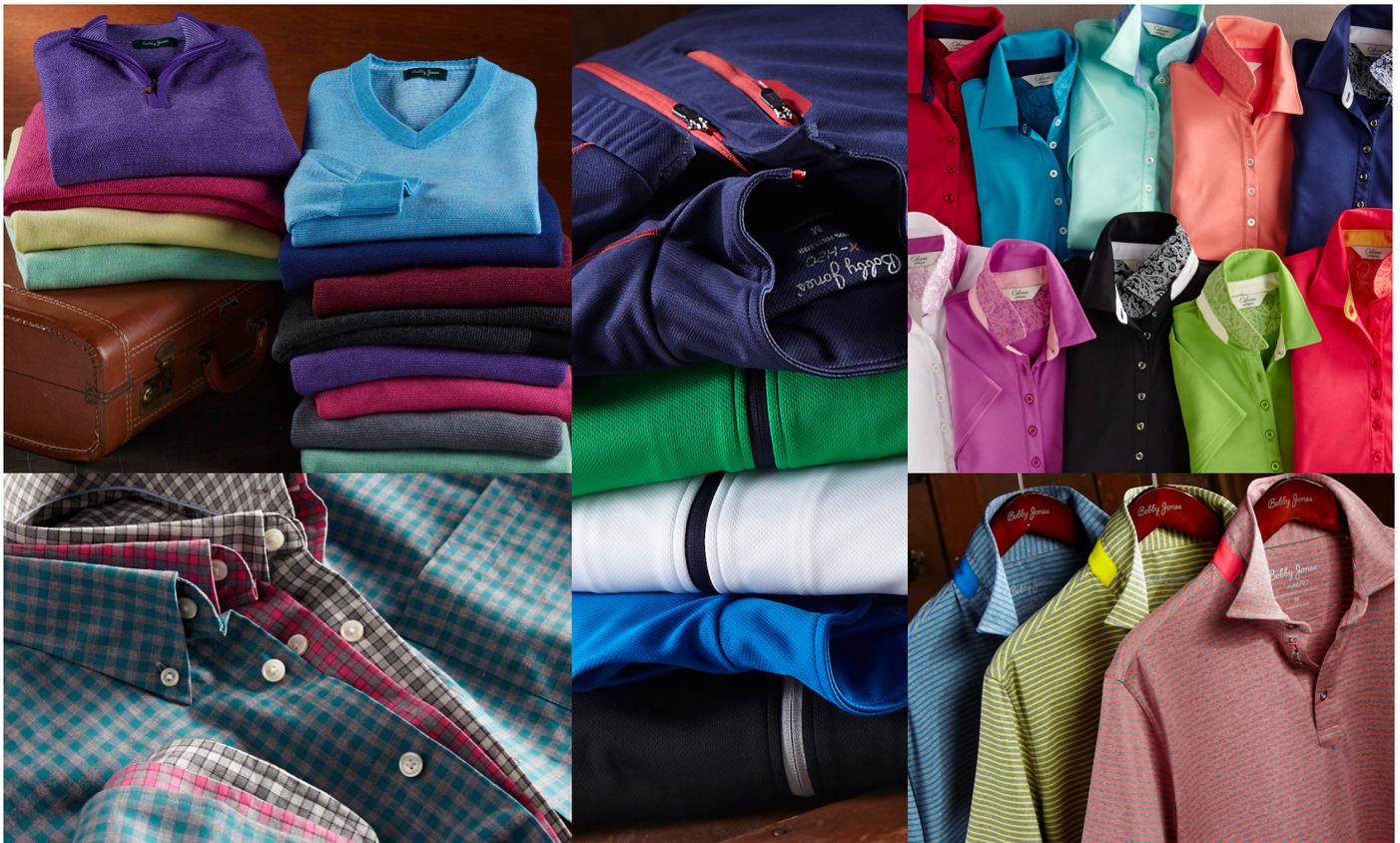


Exclusively From Bobby Jones, Just for Proponent Members

All current product from Bobby Jones outstanding mens' and womens' lines is available for personal use to Proponent Members at outstanding preferred pricing:

Without Bobby Jones logo: **30% off standard wholesale pricing**

With Bobby Jones logo: **50% off standard wholesale pricing**



Check out all the options at bobbyjones.com. To place a personal use order – or for pricing on bulk orders for outings, golf schools or other student usage – contact **Susan Moshier** in Customer Service at **404-836-0573** or at smoshier@jonesglobalsports.com.

Videos: Viewed Through a New Lens

By Ian James, CEO, RetailTribe

Videos are quite a topic of conversation among golf coaches, followed closely by debates over who's got the best YouTube channel. That's not surprising, given the age we live in. But let's see if we can take that energy and re-channel it toward activity that could bring bigger rewards. This month I'm going to ignore the camera work, editing, wardrobe, graphics and voice-overs....to focus on the big picture.

Beware the wrong role models

Among RetailTribe clients who own their own space, we often find that their sense of what "makes good retail" is derived from their shopping experiences in malls and mass-merchant stores. That's not a good place to learn. The priority for the mass merchant is speed of turnover and margin, which they try to achieve by emphasizing choice and price. For the on-course golf merchandiser, success is about relationships and revenue / profit per customer. As for that pay-

ing customer, his proposition is improvement, fun and support. If on-course golf shops are looking for ways to improve, they need to identify the right role model.

I fear that golf coaches producing videos are like their brethren the green grass merchandisers, in that they take their cues from the wrong source. That, to me, is what happens when the golf coach watches golf instruction on broadcast television. Think about the broadcaster's objective. They want to retain viewers so they can reach the viewership targets their advertisers and sponsors have set them. They're looking for a presentation that will keep the amateur golfer on his couch, looking at the screen.

How do you think that differs from your own objectives for video content? Is it possible you are trying to produce something with lots of entertainment value? I'd agree if you said your videos can't be boring, but entertainment won't usually be your goal.

The very point of the coaching segment on TV is to provide the answers golfers are looking for. This is technical information, covering grip, stance, posture, tempo, swing



The trick to driving new business from your video presence on YouTube, your website and elsewhere, is to shine a light on what you can do for a golfer to improve and enhance their experience of the game. Make the call to action about what they get, not about your technical expertise.

RETAILTRIBE ON MARKETING

positions and the like. How to start down from the top. How to get a greenside chip to check up or run out. How to feather a 40-yard pitch shot. When you create a video, are you trying to give answers, or do you want the golfer to respond by coming to you for answers?

The purpose of the coaching segment on broadcast or cable television is revealed in their call to action. You

might think it's to encourage the viewer to "find a local Professional and seek their assistance," but it isn't. Their call to action is a short highlight promoting the next segment. Hang on, it says. Don't go anywhere and especially don't go somewhere for 60 minutes to get a golf lesson. Watch the adverts, and prepare for us to excite you again.

Video, compared to print, is a richer form of content. It has more "bandwidth" than the written word and still photo. It therefore offers up more opportunity for you, but the objectives are actually no different from those you bring to other marketing content.

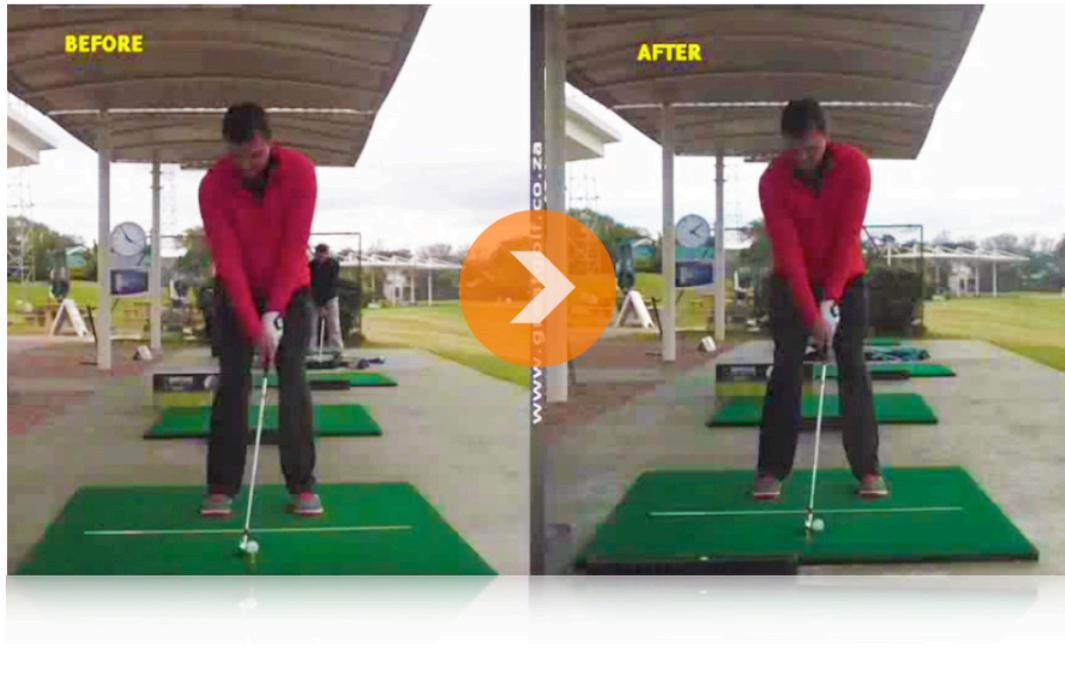
Your video has to INSPIRE the viewer to want to ENGAGE with you so that you can CONVERT them into students and RETAIN them as improving golfers.

You want them to drop what they're doing, pick up the phone, go to your web page, or dash down to your range.

You're a script writer, directing your viewer to change behavior

Before you set up that video camera one more time, step back and think about your objectives and the viewer. You're almost certainly trying to change someone's behavior. You might be trying to convince a golfer of some years, who's hacked around in the mid-90's forever and feels that the sways and slices are part of his identity as a golfer, to come and learn how to at least look like a player.

Consider that challenge and ask yourself which of the following two options is a better script summary:



Steve Cottingham, a top coach in Durban, South Africa, gets the plaudits for creating a "before and after" video that featured a student who matched the demographics of a large, untapped market and created a raft of new customer enquiries.

The swing tip option: *Show the movement of weight to the inside of the back foot and the correct position at the top of the backswing, highlighting the shoulder position and then demonstrating how important it is NOT to start the downswing with the hands, but to initiate the movement back towards the target by (fill in whatever your method is).*

The before-after option: *Show side-by-side versions of a golfer's swing four weeks ago (don't dwell on what's wrong - it looks awful) and his swing today—describing it as the current phase of a work in progress. Spend just 15 seconds highlighting two points of improvement, and then spend another 15 seconds talking about the improvements in ball flight, before allowing that golfer on the screen to spend 15 seconds telling everyone how much fun it's been improving and how much more fun it is now, out on the course.*

If both end with a call to action to come and invest in improvement, which will get the biggest results? The former shines a light on your technical expertise. The latter shines a light on what you can do for a golfer, to improve and enhance their experience of the game.

Steve Cottingham, a top coach in Durban, South Africa, gets the plaudits for the second script (above) and video. It created a raft of new customer enquiries. Steve truly showed his smarts by choosing a customer/student who matched the demographic of a large and untapped market in his golf region. Bear that in mind: Your videos offer a great opportu-

RETAILTRIBE ON MARKETING

nity to reflect the specific target market of that video.

Before you start shooting

I'm going to go into more detail about video scripting next month but for now I'm going to suggest that before you get in front of the camera the very least you need to think about is:

- Who is the target golfer for this video?
- What feeling am I trying to inspire and/or what behavior am I trying to change?
- What is the emphasis of my message: my expertise, or my ability to improve a golfer?
- What do I want the viewer to do after they've watched the video?

Remember what we're hoping to do—*inspire* and *engage* so you can *convert* viewers into students and *retain* them as improving golfers.



Who is my target golfer with the video?



What am I trying to inspire or what behavior am I trying to change?



What is the emphasis of my message: my expertise or my ability to improve a golfer?



What do I want the viewer to do after they've watched the video?

If you inspire and engage, you can convert your viewers into students.

Do much less selling in your Marketing



We create Campaigns and Content that inspire golfers to engage with their expert.

For world class marketing designed to drive more customers, contact Rick Williams on 215-622-6324 or rickwilliams@retailtribe.com.

Coaching works

Big reasons to swing on plane



And golfers will buy a whole lot more from you, worrying less about price.

STATE OF THE INDUSTRY

Proponent Celebrates Eight Very Interesting Years



Eight years ago this month we launched what is now Proponent Group originally as AMF Golf Management's Instructor Division. After a name change, an ownership change and a buyout over the first five years, we have progressed to what is today Proponent Group. It's never easy starting a business and there's no end to an entrepreneur's to-do list. Learning that first-hand has helped me see the world from the point of view of our members.

Toss in my consulting time helping my wife and Mike Bender build their new teaching facility and Proponent Group's involvement in launching Golf Channel Academy over the past year and it has truly been an exhilarating, exciting, exhausting and emotional roller coaster. And there is nothing I'd rather have been a part of for what is now already nearing a decade.

Looking back, you could say "timing is everything." Certainly part of our success has been due to golf instruction becoming the most dynamic sector of the golf industry in recent years. Think about it: Since Proponent Group launched, golf course construction has been at a virtual standstill, play has been flat at best, PGA Tour purses have leveled off and most of the major equipment companies have taken significant write offs on unsold inventory.

Yet, during this time we have seen the most innovative and useful teaching technologies ever created hit the market. We've seen an unprecedented growth in instructor education opportunities covering everything from long-term player development, to fitness, to green reading to swing technique. We've seen an explosion in the construction of teaching buildings and expanded practice areas at facilities across North America. And we've seen steady growth in the

demand for Proponent Group's instruction-related business services.

After eight years I think it's safe to say that no other organization is more focused on elevating the game's top teachers. For example, this year we will do more than 1,000 phone consults with our members on everything from building a teaching building to creating opportunities in the media to helping renegotiate an employment contract.

We'll publish nearly 250 pages of all original monthly newsletter content laser-focused on helping you grow your business and improve your teaching skills.

We'll have listings for more than 25 instruction positions that won't be posted anywhere else.

We'll host more than two dozen presentations at our annual summit and during the PGA Show exclusively for our members and then archive all of these presentations for you to access 24/7 whenever you may need the information.

We also believe our close alliance with Golf Channel Academy will create additional cost savings and business opportunities for our Proponent Group members starting in 2016 and we'll look forward to making those announcements as soon as they are ready to roll. We're also very pleased that nearly 90 percent of the Lead Coaches signed on with Golf Channel Academy so far came directly from Proponent's membership.

Yet, even with what we've been able to provide to this point, we know that there is much more to be done to make sure that you always have access to the best practice and business information you need to make wise choices as you continue to grow your career. In year nine, our goal is to help our members in more ways than ever before and we're confident we'll deliver. Thank you for allowing Proponent to be a critical and trusted resource. See you in Dallas! – Lorin

Proponent Group Partners



USchedule Adds Mobile Booking For Your Business

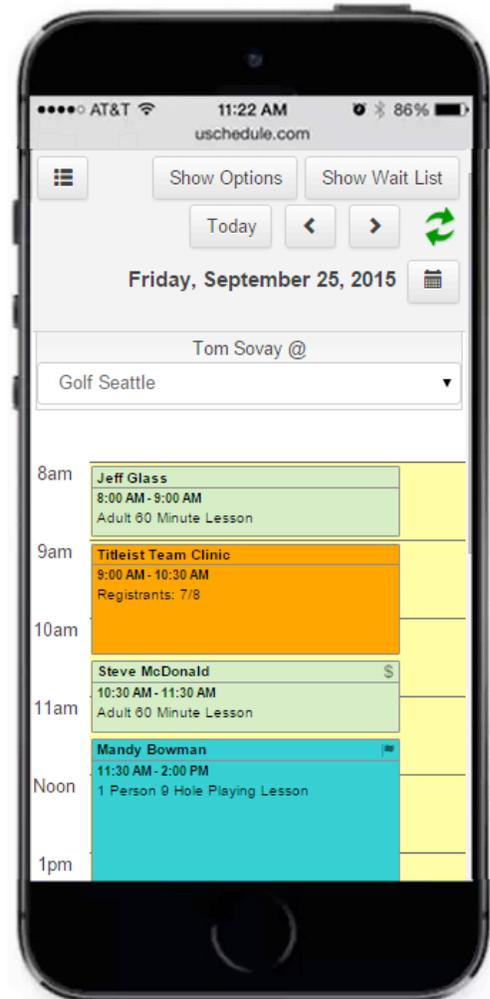
USchedule works exclusively with golf academies, golf courses, and instructors to bring the best in class software tools for your teaching business. Our software goes far beyond just scheduling and has been designed with input from many instructors. Over the years we have brought you integrated tools to manage all of your student needs, whether you are a single instructor at one location or multiple instructors and multiple locations.

- Student booking for lessons, camps & clinics
- Online payments
- Storefront
- Memberships
- Lesson video lockers
- Email marketing
- Reporting
- Dashboard
- CRM
- Online forms

You and your students are on the move, and your calendar is available on any mobile device, putting you in complete control of your schedule anywhere, anytime. From your smart phone or tablet you are able to view your schedule, access your student records, and book in just a few seconds. An email confirmation to the instructor and student is sent when a booking occurs. The student will also receive an email and text message reminder prior to their lesson.

If you have used an online scheduler, you will appreciate all of the features specifically geared for golf instruction. If you have never used an online scheduler, you and your students will love the ease and convenience of scheduling online. The software is highly customizable to meet your specific requirements – a perfect fit for your needs.

For a demonstration of USchedule's full capabilities call 877-696-0415.



What I've Learned: Bobby Clampett

Impact Zone Golf, Naples, Florida

Interview by Paul Ramee, Jr.



It's been said for years that the likes of Tommy Armour, Paul Runyan, Bob Toski, Claude Harmon, John Jacobs—top players turned great teachers—would not be seen in the 21st century. There would be too much money in the bank and too many other distractions for the world-class golfer of this era to find his way into teaching.

Bobby Clampett, however, does stand as a modern-day version of that archetype. A longtime PGA Tour player and Champions Tour competitor whose greatest fame came early, Clampett exhibits that same intense drive to know and teach the swing that made Runyan, Jacobs, Toski and their ilk so successful and influential.

In Clampett's case, the mentorship of Ben Doyle only adds to a fascinating pedigree and to his wunderkind story of youthful golf glory. Doyle was the first devotee of Homer Kelley's principles and first expert in the Golfing Machine techniques that still mean so much to Proponent Group members and coaches everywhere. A Proponent member since 2013, Clampett now balances his CBS Sports broadcasting work with a growing instruction business under the banner of Impact Golf. To discuss his playing career, swing theories and Impact Golf activities, Bobby spent time recently with Paul Ramee with Paul's tape recorder turned on.

Here's what came of their session.

Bobby, thanks for your time. There's been a lot written about your career, so we'll try and cover some aspects that are less well known.

Where should we start?

We should probably go back to when I was 10 years old and living with my mother in Carmel, Calif. I was somewhat familiar with golf and had a mild interest in playing. One day my mother went to see Ed Haber, the owner and president of Quail Lodge, which was and still is a major Carmel golf resort. She asked him

if he would give me a job, not to be compensated in money but in playing privileges. Ed said OK and introduced me to the head professional, Lee Martin. We hit it off and Lee started coaching me. He proved to be an excellent teacher because within six months I had competed in a junior tournament and a few months after that I shot in the 30s for nine for my first time. I began playing the Northern California Junior Tour regularly and by then I was really in love with the game.

People are aware that the coach who would influence you most is Ben Doyle. At what point did that relationship start?

When I turned 13, Lee took a job in Florida and started working with Ben. As you know, Ben was the first accredited instructor of The Golfing Machine. He taught me The Golfing Machine principles and really recalibrated my swing. But the pivotal moment for me happened earlier, at Pebble Beach during the 1972 U.S. Open. I found myself shagging balls for David Graham, Arnold Palmer and Gary Player.

Why do you call it pivotal?

I became so inspired by my exposure to those players that I quit Little League and concentrated completely on golf. When I turned 15 I was playing at scratch and that year I won an event they call the "Big I." The next summer I broke the all-time Junior Player of the Year points record for Northern California. The year after that I set a new California Junior Player of the Year points record. I



Clampett has had success playing at, commenting on and teaching golf at the highest levels.

WHAT I'VE LEARNED

skipped my junior year of high school and was able to get my diploma at age 17. I left home and enrolled at Brigham Young University, joining a golf team with four seniors on it.

You were making a pretty big leap at that point.

Those seniors were 21 or 22 or older and I was still 17, but I managed to play No. 1 on the team and won the individual title at two tournaments. That was good enough to make first team All-America. The next summer, which was 1978, I played a national schedule. I won the Porter Cup, Western Jr and Am, California Am, World Am, and I qualified for the Masters and the U.S. Open, finishing low amateur in both those events. I was the top-ranked amateur in the U.S. that year. My sophomore and junior seasons I won four and six tournaments, respectively, earned NCAA Player of the Year honors both seasons and finished my career with 12 victories, which is still an NCAA record, Phil Mickelson having tied it. I turned pro after my junior year at BYU and played the PGA Tour on three sponsor's exemptions and a maximum of 10 events. In those 10 events I won enough money to secure a full tour card.

Take us into your early years as a touring pro.

In 1982 I finished third in the U.S. Open at Pebble Beach. I also won the Southern Open. That made me the youngest player ever to reach \$500,000 in earnings. At that point I still felt that I had plenty of room for improvement so in '83 I broke away from Ben Doyle and tried working with several what I call "style-based" teachers. Nothing really clicked with them. However I managed to stay on tour for another 15 years despite never breaking the Top 80 on the money list. Fortunately, CBS came calling at that time.

Was it difficult at first, to be that close to the game only now as a broadcaster?

It was actually fascinating. I was able to study the game from a different perspective.

You've spent 25 years with CBS, I am sure we could talk for hours about your time there, anything in particular to share?

It was very lucky to work with people like Ken Venturi, Pat Summerall, Jim Nantz, Gary McCord, David Feherty and many others and also to call them friends. The guy who held it all together, as we know, was Frank Chirkinian. Frank coached and mentored me and he was the greatest golf broadcasting talent the game will ever know. He really brought golf to TV. He produced and directed at the same time. I was really a fish out of water when I worked on my first telecast from No. 15 at Pebble Beach in 1992. I was also playing in the event, so he made sure I had the first tee time. Frank was so good at giving advice, he had so much going on with multiple screens, multiple commentators, pulling up video, but he always had great feedback for us. He may have come off like a mean gruff, but he was always rooting for you to do well. So, CBS was a very cool place to be.

So, you made the switch and had no second thoughts?

There may have been some lingering desire to play. But, all of a sudden I was looking at the best swings in the game, using the Swing Vision Cameras and I realized that all these swings were different and unusual, but they were all performing. Ed Fiori (he beat Tiger), Jim

Furyk, Lee Trevino, they had great success but obviously teachers were not teaching their style to students. I found myself asking how it was that these guys could play such great golf.

Your answer?

It was impact.

Meaning....?

Regardless of the style of swing, impact was the same.

A pretty inspiring insight, would you say?

Definitely. It motivated me to send in my application for the 2000 U.S. Open, again at Pebble. My golf activity was probably 18 holes a month at that point in time, although I was swinging a club indoors constantly. Somehow I managed to qualify and there I was on Thurs- day of Open week, in the field. I remember I held the lead after 10 holes, then Tiger pulled ahead. In the end he nipped me by 27 strokes. Still, the experience inspired me all the more, this time toward teaching and coaching.

What did you do next?

I got serious about teaching golf and before long another parent and I went to our kids' school and put together a golf program for the middle school, junior varsity and varsity teams. What we found was that by teaching these kids about impact they all improved quickly and the kids loved the approach. I realized after watching them gravitate to "Impact Based Instruction" that I had a message to lend to golf and I had to focus on how to help people create better impact.



“We know that golf takes too long, is too expensive and too hard. Those leaving already know the first two reasons, but teaching is inadequate. The average teaching professional does not know how to assess. They will change a player's swing style, but in most cases that doesn't work.” - Bobby Clampett

The obvious next move is to put all the ideas down on paper, which as we know you went and did.

True. I wrote the book, "The Impact Zone" to organize and present what I'd learned. I was unsure of where this was headed, but I received numerous calls and emails requesting lessons and even a certification program. The First Tee called and adopted our method and found it was the most effective way to teach their kids. We came up with DVDs and training programs and today we have over 80,000 clients and 50 or so certified teaching professionals. My earnings on the Champions Tour, which I started playing in 2010, have added up to about \$1.5 million and that money has helped fund the growth of my instruction business. I've curtailed my competing to focus on teaching. That was a necessity, if the company was going to reach its potential.

WHAT I'VE LEARNED

Explain your certification program for Impact Zone teachers.

We just re-tooled it and added advanced modules. The training is online and the fee is \$595. There are 41 modules, a 90-page workbook and two exams. You need to score a 90 on the exams and then apply for certification. We are developing advanced certification levels 2 and 3. Along with that we are developing academies.

Is impact-based instruction the future of golf?

I believe it is. We've all seen the numbers on player performance among amateurs. Golf is struggling, and I've been told some 70 percent of players who take lessons currently either get worse or don't improve. We know that golf takes too long, is too expensive and too hard. Those leaving already know the first two reasons, but teaching is inadequate. The average teaching professional does not know how to assess. They will change a player's swing style, but in most cases that doesn't work and they don't have another solution.

You're saying that the attempt to help people is often counterproductive?

I have students who have been to numerous golf schools and I am their last hope. They are feeling burned, they're very frustrated and they arrive with a lot of baggage. This is the state of many people playing the game who have received "style-based instruction." When they leave our schools, they are empowered, they can somewhat become their own coach. So, I'm convinced that impact-based instruction will become the new standard in golf. It will take some time, years, but even now it is quickly gaining in popularity.

How does impact-based teaching relate to The Golfing Machine?

The essence of The Golfing Machine was always the laws of impact. We are just translating the essence of The Golfing Machine to a simple language that is teachable. Think about Homer Kelley's first Component, the flat left wrist, and his Dynamic No. 4, which is Clubhead Lag. These are impact-based and are really the secret to golf. By teaching impact-based technique we are alleviating a lot of confusion. The profession has thousands of different thoughts and in fact many a teacher's success is based on reputation. As a result many students leave perplexed.



Clampett's Impact Zone Instruction brand is adding new academy locations.

How does impact-based instruction apply to the short game?

Short shots require impact, no different than the long game. Of course, there are differences. In the full swing we are creating backswing, while in putting we are creating topspin, so certain fundamentals change

Looking back, any regrets on your playing career?

You can never undo the past. If I had not gone through what I went through as a player, I never would have written "The Impact Zone." If I had more top finishes on Tour, I never would have gone to CBS, never written my book and would never be where I am today. So, that adds up to no regrets. That said, I've learned a lot, and my advice to up-and-coming tournament golfers is stick to your style and don't become a swing junkie.

After many years walking the fairways, whose impact impresses you?

That question reminds me of a composite photograph taken at Firestone Country Club this year of the winner Shane Lowry, Dustin Johnson and Jim Furyk at the top of their backswing. At the time they were the top three on the leaderboard. It struck me that they had three entirely different backswings. A question went through my head: "What does

that tell you?" I'm betting that most instructors would want to fix their backswings. But I believe that is starting to change.

I was hitting balls one day and in the stall next to me an instructor was teaching a woman and she was fit to be tied. She had just played her worst round ever. The instructor was doing his best, but she just kept hitting bad shot after bad shot. The instructor kept working on her posture and she kept hitting bad shots, the two of them were very frustrated, she didn't get any better and the lesson ended. The moral of that story to me was that this was happening way too often and if I could help I needed to do something.

Sounds like you've taken responsibility to put the golf instruction world on your back.

I know Impact Based instruction works, I feel like it is my duty, my calling. In life if you don't do what you are good at and want to do you will never be happy. It is my responsibility to give back to the game I love and someone has to do something.



Now You Have **FOUR** Ways to Find Answers to All of Your Business and Career Questions

Take Advantage of All of Our Options

Contract Negotiations * Proprietary Compensation Information * Marketing Issues
Business Plans * Job Search Assistance * Public Relations * General Career Advice
Management Action Plans * Resume Review * Website Design * Logo Design
Teaching Building Design and Construction * Social Media Marketing * Instruction Trends

Our Unique Members-only Website

Access to more than 100 presentations from the top industry experts and world-class instructors whenever you need it, only on our members-only website. Plus, more than a dozen business templates and guides ready for downloading at any time.

Our Member Mentors

Tap into the combined knowledge of nearly 100 of our members who have offered to assist fellow members by sharing their expertise in dozens of relevant topics. Just find your topic of interest and contact those listed for advice to tap into our membership's shared wisdom.

Our Private Edufii and Facebook Groups

Ask our Private Facebook or Edufii group of more than 400 Proponent members your questions and you'll get answers from your peers across North America.

Our One-on-One Consulting

For our full members, call our office anytime you need help with a career or business-related issue. We talk with half-a-dozen members or more each day and provide recommendations and advice in dozens of areas that can affect your bottom line.

Log on to www.proponent-group.com or call 407-878-1235.

INDUSTRY INTERVIEW

Golf Datatech Co-Founder—with a View of the Industry from Many Sides Proponent Taps the Insights of Tom Stine

By David Gould, Staff Editor

As part of our initiative to bring voices from various industry sectors into the Proponent newsletter, we're pleased to devote space to our recent conversation with Tom Stine. Born in Toledo, Ohio in 1950, Stine is best known for his success as a co-founder of Golf Datatech, LLC, the industry's trusted and non-partisan source of product sales figures and trends in golf retail. However, many veteran golf editors and writers will associate him closely with Golfweek magazine, which was launched in 1975 by Tom's father.

Charley Stine, a journalist known for sound Midwestern judgement and a wry wit, laid out Golfweek as a newspaper-style tabloid and loaded it with tournament results and short features, at a time when this information was increasingly in demand and long before the Internet. "Working with Dad and growing Golfweek into a national publication was a great golf experience and a great business experience," Tom recalls. "My brother Bob worked with us for a while, and my brother Bill has done great things in the golf-course management end of the business, owning and managing semi-private and daily fee courses." Bill Stine's sons, Buck and Mack, now work in the course-operations business with him.

Several years ago a Golf Datatech research project on behalf of Proponent Group yielded important market data about who takes lessons and why. It utilized the Database of Serious Golfers that Stine's company developed to gather opinions about instruction from 1,500-plus performance-conscious players. That information guided additional Proponent projects and initiatives, all in the name of effectively positioning and promoting what our members provide.

We talked to Tom about player

development, the state of the industry, how teaching has changed over the years and what golf might look like in the future. Here are some highlights of that conversation.

What was your early experience of lessons, practice and generally working on your game?

The time in my life when I most enjoyed being on the range and trying to improve was in the 1980s, in the early days of Golfweek. The planets kind of lined up, because I was living in a quiet town, Winter Haven, Fla., I was single, and there was a new instructor at the resort down the street whose name was David Leadbetter. I would go to his tee on the back of the range many a night after work to relax and hit balls. David and I grew to become good friends. He was living in a little condo right there beside his tee at the Grenelefe Resort. We would talk with each other about a lot of things, including how we

"There are teachers who just hang their shingle and then wait for golfers to find them. That doesn't seem like a recipe for success. There is a way to be out there... "working the range," if you will, that I think is perfectly appropriate." - Tom Stine

planned on making our way in the golf business. Of course he gave me some great swing ideas to work on, and there was lots of time to practice, so I was able to get down to a 5-handicap, which is the lowest I've ever been. His teaching talent exceeded my playing ability.

planned on making our way in the golf business. Of course he gave me some great swing ideas to work on, and there was lots of time to practice, so I was able to get down to a 5-handicap, which is the lowest I've ever been. His teaching talent exceeded my playing ability.



David Overmyer, Tom Stine and John Kryznovek launched Golf Datatech nearly 20 years ago.

INDUSTRY INTERVIEW

As you were watching David develop his teaching business, could you tell he was on his way to such immense success?

I had no idea he could accomplish what he's accomplished. I had no thought that any golf teacher could do that. This was back in the day, before instruction became cool. Teaching golf was all David knew how to do, so he spent all his time doing it. I could see the passion in him. I could see his talent for getting people to make the appropriate swing changes. It was like he saw golfers' swings in slow motion. He could talk about the swing all day and he studied it constantly. If you happen to meet a great math teacher or a great piano teacher, they have what David has, whatever that is. He had a gift and he worked very hard to develop it.

You weren't the only guy on the back end of that Grenelefe range, correct?

Far from it. Nick Price would be there, hitting balls all day long. I'd run into Denis Watson all the time. Other tour pros, who were on their way up, would come through. At one point I decided to introduce David to a young woman I knew, Kelly Fuiks, who had been a student of Manuel de la Torre during winters in Arizona, where she was from. I guess I was suggesting that he take Kelly on as a student, but it ended up being a lot more than that. They turned out to be a good match and they got married. They're still very happy together.

What exactly does Golf Datatech do?

We track the sales of all golf products—what's been sold, how much it's been sold for and how much inventory is remaining in the on-course and off-course retail channels. We created this business from scratch and have produced our reports every month since 1997. We collect the data from the retailers electronically and run it through proprietary programs we have developed. We then distribute our reports electronically back to the retailers and the manufacturers. The other part of what we do is consumer research, some of it syndicated, some for individual client companies. We conduct studies on the attitudes and usage of serious golfers about their game, their equipment, their likes and dislikes. If a brand is creating a new advertising campaign we can do a study indicating how it will be received—along with general information about consumer attitudes toward the brand and its competitors.

What do your clients want the data to show? What do they wish for?

They commission our reports in order to know what is go-

ing on in the retail market—what's selling and what isn't. Overall, everyone wishes the numbers were better. No matter how good the numbers are they would like their business and golf in general to be doing better.

Your company works with golf brands and businesses across the board. How often will you see a new entry in the golf industry and think, "Hey, this is a great business they've got."

That doesn't happen very often. You don't see startups come to market and do well the way you did years ago. At least in golf hardgoods you don't. The amount of R&D and marketing that's needed is daunting. Even if you had that great new idea, you can't build the machinery of a full-fledged company to compete with established brands if there isn't that second great product waiting behind the first one, then the third, even the fourth. It's a high barrier to entry.

OK, what's the hottest club or piece of gear coming down the pipeline?

Don't want to disappoint you but, in this role, I don't make predictions. "We just count 'em" is the Golf Datatech slogan. Basically, the strong will survive. Some companies that have been leaders may fall back, and others will come forward. But shelf space is hard to get, so if you don't have any you've got a difficult row to hoe.

What do you see in the Golf Datatech numbers that a golf coach should take note of?

One thing I notice is how distance-measuring devices continue to grow in popularity. Right now there is more money spent on distance-finders than on putters. Think about that. Golfers seem to be buying their third and fourth rangefinder, as the technology improves. So, by now, the golfer really ought to know how far they hit their 24-degree hybrid and how far their 7-iron carries. It seems that golf academies could work on that angle—having golfers track those yardages, then come to them for a game-improvement program, then measure again.

Companies that use your services are marketing a product, letting you tell them how well it fares against the competition, then making adjustments. Do you see golf coaches doing that?

Obviously, there are some teachers who just hang their shingle and then wait for golfers to find them. That doesn't seem like a recipe for success. There is a way to be out there on the tee line, "working the range," if you will, that I think is perfectly appropriate.

**"One thing I notice is how distance-measuring devices continue to grow in popularity. Right now there is more money spent on distance-finders than on putters. Think about that."
- Tom Stine**

INDUSTRY INTERVIEW

You think golfers are open to having the teaching professional approach them that way?

I think golfers are confused about lesson-taking and how it works. Someone like myself, who's been in the game and been in the business for decades, is right now unsure where to go to get help for his major weakness as a player—in my case that's the shots from 30 to 60 yards away. I putt very well and I play very well from greenside bunkers, but those other shots ruin me. I have no confidence over them and I don't know where to get instruction to help me fix this. If some teaching pro framed it for me correctly, where they wouldn't be working on my full swing, but this 50-yard problem would be addressed, I would sign up for that right away.

There have been several in-depth studies of the Millennial generation, gauging their interest in golf and how likely they are to stick with it. Your thoughts on that?

Our company has been trying to get its arms around that data and the various interpretations. We've made some progress. Personally, I hear people throwing the term Millennial around as though they really know what they're talking about, when I suspect they probably don't. It boils down to the characterization of the behavior and attitudes of an age group—people currently in their 20s and 30s. My response a lot of the time is to ask the question: What did we call "people in their 20s and 30s" when other generations were in their 20s and 30s? Does tagging a name on people who are a particular age at a given time maybe over-complicate things?

Do you pay much attention to Topgolf?

I do pay attention to it. I like Topgolf. I've been to three of them, including the one in England. They've got something that's really pretty terrific. It's a great place to introduce someone to golf. If I were the owner of a golf facility nearby a Topgolf center, I'd want to have them hand out a coupon for a nine-hole round at my course, if they were open to that. Topgolf is fun, entertaining, social... and the activity that holds it all together is hitting golf balls. "Real" golf doesn't need all the Topgolfers, just maybe a dozen or so

out of 100. I always come back to the idea that only 10 to 20 people out of every 100 are really going to like this game, and 20 is up on the high side when you are talking about America's participation rate.

What are the issues for the game and the industry, in your view?

I see real estate-driven activity as the cause of most of our big problems. What happened with golf courses in planned communities was unsustainable from the beginning. The courses were long so they could fit more homes around them. People moved into them and thought they would take up the game, and many of those home buyers who tried golf found out they didn't like it, or they didn't have time to teach their kids, or they lost their job and then lost their house.

So you think we're just dealing with a real-estate-golf bust?

Let's just say that golf's recovery is about the game returning

to its "normal" proportions, if that's the right word. Courses have closed in big numbers over the last few years but that trend is slowing down. We'd like to keep the participation rate in line with what it was prior to the real estate boom and bust. That would keep the sport healthy. Personally, I don't know one person who has quit playing golf in the past five years. I know some who have dropped their club memberships, and now play at public courses, but they still play. They take their clubs on vacation. They're still golfers.

Does the game's health depend on juniors being brought into golf early? The junior segment has turned into a major revenue source for in-demand golf instructors.

That's great, and I'm sure it will continue as a strong market segment for the teachers. But again, I've seen golf do pretty well in times where there weren't a lot of children visible at the private club or at the high-end daily fee. As a kid I played every sport—all the team sports—and I loved all of them. Meanwhile, I played enough golf when I was young to get a taste for the game. Well, I don't play baseball or basketball anymore. Same as most every guy my age who still plays a sport, I play golf.

"I always come back to the idea that only 10 to 20 people out of every 100 are really going to like this game, and 20 is up on the high side when you are talking about America's participation rate." - Tom Stine

**Join Proponent at the Summit in "Big D"
November 1-3, 2015**

It's the Best Investment You Can Make in Your Career this Year

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT: J.R. MATS

FINALLY

A Golf Mat That Lets You Swing Down-and-Through™



✓ True Divot Action™

✓ No Bounce™



✓ Takes a Real Tee™



Mike Bender 's
Wedge Range



Kirk Triplett 5x5



Butch Harmon School



Tuff Shot Trainer™

- "True feel with true results ..." Mike Bender – Top 5 Teacher / Top 25 Golf School
- No Bounce and the feel really is Real ..." Jack Connelly – President PGA 2002-2003
- "The perfect golf mats for our school..." Steven Dresser – Top 25 Golf School

Proponent Group "Help Me Help You" Specials ... if you help me with pictures and a review that I may use in my marketing – I will offer you a special deal. (*limit One Mat Only)

***1 @ 5x5 Country Club Elite® Mat \$ 299 Delivered USA 48**

***1 Uneven Lie™ Mat ... \$ 299 Delivered USA 48**

Quick & True Putting Turf™ ... \$ 3.50 per sq.Ft. + Shipping

Contact Jay McGrath at Jay@RealFeelGolfMats.com to order your Proponent group special or to discuss your specific project needs.

**J.R. Mats Inc.
800-344-2115**



MEMBER MILESTONES

Please Welcome Proponent Group's New Members for September 2015

Douglas Acton, The Meadow Club, Fairfax, CA – Full Member

Jason Balle, Belfair Plantation, Bluffton, SC – Full Member

Jim Coles, Morro Bay Golf Course, Morro Bay, CA – Associate Member

Stan Moore, Don Law Golf Academy, Boca Raton, FL – Full Member

Kyle Morris, The Golf Room, Dublin, OH – Full Member

Chad Moscovic, Eldorado Country Club, McKinney, TX – Associate Member

Rico Riciputi, Glenmaura National G.C., Moosic, PA – Associate Member

LPGA Honors "of the Year" Winners



The LPGA Teaching and Club Professionals have selected the recipients of their annual section "of the year" awards. Three Proponent Group members have been honored for 2015.

They include the Northeast Section's Teacher of the Year, **Jane Frost** in East Sandwich, MA; the Southeast Section's Junior Golf

Leadership award to **Sheryl Maize** in Sarasota, FL and The Western Section's Teacher of the Year, **Alison Curdt** in Simi Valley, CA. The LPGA's National Award winners will be announced in the coming weeks and will come from the section award winners. Congratulations to all and best of luck on the national awards!



Jane Frost

Digest Names Top 50 Best Teachers in America and Best in State



Golf Digest
THE 50 BEST TEACHERS IN AMERICA
2015+2016

Golf Digest has published its new 2015-16 Top 50 Best Teachers in America list in the magazine's November issue on newsstands this week and Proponent is very pleased to announce that 15 of our members are on the new list including: **David Leadbetter, Mike Bender, Martin Hall, Bob Toski, Michael Breed, Pia Nilsson, Cameron McCormick,**

Mike Malaska, Dr. Jim Suttie, Manuel de la Torre, Lynn Marriott, Dr. Gary Wiren, Mike LaBauve, Kevin Weeks and Todd Sones.

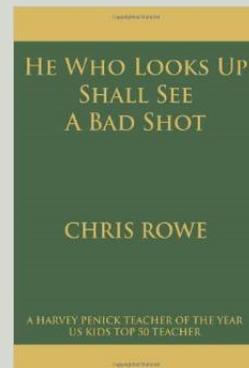
Digest also published their Best Teachers in Your State list and 127 Proponent members are listed among the best in their respective states including eight members ranked #1 in their state: **Mark Blackburn, Trent Wearner, Dr. Jim Suttie, Josh Cook, Bernie Najar, Michael Breed, Dana Rader, and Erika Larkin.**

Both lists are the result of balloting of more than 1,000 teachers across the country. Congratulations to all who made the lists!

Chris Rowe Publishes First Book

He Who Looks Up Shall See a Bad Shot by member **Chris Rowe**, of Trinity, TX, is filled with stories of life experiences related back to lessons Chris has given. The book is written in a similar format to Harvey Penick's books with no chapters, just short anecdotes and stories.

If you'd like to purchase a copy, it is available on amazon.com.



The Proponent Team

Lorin Anderson President

David Gould Staff Editor

Lori Bombka Operations Manager

Debbie Clements Accounting

Todd Wilson CEO, Golf Channel Academy

Scott Novell President, Golf Channel Academy

Proponent Group
The Premier Network of Golf Instructors



1513 Cherry Ridge Drive
Heathrow, FL 32746

407-878-1235 Phone

321-363-1191 Fax

The Premier Network of Golf Instructors

Copyright ©2015 Proponent Group. A Golf Channel Academy company. All rights reserved.