

COLLABORATE

www.proponent-group.com

Smarter Strategies in the Year Ahead Lessons Learned from Income Tax Season

By John Torsiello, Contributing Writer

Had enough of 1099 forms and Schedule C expense slips? This may be the ideal moment to take a few notes on how to tame the tax beast as 2015 rolls along toward the finish line.

At tax time, the self-employed golf instructor puts aside wrist cock and hip turn to wallow in the IRS rules and regulations that seldom seem to give hard-working instructors a break. It certainly doesn't help to think that the Internal Revenue Service "loves to audit independent contractors," according to California-based tax attorney Scott Kauffman, or that, in his words, "anything involving golf puts up a red flag" because "it looks to the IRS like perhaps this is a hobby and not someone's business." Ouch.

Some teaching professionals mosey through tax season with nary a care. Proponent Group member and PGA Master professional Allison Curdt of Los Angeles has prepared her own returns on Turbo Tax since 2005 and has not encountered any problems. "I turned independent contractor this past



year and had a successful return and pretty much deducted anything that I could think of relating to my business. I've consulted with a CPA who does taxes for athletes to make sure I'm kosher—this includes earning income in other states from tournaments." Curdt wisely advises golf teaching professionals to keep every receipt that might possibly be deductible on a tax return.

Ryan Bonser wasn't so fortunate. The Rochester, Minn.-based Proponent member was called in by the IRS for an audit, most likely triggered by high capital expenditures.

"I bought a Trackman for \$25,000 and it sent up a red flag," says Bonser. "I was teaching lessons at Dick's Sporting Goods and I thought I could deduct miles that I drove to give lessons and that also popped up on the audit." He was a commut-

Continued on page 2

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

PAGE 3

Upgrade Your Publicity Pictures

PAGE 6

Golf Channel Academy Launches with More than 50 Locations

PAGE 8

Teaching Building Sampler: Three Buildings for Different Needs

PAGE 11

Retail Tribe on Marketing: Use Success Stories to Sell Instruction

PAGE 14

State of the Industry: The Art Versus The Science of Teaching

PAGE 16

The Library: New List of Your Favorite Books for Developing Talent

PAGE 18

What I've Learned Interview: Larry Rinker, Ritz-Carlton Orlando

PAGE 22

Member Milestones: New Members, April Webinar and Discounts


 Proponent Group
 The Premier Network of Golf Instructors

Lessons Learned from Income Tax Season (continued)

Continued from page 1

ing employee, even though he was attracting his own following of clients to the store. If he had driven home after a regular work shift, then drove back to Dick's to give his private lessons—as he did on numerous occasions—those miles would be a more legitimate deduction.

Bonser says the audit was a bit exhausting. “They went through all my receipts, my checking account and savings account to see the funds coming and going. But, to be honest it was totally worth it no matter what I had to go through,” says Bonser. “It was like getting my car tuned up. Now I know what to do and what throws up red flags. I also know that hiring a good accountant is worth the money.”

Steven Goldburd, a tax attorney and partner in the New York City firm of Goldburd McCone, says the most common mistakes independent contractors make when filing taxes is showing no profit and not keeping adequate records. Additionally, many independent contractors take a home office deduction. But, in order to do so they must show that they have an actual designated space in their home to be used as a home office. “Your kitchen table doesn't count,” he warns.

James Clements, a CPA in DeBary, Fla., reminds teaching professionals that as independent contractors they are running a business, and must obtain business licenses, “sales and use” licenses as well as federal and state employer IDs. “If you have helpers,” says Clements, “they may be classified as employees and must be paid wages with all the proper withholdings, tax filings and insurance (worker's compensation) applicable to the golf teaching professional's state.”

As Clements sees it, the most common failing among independent contractors is poor record-keeping. Among the liabilities of laxity in this area is lost deductions, which means you pay more in taxes than you truly have to. Given a situation where the taxpayer's federal tax rate is 25 percent, the state rate is 5 percent and self-employment taxes are at 15.3 percent, a deduction you fail to claim “could increase the total tax you pay by 45.3 percent,” Clements says. Sloppy records can also lead to penalties. “If deductions are not properly documented they could be disallowed and subject to all the taxes (45.3 percent) plus an accuracy-related penalty of 20 percent under Internal



Revenue Code Section 6662,” he points out. “In that instance, undocumented and disallowed deductions could lead to 65.3 percent increase in taxes.”

Goldburd says, “We (independent contractors) pay tax on our net income. The more business deductions you have the lower your net income will be. Good record-keeping is the best proof for these deductions.”

It helps, according to Goldburd, to try and look at your business through the eyes of a tax auditor, who studies returns from dozens of different occupations. “The auditors get curious if you take too many expense deductions or if you take very few,” he says. Showing too many years of losses as opposed to profit will get the attention of the IRS. So will a tax return that features a total dollar figure for expenditures that is much higher than in previous years.

Clements says the higher the income the greater the chance for audit. Gray areas for deductions are mostly meals, entertainment, travel, auto mileage and uniforms. “The solution is to document for meals. You must state who was entertained and what business was discussed. For auto mileage use a calendar, and don't use round numbers. Uniforms must have the business name on the shirts. Independent contractors who are not incorporated are the biggest red flags. Corporations have only about a 0.5 percent chance of audits.” This last observation dovetails with the advice of Scott Kauffman, who commonly advises teaching professionals to register their business as an S Corporation.

An S Corporation is a special structure of business ownership under which the business is able to avoid double taxation because it is not required to pay corporate income tax on the profits of the company. All profits/losses are passed on directly to the shareholder(s) of the company. The shareholder(s) file individual tax returns and pay income tax on whatever share of profits received from the business. A business electing to incorporate with S Corporation status has its business income taxed only once, similar to how sole proprietorships and partnerships are taxed.

Says Kauffman, “Simply put, S Corporations are more difficult to audit and in general throw up fewer red flags. And an S Corporation will result in some tax savings.”

Continued on page 4

PROPONENT GROUP NEWS

Don't Put it Off...

The Serious Task of Smiling for the Camera

By David Gould, Staff Editor

At last fall's Summit our opening-night dinner came with a bonus opportunity: Proponent members could have a professional photographer shoot head-and-shoulders photos of them, free of charge. It made good sense—attendees were spruced up and well dressed, the temporary photo studio was just steps from the reception area and the group was in a festive, smiling mood. A total of nine members swung by.

A question about those other 100-plus Proponent members on hand—could each and every one claim they had no need for new or additional headshot photos? The likely answer is no, and yes, this is a guilt trip. Being obsessively media-minded, your Proponent editorial staff will always try to prod, prompt, urge and even beg member coaches to keep supplying themselves with great photography for business-building reasons.

That includes headshots, action poses, images of you on the tee with juniors, women golfers, in clinic settings, doing your clubfitting, the whole shebang. Once those photos are produced and they begin to circulate, they can also boost your publicity machine without you doing anything. Editors of publications go on Google Images regularly to find stock photos of teaching and coaching. Your excellent pictures, tagged the right way, could even get you an interview opportunity. That's because editors who lack photo budgets will find their no-charge photos first, then make phone calls to the professionals shown in the photos—this happens a lot more than you might expect.

In the member-only website, under Marketing Templates, is a complete how-to article on your professional photography needs. Here in the newsletter we will get you thinking and provide some bullet points on the technical aspects.

Photography basics to remember:

- Photos should be updated every 2-3 years including headshots, teaching shots, shots of your swing, facility shots and any other photos that you may need for promotion.
- Try to have your photographer shoot with all sky or all grass backgrounds whenever possible. This can be done when



Dark clothes, cluttered backgrounds and poor lighting (left) make your teaching brand look less polished than a well thought out photo (right).

demonstrating on an elevated tee with the camera set low or when you're in a fairway and the camera is set high.

- Wear a bright solid-color shirt (yellow, red, orange, peach or light blue all work well) and mid-tone khaki or gray pants. Avoid black, white, dark brown and green in shirts or pants.
- Shoot swing and drill demonstration shots on a tee on the golf course where the grass is in perfect condition, do not shoot on the driving range if you don't have to. It always looks messy and the backgrounds are usually filled with buildings, carts or cart paths.
- Don't wear a hat or sunglasses unless that is part of your trademark look. Hats create shadows on your face, which makes it harder for people to feel like they are getting to know you through the photos.

Continued top of Page 4

Customized Compensation Surveys Now Available

Proponent Group Full Members Who Completed the 2015 Compensation Survey May Request Customized Survey Results

While we shared some of the general results of the new 2015 Proponent Group Compensation Survey in last month's March members' newsletter, we want to remind those members who completed the survey that you also may request a customized version that most closely

matches your job situation. We are able to filter the results in thousands of different combinations including job title, facility type, facility financials, job duties and the like. If you need personalized data to renegotiate your contract or to determine if you should be pursuing an increase in salary or lesson rates, just call our office at 407-878-1235 or email landerson@proponent-group.com and we'll create a report based on the parameters you are most interested in comparing.

PROPONENT GROUP NEWS

By Asking for Help You're on the Hook—and the “Shoot” Will Happen

Continued from Page 3

The photo at right shows Mike Perpich, a Proponent Group member who by his own admission is not a champ when it comes to business promotion. That said, Perpich recently did a bang-up job of rebuilding his photo gallery. The end purpose was to create a new business website. In the process, the photo gallery he built shows all facets of his operation, captures Perpich in every “stock” pose imaginable and presents it all in a highly professional manner.

The digital files of these images are saved in both high and low resolution, which makes life very easy for anyone (inside or outside the media world) who will be transmitting, viewing or publishing the pictures.

One key to making this happen was asking for help—in this case Perpich sought assistance from the Proponent Group staff and then from one of his golf students who is an accomplished amateur photographer. When you've got people helping you—paid or unpaid—you are on the hook to set aside the time, make the preparations and go through with the process. So, find talented folks to help, make the commitment and build that photo file.
– D.G.



A soothing background, solid-colored clothing and a good view of the coach's face combine to make for a high-quality image of Mike Perpich with his student.

Lessons Learned from Income Tax Season (continued)

Continued from Page 3

Clements explains that independent contractors and employees can take basically the same deductions but both must document properly. Employees can only deduct if they itemize and even then can only deduct an amount equal to 2 percent of their adjusted gross income. “An independent contractor can potentially be in better control of his tax-deductible retirement savings. One of the best ways not to lose deductions is to keep a separate business checking account and use it for business only—don't use a personal account for business. A 1040 filed with a Schedule C (for self-employed contractors) faces an audit chance between 1.2 percent and 4 percent.”

There can be a fine line separating the business employee from the independent contractor—with major tax consequences depending which side you fall on. “Don't assume,” says Goldburd, “that just because the person paying you tells you that you're an independent contractor, you actually are independent.” He says these questions include: Are you paid by individuals or is all your income received from one or two (or possibly even more) golf clubs? Who sets your schedule? Who tells you where to be? Must you work at their premises? Who pays your expenses? Do you have a written contract with one club or more clubs? Are you guaranteed vacation time? “If you answered that the club or a specific person pays you, tells you where to be, and for all intents and purposes acts like

your boss, then maybe you are an employee and not really independent at all.”

Gray areas and judgment calls are always part of the tax process, if you file a Schedule C. “As an independent contractor you may go to a golf teaching summit which you believe will make you a better teacher,” says Goldburd. “On the one hand, you must pay for the retreat, on the other hand, you aren't the sole judge of whether it's a legitimate tax deduction for your business. An employee may also take certain expenses that are ordinary and necessary for his employment. However, if your employer does not believe that the coaching clinic is important enough to send you, you may not be able to take that retreat as an expense on your Schedule A.”

Teaching pros can use affordable software to help with record-keeping, including Quickbooks, TurboTax, PeachTree or Simply Accounting. These programs will guide you through your business-expense entries and provide advice on which are likely legitimate tax deductions.

Kauffman advises that to limit the possibility of an audit or losing legitimate tax deductions, it is wise to seek professional guidance. “Make sure it is someone who has CPA after their name and not someone who just prepares taxes. They can be of immense help.”

Proponent member Ryan Bonser was able to “man up” and turn his IRS audit into a positive experience. You may prefer getting educated in a less nerve-wracking manner.



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 350 Proponent members your questions and you'll get answers from your peers across North America.

Our One-on-One Consulting

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.

GOLF CHANNEL ACADEMY LAUNCHES

A New Era for Promoting Instruction

Golf Channel Academy Goes Live Nationwide

By David Gould, Staff Editor

Golf instruction, having quietly reinvented itself, is gaining a forceful new voice to promote the benefits of quality coaching. Golf Channel Academy—the in-person, hands-on extension of Golf Channel’s televised instruction shows—launches this week in 57 locations throughout the U.S. and Canada. The upshot is a decidedly higher profile for the teaching-coaching sector of the industry.

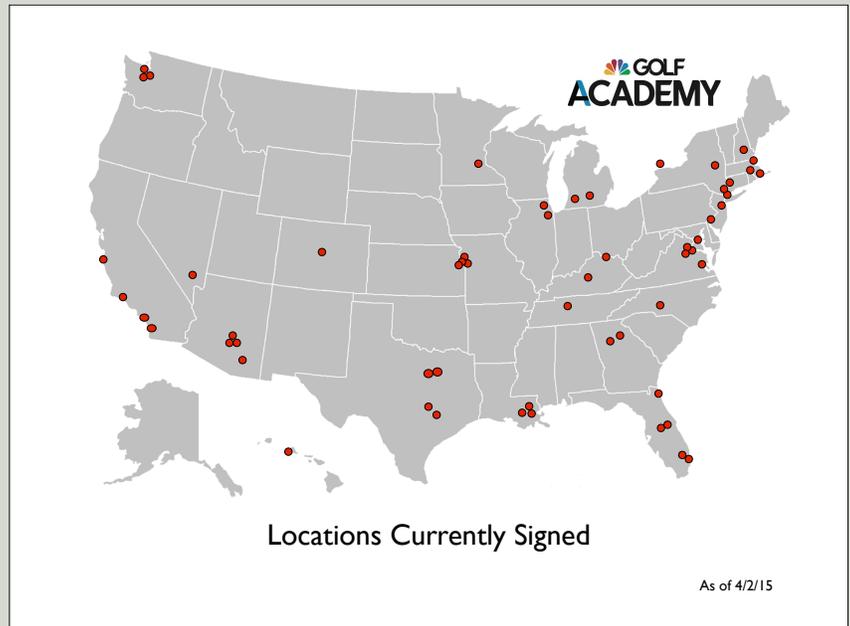
As Proponent Group members have been hearing for the past year, Golf Channel Academy (GCA) is not an institute with a fixed curriculum. Rather, it is a network of accomplished coaches, their self-branded schools and their physical learning centers. Each GCA-affiliated coach will continue to teach the way he or she does best, utilizing the methods that have lifted them to the top of the profession. A primary mission of Golf Channel Academy is simply to harness the collective market presence of skillful coaching and emphasize its benefits to golfers.

“As Golf Channel Academy continues to ramp up, Proponent Group will continue reaping collateral benefits,” commented Lorin Anderson, president of Proponent Group. “The resources we will have available and the data we will be able to analyze is unprecedented in the golf instruction industry,” Anderson stated. “This is a powerful combination—one that will equip Proponent members with first-rate proprietary information.”

He went on to say that only by teaming up with Golf Channel Academy could Proponent Group attain business resources and assets of such high caliber. “GCA will raise the tide for all Proponent Group members simply by promoting the value of high quality golf instruction day-in and day-out on Golf Channel’s multiple platforms,” Lorin said.

Golf Channel Academy coaches will benefit from a wide spectrum of business consulting services and products addressing marketing, sales, technology, and back-office solutions needs, as well as shared best practices across the network. Coaches also will have the opportunity to appear on instructional programming across Golf Channel’s television and digital platforms.

Students who work with Golf Channel Academy coaches will be offered other benefits, as well, including the opportunity to join “Golf Channel Academy Club,” an



Golf Channel Academy’s launch includes 57 locations in 26 states in its growing network.

exclusive community of like-minded golfers who are motivated and passionate about improving their golfing skills. Included in the membership will be “Golf Channel Academy Magazine,” a fully digital, twice-a-month e-magazine that extends the philosophy of ongoing instruction and includes articles and video tips from the coaches. The Club will also help facilitate communication between the students and their coaches, promoting the sharing of best practices and other activities. As Golf Channel Academy Club grows, further benefits, discounts, and programs are planned, including skills competitions.

The impetus for Golf Channel Academy grew out of collaboration between Todd Wilson, CEO of Golf Channel Academy, and Scott Novell, its president. In part, Wilson based the GCA concept on the “brand-within-a-brand” strategy employed by NASCAR with its race tracks and racing teams, where he was a long-tenured senior vice president as well as CFO.

The Wilson-Novell tandem was put in contact with Anderson back in 2013 and over time conducted lengthy discussions about how golf instruction businesses work. Lorin eventually assumed a formal consultant role to the nascent business—then called Golf Coach Select—and now serves as executive vice-president of GCA. In part as a result of Golf Coach Select becoming closely familiar with Propo-

ment Group and its membership, active Proponent members have come to represent nearly 90 percent of the Golf Channel Academy “lead coaches.” at the time of this launch.

Wilson, who along with Novell has appeared regularly at Proponent Group events and gatherings, puts strong emphasis on the many advantages that the combination of Golf Channel, Golf Channel Academy and Proponent enjoys. “We will market and advertise golf teaching and coaching as it rightly should be marketed,” he recently said. “This is the first opening there has ever been to elevate instruction to its rightful place in the industry and in the minds of consumers.”

Years of research by Golf Channel Academy’s executive team—aided by experts from the golf world and academia—have identified the initial group of 46 lead coaches. They all share the philosophy that good coaching takes place over a period of time, and that the relationship between coach and student is an on-going one devoted to long-lasting improvement. Everything about Golf Channel Academy is devoted to enhancing the “coaching” experience for both teacher and student.

A directory of all Golf Channel Academy locations and additional information on the facilities, programs, and inaugural group of more than 190 lead and staff coaches can be found at www.golfchannelacademy.com.

As Golf Channel Academy officially launches this month, 57 facilities are already part of the network. The current list of lead instructors and their facilities will continue to grow to approximately 100 across North America.



Arizona

Jeff Fisher, Fisher Bryan Golf Academy, Longbow G.C., Mesa
Lynn Marriott and Pia Nilsson, VISION54, Talking Stick Golf Club, Scottsdale
Mark Polich, Mark Polich Golf, Tucson
Craig Renshaw, Legacy Golf Performance Center, Phoenix

Canada

Henry Brunton, Henry Brunton Golf at Eagles Nest G.C., Maple, Ontario, Canada

California

Henry Brunton, Henry Brunton Golf at Strawberry Farms G.C., Irvine
Don Parsons, Don Parsons Golf, Twin Lakes GC, Santa Barbara
Kip Puterbaugh, Aviara Golf Academy, Carlsbad
Jeff Ritter, MTT Performance, Poppy Hills GC, Pebble Beach

Colorado

Trent Wearner, Trent Wearner Golf Academy, Meridian G.C., Englewood

Connecticut

Paul Ramee, Jr., Bull's Bridge Golf Club, South Kent

Florida

Ed Bowe, Omni Amelia Island Plantation Resort, Amelia Island
Fred Griffin, Grand Cypress Academy of Golf, Orlando
Martin Hall, Martin Hall Golf, Ibis G. & C.C., West Palm Beach
Kenny Nairn, Celebration Golf Academy, Celebration G.C., Celebration
Kellie Stenzel, Kellie Stenzel Golf, Palm Beach Par 3, Palm Beach

Georgia

Charlie King, Reynolds Golf Academy, Reynolds Plantation, Greensboro
Chad Phillips, Blue Giraffe Golf Institute, Alpharetta

Hawaii

Claude Brousseau, Ko Olina G.C., Kapolei (Oahu)

Illinois

Todd Sones, Todd Sones Impact Golf, Vernon Hills
Kevin Weeks, Cog Hill Golf & Country Club, Lemont

Kansas

Chuck Evans Golf, Canyon Farms G.C., Lenexa

Kentucky

Ralph Landrum, World of Golf, Florence
Larry Ward, High Performance Golf Academy, Lexington

Louisiana

Rob Noel, Rob Noel Golf Academy at Money Hill G&CC, Abita Springs; Big Easy Sportsplex, Jefferson; and Carter Plantation, Springfield

Maryland

Rick Krebs, Waverly Woods G.C., Marriottsville
Mitchell Spearman, Mitchell Spearman G.A. at Oak Creek Club, Upper Marlboro

Massachusetts

Jane Frost, Jane Frost Golf Performance Center, East Sandwich
Skip Guss, GolfRite at Southborough Golf, Southborough
Cathy MacPherson, Ferncroft Country Club, Middleton

Michigan

Dave Kendall, Kendall Academy of Golf at Miles of Golf, Ypsilanti, and Kendall Academy of Golf at Gull Lake View G.C. & Resort, Augusta

Minnesota

Rod Lidenberg, Golf Channel Academy at Halla Greens, Chanhausen

Missouri

Chuck Evans, Chuck Evans Golf at Tiffany Greens G.C. and Staley Farms G.C., Kansas City; and Drumm Farm G.C., Independence

Nevada

Mike Davis, Royal Links Golf Club, Las Vegas

New Hampshire

Jason Sedan, Lake Winnepesaukee G.C., New Durham

New Jersey

Jason Birnbaum, New Jersey Golf Academy, Roseland

New York

Kelley Brooke, Golf Channel Academy with Kelley Brooke, New York
Anders Mattson, Saratoga National G.C., Saratoga Springs
Mitchell Spearman, Mitchell Spearman G.A. at Doral Arrowwood, Rye Brook

North Carolina

Dana Rader, Dana Rader Golf School, Ballantyne Hotel & Lodge, Charlotte

Pennsylvania

Dom DiJulia, DiJulia Golf, Jericho National G.C., New Hope

Tennessee

Virgil Herring, High Performance Golf Academy, Westhaven G.C., Franklin

Texas

Chris O'Connell, The Plane Truth, The Courses at Watters Creek, Plano
Jon Sinclair, Sinclair's Golf Training Center, Euless
Brech Spradley, Barton Creek Golf Academy, Austin

Virginia

Chris George, Golf Academy at Kingsmill Resort, Williamsburg
Erika Larkin, Virginia Oaks Golf Club, Gainesville
Mitchell Spearman, Mitchell Spearman G.A. at Belmont CC, Ashburn, and Dominion Valley CC, Haymarket

Washington

Gregg Rogers, Gregg Rogers Golf Performance Center, Bellevue; Willows Run G.C., Redmond; and Safeco Field, Seattle

TEACHING BUILDINGS

Inside the Coaches' Studios

Academy Building Sampler: Three Distinct Looks

By David Gould, Staff Editor

When golf came to America and curious businessmen took up the game, their expert guides were Scottish immigrants who built clubs and taught lessons. Being humble tradesmen, these pros couldn't venture inside the clubhouse. They were confined to outbuildings found alongside simple practice grounds. Thanks to Walter Hagen's prodding and a change in social attitudes, clubhouses would eventually include a golf shop plus office and work space for the pro.

And now a century later you could say we have come full circle. The clubhouse golf shop does still handle golf retailing and administration. However, golf expertise covering the swing and the equipment is again headquartered in separate, dedicated buildings. Slowly at first, but now at a fast clip, clubs from coast to coast are planning, designing and building impressive structures with hitting bays, coaching technology, clubfitting gear, fitness space and a few creature comforts to enhance the learning experience.

As we go through 2015, Proponent Group will be taking a few pages in the monthly newsletter to spotlight teaching buildings from the member website's extensive photo archive. Next month we'll also include a bonus article from Tim Cutshall. Many of you recognize Tim as a bona fide expert on teaching buildings and in particular on their infrastructure for technology.

Space won't permit us to show every angle of the three buildings we've selected. For that you can go to the Proponent member-only website and click on Member Benefits, then Business Guides, scrolling down to where you'll find the Learning Center Photo Gallery. Meanwhile, here's a sampling to spur your thoughts on new, improved, or slightly tweaked facilities you might establish for yourself.

It's a core belief of Proponent Group that, within a given market, smart facility owners and top-rank coaches should



Eagle Springs in Wolcott, CO is home to this tidy, one-bay teaching facility inhabited by Steve Atherton. The building cost about \$250,000 and allows members to make quick learning "pit stops" as needed.

form alliances that benefit one and all. Scott Dirck's partnership story with **Geneva Golf Club in Alexandria, Minn.**, is a fine example of that synergy. Having developed a large following in the area, Dirck first negotiated with a course across town from Geneva G.C. on construction of an academy complex. "We went through discussions and planning for nearly three years and ran into snags at the end," Scott recalls. "I got a call from the Geneva people at the 11th hour and within a week we had an agreement signed."

The seven-bay, stone-and-clapboard result of that negotiation is The Golf Academy, offering area golfers some 4,500 square feet of weather-beating, tech-wired coaching and practice space. Opened in 2012 and representing almost a half-million-dollar investment by Dirck, it serves as a landmark amenity to semi-private, 27-hole Geneva G.C. “The course had very few golfers among our 500-plus active instruction clients and we weren’t getting much business from among their regulars, either,” says Dirck. Once the academy opened, plenty of crossover began to happen.

The operation of the academy is based on four lines of business: annual practice memberships, walk-up practitioners, instruction clients and equipment sales. Dirck sells annual Academy memberships for \$500 to non-students and for \$350 to golfers who take lessons from him. He started operations with no simulators but has since added two, basically as benefits that attract and retain members.

Year-round practice and coaching, with plenty of technology to support the process, is a strong attraction to golfers in a region known for its long, frigid winters. “The four business segments tend to feed into one another, but you have to keep on top of each one and not let it slip,” says Dirck. He is currently hiring an additional teaching pro and feels positive about the trajectory of the business. “Three years in, we’re well ahead of where I had hoped and projected us to be,” he says.

When **Sleepy Hollow Country Club** went to replace its modest old teaching building—put to great use by Jim McLean in the 1980s and ‘90s—the club took its architectural cues from a classic equestrian center and stables complex on some upland behind the clubhouse. “It’s a beautiful structure to look at,” says Kevin Sprecher, who as director of instruction at SHCC makes the 1,700-square-foot building his second home. Having worked for McLean when the latter went through design and construction of an academy building at Miami’s famed Doral Resort in 1994, Sprecher was able to help guide the planning process.

Kevin’s request for 1.5-inch wiring conduit wasn’t heeded, unfortunately, but other than some complications related to that faulty design spec the building is a pleasure to work in. Sprecher, a longtime Proponent member, “taught all winter—usually 12 to 20 hours on the weekends—which is activity for the members and revenue for me that would have been zero without the building.” One bay is “blank,” meaning it is simply climate-controlled hitting space for a member seeking relief from heat or cold. The other two bays are fully outfitted with technology. “The cost to the club was \$450,000, back in 2006-07,” says Sprecher. “If we had waited two years, until after the financial collapse when contractors were suddenly looking for work, it would have been much less.”

One other shortcoming, lack of room for a simulator, could not have been foreseen in 2006. “Now that simulators give accurate data on what the ball is doing, they’re a



Geneva Golf Club in Alexandria, Minn. is home to the Scott Dirck Golf Academy and this 4,500 square feet of weather-beating, tech-wired coaching and seven bay practice space financed by Dirck.

legitimate piece of equipment for a teaching building,” Sprecher says. “Coaches who are involved right now in planning a building might want to add that to the list.”

From the compact, hip-roofed structure where Proponent member Steve Atherton works with his **Eagle Springs** students, the golf range is vast and the mountains beyond even vaster. A Weiskopf-Morrish golf course and privileged seclusion are the principle attractions of this short-season

private club in Wolcott, Colo., some 18 miles outside of Vail. The one-man golf academy Atherton oversees cost about \$250,000 to build, he says, and its design is quite sound. “I added a second 22-inch monitor at about knee height and left of the target, so players could see what I’m pointing to or telescoping without getting out of their stance,” he notes.

When an academy building has a small membership to serve, the single-bay approach can work well. Atherton’s got a full gamut of technology in his little learning center, nonetheless he has carved out a teaching practice that looks something like those early days of club golf in America. His members are with him for just four months a year, and their daily turnout for golf only comes to about 20 four-somes. Given those conditions, he handles swing coaching with a light hand, and without hesitation he will ride a student out to a quiet spot on the course and put theory immediately into practice.

“Teaching in this environment has simplified my approach to technical swing coaching,” says Atherton, whose golfers stop in to see him the way Indy drivers pull in to see the pit crew. Eagle Springs members enjoy their practice time, but the idea is to be out on the mountain-view fairways.

“We’ve got video, we’ve got Flightscope software and we’ve got my eye as a coach to check out what’s going on,” says Atherton. “Most of the time we can isolate a problem such as shoulder turn, head position or swing path and get going on a drill and a swing thought that will iron out the problem,” he says. “The numbers are great for driving home the point—ball speed, face angles and so forth.”

From there the member hops over to the grass tee area and hits shots, checks his alignment, checks the divots—and is ready to head back out to actually play some golf. In other cases, it’s a free-form playing lesson that comes next—two or three holes of shot-hitting that help translate the “in-studio” technical stuff to fairways and greens. Wise instructors all seem to talk about technology being a hazard because it can overcomplicate mat-

ters, whereas the real value of computer-aided teaching is to keep the process straightforward and understandable. Here’s one example where that’s truly the case.



Sleepy Hollow C.C. in Scarborough-on-Hudson, NY includes two fully outfitted teaching bays and one “blank” bay for general member practice in its 1,700 square foot space.

Use Success Stories to Sell Instruction

By Ian James, CEO, Retail Tribe

You're extremely busy, yet here I am asking you to publish at least one PR success story a week throughout the season. That's a "big ask," as they say, so let's make sure you get a hefty return on your PR effort.

We begin with some basic, logical best practices:

Golfers Must Recognize Themselves in Your Marketing Messages

If you're trying to build coaching revenue from women golfers then be sure you have text and photographs presenting success stories from that group.

If the majority of your women golfers are higher-handicap then resist the urge to strongly promote your story about the par-shooting woman golfer you teach. Instead tell stories about those who have higher handicaps and are enjoying success.

Also, if your female players are generally over age 55, remember that images and stories about under-14 girls won't resonate with that audience.

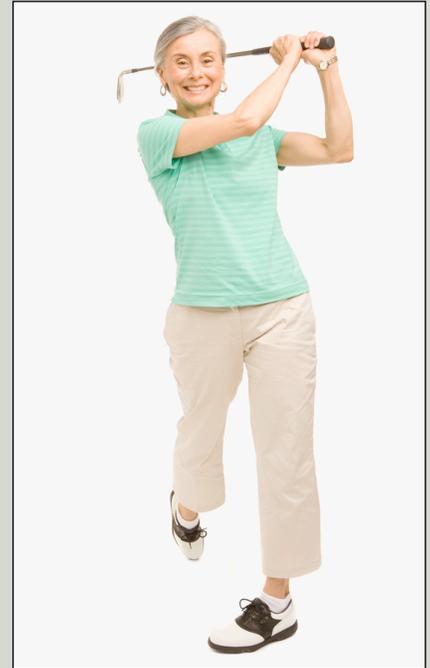
The reason I begin by focusing on women players is because the golf industry fails the "recognition test" so badly. Look around your club and count all the photos and images of women playing golf.

Most clubs I visit have lots of photographs of men but very, very few photos of women—in many cases there are none. Yet most bemoan their inability to generate interest among the ladies.

Send Your PR Via Media That's Looked at by Your Potential Customers

I'm often asked about the merits of Facebook vs. Twitter (and recently Instagram has been added to that list). My answer is always the same: Where are your warmest leads? Who are the potential customers most likely to respond to your PR?

The same would



Name	Last Name	Email	Gender	Handicap
Mary	Riordan	mrif@ballyvaughanhotel.com	F	22
Matthew	Laightland	mfo@brothoptinggolfrange.co.uk	M	18
Simon	McGreal	smcgreal@traffordcollege.org.uk	M	14
Sam	Pleshette	samshah-prof@crossen-golf.co.uk	M	11
Phil	Bowes	cardiffgolf@btconnect.com	M	12
Julia	Hay	gwain.hay@golfs.co.uk	F	19
Duncan	Lambert	dslambert2@aol.com	M	12
Steven	Andrews	steve@foregolf.wanadoo.co.uk	M	22
Peter	Darnell	pdmagnif@me.com	M	23
Gary	Cooke	grschoolgolf@gmail.com	M	18
Francis	Lee	dlee@btinternet.com	F	19
Stacy	White	stmarkgproshop@btinternet.com	F	21
Angela	Street	austrwt7@gmail.com	F	20
Neil	Marr	neilmarr@metdunhousegolfclub.co.uk	M	19
Nicky	Lumb	nl@nickylumb.com	M	11
Kimberly	New	knewnew@btinternet.com	F	14
Terry	Healy	terry.healy@portsmouthgolfcentre.co.uk	M	17
Rob	Watkins	rjbertwatkins88@googlemail.com	M	17
Aaron	Anderson	aaj@erayproshop@gmail.com	M	19
Steven	Hunter	stevenhuntergolf@gmail.com	M	21
Lee-Ann	Duff	leed@comdalegolf.co.uk	F	23
Joe	Jezzard	jjezzard1788@yahoo.co.uk	M	9
Daryn	Cochrane	daryncochrane11@gmail.com	M	15
Wayne	Yellot	waynellot@aol.com	M	17
Jacques	Gous	proshop@weald-of-kent.co.uk	M	15
Alan	Reid	alanerid@mon.com	M	18
Melissa	Wright	marbarwrightow@gmail.com	F	19
Claire	Henning	mikahenninggolf@gmail.com	F	19
Stuart	Collier	stcollier@cookepark.com	M	16
Dorothy	Power	dawpower17@gmail.com	F	22
Pierre	van Vuuren	pierre.vanvuuren@retailtribe.com	M	21

Research indicates that email remains the most productive PR communication mechanism for community-based retailers, but so few of those retailers place enough emphasis on gaining all the email addresses from their community.

Top photo: If you're trying to build coaching revenue from women golfers then be sure you have stories and photographs of success stories from that group. Bottom image: Are you gathering all the email addresses from your golf community?

apply to email databases. There's little point in telling success stories about women golfers in your email newsletter if you don't have any women golfers on your database.

Remember, There Might Be a Separate User and Buyer

Especially relevant with junior golfers is the fact that any success stories will need

It's not just PR that needs to fit your sales plan, it's all your marketing. If you want to sell 'distance programs' in May, then use all your marketing mechanisms to build demand.

Ever wondered how some people **hit it so much further?**



If you want to sell distance-related instruction in May, then then make sure a good portion of your PR success stories in March and April include great performance results from golfers who've made the investment in gaining distance.

Proponent Successes

World-class marketing in less time is worth over \$12,000 just in time

"I consider myself a top quality golf coach and that's what I need to spend my time doing" says Paul Kaster, the recently appointed Director of Instruction at Forsgate Country Club, NJ. "The less time I'm in the office, the better it is for my club and my golfers. Over this summer season RetailTribe will not only help me to continue to grow my business, they'll save me the time to create an additional \$ 12,960 worth of revenue".

There are many email or web Marketing solutions on the market. They all provide some sort of template choice. The Professional still has to do the hard work of adding the content and keeping it updated. When we started RetailTribe 8 years ago, our mission wasn't to design templates for email or web sites, it was to create the 'content', the 'online conversations', and the 'marketing campaigns' to inspire golfers to want to improve and to talk to their 'expert' PGA Professional.

We also recognized that, for an 'expert', their time is money. We therefore built a service that allows the PGA Professional to spend more of their time with customers (and their family at the end of the day) rather than sitting at their computer screen.



Paul Kaster

Paul also endorses the quality of content produced: "The look and feel of the RetailTribe content is high-class. It is clean and professional. Everything they produce attempts to stimulate the golfer to talk to me about improving their game. That's exactly what a golf coach needs."



"And just as importantly RetailTribe has improved my marketing while saving me 9 hours of time per week. That is gold for a golf coach in the summer. If you're looking to grow your business this summer, don't wait. Contact RetailTribe". – **Paul Kaster**, PGA Professional, Royce Brook Academy of Golf

"Selling the Result Really Works"

"Rick (a RetailTribe Campaign Manager) told me to run a 30-yard pitch shot challenge for three hours. I sold more wedges in three hours than I'd sold in the previous three months. And guess what? I also sold coaching programs.

Then he encouraged me to run a "Speed Challenge" for three hours. I sold over \$5,000 of merchandise in those three hours, with more in the week after. Selling the result really works." – **Bill Abrams**, PGA Professional, Balmoral Woods

Bill is another PGA professional who has embraced "Better Golf as a Merchandising Strategy."

You'll be surprised at how easy we can make effective marketing for you. Just give us 20 minutes and we'll show you how we can make an impact for you.

Contact Ian James at IanJames@retailtribe.com or 972-743-0038 or visit us at www.retailtribe.com.

to appeal to both the young golfer and that kid's parents—with a focus on the mother.

Talk about the Product You Will Be Selling

If your near-term goal is to promote Short-Game Improvement programs in May, then make sure a good portion of your PR success stories in March and April include great performance results from golfers who've made the investment in a better short-game.

Which Brings Us to the Most Important Tip

PR communication, and all marketing, is most effective if you have a plan. So the question I have for you this month is: Do you have a Marketing Calendar?

“...All marketing, is most effective if you have a plan. So the question I have for you this month is: Do you have a Marketing Calendar?”

—Ian James

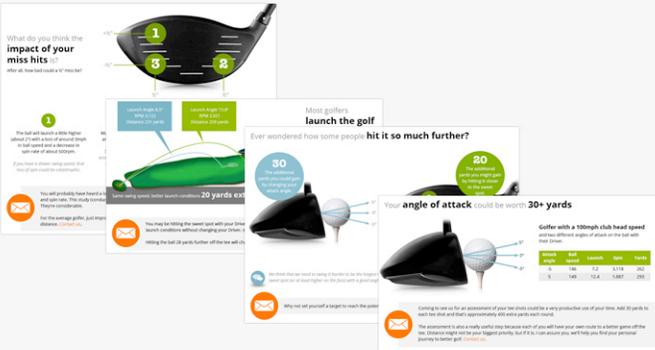
Yes, there are simple annual objectives. You want to create a “culture of improvement” among the golfers in your community. And yes, you want to build their trust in your ability to deliver improvement. All of that will require PR, along with activities like clinics, events, challenges, education and infotainment.

But, you also want to focus all that marketing muscle around topics or campaigns.

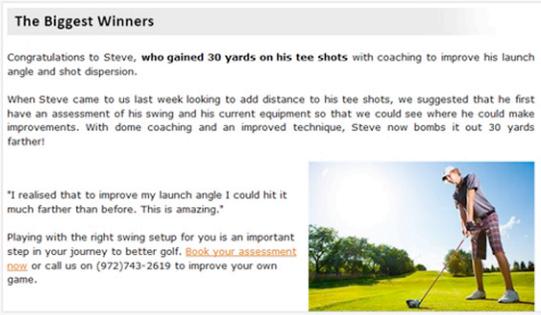
We favor dividing the year into 12 calendar months with a focused campaign in each month that is built around related topics. Below you will see a March Campaign we ran with some of our customers.

Your success stories published through your PR communications should be very targeted at the specific results you are looking to achieve.

1 Four email articles describing the performance impact of a better launch and how technique influences launch conditions.



2 Weekly PR highlighting the biggest winners, those golfers who have experienced big distance gains from improved technique.



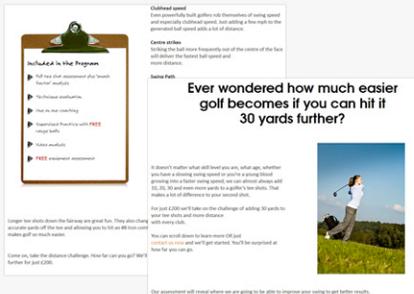
3 Exciting, highly graphic web article that is a great link for social networking posts.



4 Scheduled performance challenges around distance to engage with golfers.



5 Limited space coaching program built around 'distance'.



Retail Tribe favors dividing the year into 12 calendar months with a focused campaign in each month built around related topics (This campaign ran last month). Success stories published through your PR communications should be very targeted at the specific results you are looking to achieve.

STATE OF THE INDUSTRY

The Art Versus The Science of Golf Instruction



After spending some time with Matt Frelich of TrackMan a couple of weeks ago, it got me thinking a lot about all the Facebook chatter about the art and science of golf instruction. After spending a couple of hours with Matt it's apparent that the technology now exists that provides every data point you could ever need to diagnose what is happening during the golf swing. This is exciting stuff, no doubt. Just the difference in what my wife, Cheryl, now has at her disposal in the 20 or so years she's been on the lesson tee is extraordinary.

Another amazing example is that the camera on her iPhone 6 provides the same capabilities as the Hultcher camera I used at GOLF Magazine and Golf Digest to take swing sequences. That one cost \$15,000 and you could barely carry it around in its travel case it was so heavy. The same can be said for force plates, putting stroke analyzers and so forth. When it comes to diagnostics, you're living in the right time and it's probably only going to get better.

But. And I believe it's a big "but." Are golf teachers today really better teachers and coaches because of these amazing technologies? I'm not so sure that more great teaching and coaching is being done today than was 20 or 30 years ago because these diagnostic tools are only the beginning of the chain of events that must occur for a lesson to deliver on all counts. And the chain is only as strong as its weakest link. There is the all important prescription of what to do to make a corrective change. Then there is the way that prescription is communicated. And, finally, there is the last ingredient: Putting all of the above into an enjoyable, low-stress package that allows the golfer to feel comfortable enough to trust your message and stick with it.

Along these lines, this month's newsletter on page 16 includes a new addition to our Proponent Group library which can be found on the members website. This new section includes your favorite books on learning, coaching and developing talent. Most focus on the entire process of learning a skill. Hopefully you've already read many of them.

I sense that the industry has become so enamored by "the numbers" that younger teachers in particular, are not learning the art of teaching. This includes having a huge arsenal of options to prescribe and a variety of ways to communicate each of these options. Martin Hall and Craig Shankland are two of my favorites in this regard. If there was a contest between them to list all of the ways they have fixed a pull-hook, we might be here all night.

And, I believe it is much easier to be Martin Hall and add diagnostic data into his lessons than it is for someone who has focused mostly on the diagnostics to add the art of teaching into their lessons.

"Everything on the science of the game has been written, little on how to learn it." said Percy Boomer in his book "On Learning Golf". That was in 1946. If you haven't read "On Learning Golf", order a copy today. It will mesmerize you with Boomer's ability to describe the sophisticated feels of the swing. The vivid images, terms and phrases he uses will remind you that great teaching is still very much an art form. Often he talks to his fellow teachers and one line in particular stands out to me when he says: "We use our imagination to translate theory into feeling." Even today, you still have to help create swing feels for your students.

Teaching is a communications craft. Always has been. Always will be. With today's incredible diagnostic tools taking the guesswork out, now you should really focus on the rest of the ingredients, rather than ignore them.

Proponent Group Partners



PARTNER SPOTLIGHT: GOLFMDs



Introducing the GolfMDs Gift Card!

Connecting Instructors to Millions of Consumers Nationwide



We are excited to announce that GolfMDs.com has teamed up with **Go Play Golf** to create the industry's first instructional services-based gift card to launch this Spring.

To learn more, visit www.golfmds.com/goplaygolf

The GolfMDs Gift Card will be available at these fine retailers:

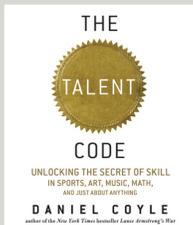


CONTINUING EDUCATION: THE LIBRARY

Must-Haves for Your Library: Best Books on Learning, Coaching and Developing Talent

We get a lot of requests from members asking about books that are considered to be “must reads” for golf instructors. Over the years we have provided answers as best we could, trying to cover all the relevant sub-categories. The collection of titles that earned recommendations can be found at any time at the Proponent Group website tab we call The Library.

Recently, we turned the question around by posing it to the full rank and file of Proponent members. Sticking to just one sub-category—the process of learning, coaching and nurturing talent toward skill acquisition—we asked for your favorite books on this subject. Apparently, it’s a hot topic for many of you. We ended up with well over 100 different titles mentioned in the survey. The top 12 responses are included below and have been added to The Library on the members website. If you’ve read every one you are truly voracious. If not, you may want to print out this list and make a point of acquiring a couple that seem to be up your alley.

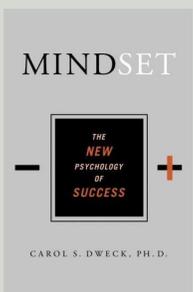


1) **The Talent Code: Greatness Isn't Born. It's Grown. Here's How** by Daniel Coyle

In this groundbreaking work, journalist and New York Times bestselling author Coyle provides parents, teachers, coaches and businesspeople with tools they can use to maximize potential in themselves and others.

Whether you're coaching soccer or teaching a child to play the piano, writing a novel or trying

to improve your golf swing, this revolutionary book shows you how to grow talent by tapping into a newly discovered brain mechanism. Drawing on cutting-edge neurology and firsthand research gathered on journeys to nine of the world's talent hotbeds – from the baseball fields of the Caribbean to a classical music academy in upstate New York – Coyle identifies the three key elements that will allow you to develop your gifts and optimize your performance in sports, art, music, math, or just about anything in which you may have an interest.

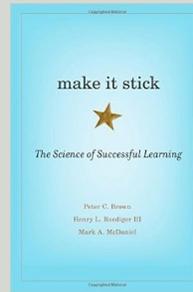


2) **Mindset: The New Psychology of Success** by Carol Dweck

World-renowned Stanford University psychologist Carol Dweck, in decades of research on achievement and success, has discovered a truly groundbreaking idea, the power of our mindset. Dweck explains why it's not just our abilities and talent that bring us success, but whether we approach them with a fixed or a growth mindset. She makes clear why praising intelligence and ability doesn't foster self-

esteem and lead to accomplishment, but may actually jeopardize success. With the right mindset, we can motivate our kids and help them to raise their grades. We can also use the appropriate mindset to reach our own goals – personal and professional.

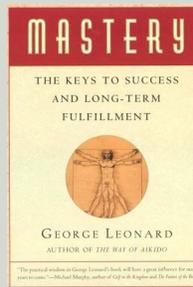
Dweck reveals what all great parents, teachers, CEOs and athletes already know: How a simple idea about the brain can create a love of learning and a resilience that is the basis of great accomplishment in every area.



3) **Make It Stick: The Science of Successful Learning** by Peter C. Brown, Henry L. Roediger III, and Mark A. McDaniel

Drawing on recent discoveries in cognitive psychology and other disciplines, the authors offer concrete techniques for becoming a more productive learner. Memory plays a central role in our ability to carry out complex cognitive tasks. New insights into how memory is encoded, consolidated and later retrieved have led to a better understanding of

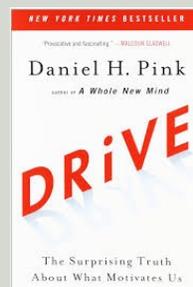
how we learn. Grappling with the impediments that make learning challenging leads to more complex mastery and better retention of what was learned. More complex and durable learning come from self-testing, introducing certain difficulties in practice, waiting to re-study new material until a little forgetting has set in, and interleaving the practice of one skill or topic for another. “Make It Stick” will appeal to all those interested in the challenge of lifelong learning and self-improvement.



4) **Mastery: The Keys to Success and Long-Term Fulfillment** by George Leonard

Zen philosophy and his expertise in the martial art of aikido led bestselling author George Leonard to write this classic book, first published in 1992. In it, Leonard shows how the process of mastery can help us attain a higher level of excellence and a deeper sense of satisfaction and fulfillment in our daily lives. Whether you're seeking to improve your career or your intimate relationships, increase self-esteem, or create harmony within yourself, this inspiring prescriptive guide will help you master anything you choose and achieve success in all areas of life.

ships, increase self-esteem, or create harmony within yourself, this inspiring prescriptive guide will help you master anything you choose and achieve success in all areas of life.

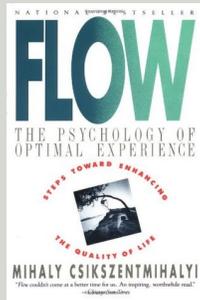


5) **Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us** by Daniel H. Pink

Most people believe that the best way to motivate is with rewards like money, or through a timeworn “carrot and stick” approach. That is a mistake, according to author Pink. In this provocative and persuasive book, he asserts that the secret to high performance and satisfaction at work, at school, and at home is the deeply human need to direct our own lives, to learn and create new things, and to do better by ourselves and our world.

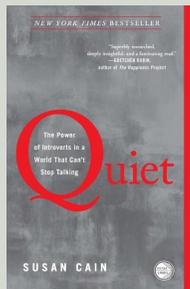
create new things, and to do better by ourselves and our world.

Drawing on four decades of scientific research on human motivation, Pink exposes the mismatch between what science knows and what business does, and how that affects every aspect of life. He examines the three elements of true motivation: Autonomy, mastery, and purpose, offering wise and surprising techniques for putting them into action.



6) Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi
Psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi's famous investigations of "optimal experience" have revealed that what makes an experience genuinely satisfying is a state of consciousness called flow. During flow, people typically experience deep enjoyment, creativity, and a total involvement with life. In this new edition of his groundbreaking classic work, Csikszentmihalyi demonstrates the ways this positive state can be controlled, not just left to chance. Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience teaches how, by ordering the information that enters our consciousness, we can discover true happiness and greatly improve the quality of our lives.

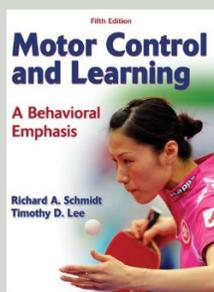
Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience teaches how, by ordering the information that enters our consciousness, we can discover true happiness and greatly improve the quality of our lives.



7) Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can't Stop Talking by Susan Cain

In her book, "Quiet," Susan Cain argues that we dramatically undervalue introverts and shows how much we lose in doing so. She charts the rise of the Extrovert Ideal throughout the twentieth century and explores how deeply it has come to permeate our culture. She also introduces us to successful introverts, from a witty, high-octane public speaker

who recharges in solitude after his talks, to a record-breaking salesman who quietly taps into the power of questions. Passionately argued, superbly researched, and filled with indelible stories of real people, "Quiet" has the power to permanently change how we see introverts and how they see themselves.



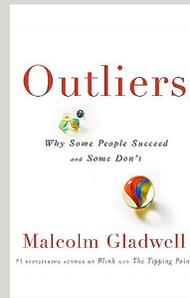
8) Motor Control and Learning: A Behavioral Approach (Fifth Edition) by Richard Schmidt and Timothy Lee

Significantly updated with current research, new learning features, and more references, the fifth edition of "Motor Control and Learning: A Behavioral Approach" combines text, figures, and practical examples to explain this complex topic in a clear and comprehensive manner. This outstanding introduction to the field focuses on motor behavior

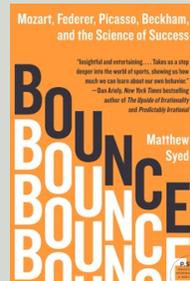
that can be observed directly as well as the many factors that affect the quality of these performances and the ease with which they can be learned. [NOTE: Dr. Lee was a featured speaker at the 2011 Proponent Group Summit.]

9) Outliers: The Story of Success by Malcolm Gladwell

In this bestseller from 2008, Malcolm Gladwell takes us on an intellectual journey through the world of "outliers," the best and the brightest, the most famous and the most successful. He asks the question: What makes high-achievers different? His answer is

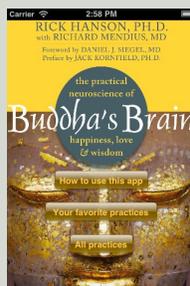


that we pay too much attention to what successful people are like, and too little attention to where they are from: that is, their culture, their family, their generation, and the idiosyncratic experiences of their upbringing. Along the way he explains the secrets of software billionaires, what it takes to be a great soccer player, why Asians are good at math, and what made the Beatles the greatest rock band.



T-10) Bounce: Mozart, Federer, Picasso, Beckham, and the Science of Success by Matthew Syed

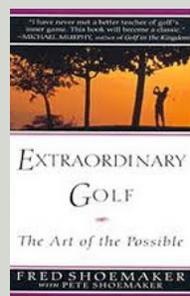
In the vein of the international bestselling Freakonomics, award-winning journalist Matthew Syed reveals the hidden clues to success, in sports, business, school, and just about anything else that you'd want to be great at. Fans of "Predictably Irrational" and Malcolm Gladwell's "The Tipping Point" will find many interesting and helpful insights in "Bounce."



T-10) Buddha's Brain: The Practical Neuroscience of Happiness, Love, and Wisdom by Rick Hanson and Richard Mendius

By combining breakthroughs in neuroscience with insights from thousands of years of mindfulness practice, you too can use your mind to shape your brain for greater happiness, love, and wisdom. "Buddha's Brain" draws on the latest research to show how to stimulate your brain for more fulfilling relationships, a deeper spiritual life, and a greater sense of inner con-

fidence and worth. Using guided meditations and mindfulness exercises, you'll learn how to activate the brain states of calm, joy, and compassion instead of worry, sorrow, and anger. Most importantly, you will foster positive psychological growth that will literally change the way you live your daily life.



T-10) Extraordinary Golf: The Art of the Possible by Fred Shoemaker and Pete Shoemaker

Most golfers approach the tee with a complex mental package: Worries and judgments about their swing, the other person's swing, the course, the weather, looking good, looking bad. They think about what's wrong instead of what's possible. Drawing on his experience teaching amateurs and professionals in clinics around the globe, Fred Shoemaker shows how extraordinary golf can be coached, learned, and

practiced, with results not only in people's scores but in their sheer pleasure in the game. Combining an array of practical exercises with an entirely new point of view, he demonstrates how to focus not on the voices in your head but on the reality of golf: the club, the ball, the body, the course, the elements that actually make up the game. He shows how to approach shots creatively, instead of mechanically; how to develop a powerful and consistent swing and how to improve yourself in competition by determining what you're competing for. [NOTE: Fred Shoemaker was a featured speaker at the 2013 Proponent Group Summit.]

What I've Learned: Larry Rinker

The Ritz-Carlton Orlando, Grande Lakes, Orlando, FL

Interview by Paul Ramee, Jr.



When you say that a coach's "book is full," you generally mean their time is reserved far in advance with golf lessons and clinics. With Larry Rinker, you could certainly use the phrase that way. You could also use it more generally, to describe a life filled with golf-related pursuits and highly impressive achievements. A real page-turner, in this Proponent member's case.

For starters, the former PGA Tour player holds down two premier director-of-instruction jobs, in the South and West. He is in particular demand as a short-game instructor, with a roster of tournament players as clients. He's a national radio host, a broadcast veteran with SiriusXM, ESPN, Golf Channel and USA Network and he's part of a three-sibling act that includes fellow tour players Laurie (LPGA Tour) and Lee (PGA Tour).

If you want to make a deep dive into Rinker's area of highest expertise, sit down with his "Five Fundamentals of Being a Great Player," an online interactive ebook published in 2012 and revised in 2015. The subtle, precise challenge of high-level golf inside 100 yards is a focus of this publication, although it expands to cover a full gamut of tournament preparation—be it the club's fall member-member or a big-time tour event.

Realizing there was much to cover when he sat down with Larry for a Q-and-A session, Paul Ramee fired his questions briskly. Here's what came of that conversation.

Can you tell us about your upbringing and what it was like to be part of such a well-known golf family?

I got started at six when my older brother, Laine Jr., came home from a junior camp at Martin County Country Club and said, "Hey, there's a kid that's six out there, why don't you come out tomorrow? So I did. Golf became one of the only sports I could play in school after I had a kidney taken out later that year.

That's an unlucky break for an athletic boy, wouldn't you agree?

I had a 50/50 chance to live after my lungs collapsed following the opera-

tion. I was in the hospital for two weeks and when I got home my dad had a set of clubs waiting for me. I can still see it now.

Is it true that your family spent a lot of time together on the golf course?

My dad was a flower farmer who grew chrysanthemums. He started playing golf when he was 24 years old. He quickly fell in love with the game and saw it as a great family activity. He would joke that golf was "an easy way to babysit the kids," but he was serious about how valuable the game was in building family bonds. Golf was what we did as a family.

What about the competitive side, as you and Laurie and Lee became outstanding junior players?

My parents were very involved with our tournaments. They drove us to just about every one, and stayed to watch the competition. Whether it was junior, college or professional events, they always seemed to be there.

How much did you kids interact on your own?

We were always learning from each other. I remember when the "Square to Square" swing method was briefly popular and my brother Laine Jr. decided to model his swing on that concept in college. Looking back it was one of the worst concepts we have seen and I'm glad I didn't try it.



Sirius XM has allowed Rinker to call upon his experience as a player, instructor and broadcaster.

How did you get started with formal instruction?

My first teacher was a man named Mike Skevington, who was a Horton Smith disciple. He was a great teacher and had me walking our junior tournament courses and drawing the greens on a notepad so I could create a yardage book. Under him I improved steadily and broke 70 for the first time in my second tournament.

Were there other instructors who helped you develop?

In 1976, when I was 19, my father took me to see Bob Toski. I was an average college player at the time. Working with Bob, I made big improvements. It was his coaching that would elevate me from where I was to top-30 on the PGA Tour money list in 1985. Bob and my father created a nice bond as well.

When people talk about Toski they always mention his energy level and his powers of motivation, along with all his technical knowledge. Was that your experience?

I was very fortunate to have someone like Bob Toski mentor me. The experience was amazing. Bob played at the highest level and you just couldn't have a better coach. His teaching lineage is very strong. He was a phenomenal mentor and remains a close friend.

Any specific memories stand out?

The most important thing he taught me came in our first lesson. Bob instructed me to "get the left arm through the swing with speed." He told me that if I did that, the golf ball could never go left. He showed me as a right-handed golfer how to eliminate the left side of the golf course and still release the club.

From what Toski taught you as a player, are there things that carry over to your own teaching?

The list of things he taught me, that I still think about, is too long to go through here. He taught me the importance of communication, how to hit different shots, and how to control the path and club face with my arms, hands, and wrists.

What was the PGA Tour like in the 1980s?

To get out there in the '80s you did not have to be as good a player as you do now. Once you got through Tour School, you could learn and improve out on tour which for a lot of us was a requirement, to keep our cards. Life on tour was still not so different from the 60's and 70's— we used to drive around from

event to event and some guys would even drive to California from Florida for the West Coast swing. At some tournaments we still had to buy range balls. We were given coupons for 50 percent off our meals, which we ate in the clubhouse grill, mixed in with the members and guests. All of this was still better than the players had before us. We weren't pampered, except the superstars, and I think that created a closer bond among the players.

Did things gradually get less casual, as you continued your tour career?

Things changed pretty suddenly, actually. When the tennis player Monica Seles got stabbed at a tournament in 1993 it triggered some new policies. Then after 9/11 it really changed. Now there are fenced-in areas between the locker room and first tee for players to walk through along with other security measures.

What is your overall feeling on your decade-plus as a tour player?

I am blessed to have had the career I had. Of course I would have liked to have won, but I wouldn't trade one win and a few seasons on Tour for my 525 PGA Tour starts and 283 made cuts. I got to play with everybody.

You led the PGA Tour in eagles one season. What is the back story there?

Quite a shocker. And all the more so when you find out that Corey Pavin finished second! Corey and I were not exactly the two longest hitters out there. What is amazing is that I had 14 eagles for the year, and all but three of them by Hilton Head.

In 1985, you won the JC Penney Mixed Team Championship with your sister Laurie. Can we figure that was a memorable week for the Rinker family?

That was the high point of my career and yes, it was a very special thing for our family. Both of our parents were out there watching, and Laurie had Lee caddying for her. We beat a lot of future Hall of Famers. Back then, players like Curtis Strange, Greg Norman, Nancy Lopez and Betsy King played the Mixed Team. When Laurie and I won, we beat Curtis and Nancy, who both ended up as Player of the Year on the respective tours.

What was the impetus behind your transition from tour player to teacher?

In 2000 I was still playing decently but that would turn out to be the beginning of the end for



Larry Rinker made the cut in more than half of his 525 PGA Tour starts including a win with his sister Laurie in the 1985 JC Penney Mixed Team Classic

me. In 2001 and '02 I had fewer starts and not all that many good rounds, either on the PGA Tour or on what is now the [Web.com](#) Tour. My wife told me I needed to do something else, so by 2003 I had my real estate license and at the same time I was doing some teaching around Orlando. I worked on the team that was developing Ty Tryon, in his move straight from high school to the PGA Tour in 2001. I was working with some other juniors on their short-game skills. It felt good to be developing a niche following as a short-game teacher.

At that time my brother Lee was pursuing head-pro jobs. I took some cues from that and in 2008 I took a seasonal job as an assistant pro in Vero Beach. My salary was \$600 a week but the teaching income turned out to be significant. I remember that in my first 17 days I did \$4,000 in lessons. In 2009 I became a member of AMF, the predecessor organization to Proponent Group. In 2010 I landed a teaching job in Vail at the Red Sky Golf Club. That came to fruition through my involvement with Lorin Anderson at AMF. Getting that job in Colorado really changed the course of my career and so will the new position at The Ritz-Carlton.

How much fun is it to host your own XM / Sirius Satellite Radio Show?

I was fortunate to have that opportunity. The network already had Hank Haney, David Leadbetter and Jim McLean lined up to host golf instruction shows. They were looking for a fourth and I was the lucky guy Brian Hamilton with SiriusXM reached out to. It has been fun to call upon my experiences as a 34-year PGA Tour Veteran Member. I was fortunate to work with the best instructors in the game, people like Toski, Peter Kostis, Leadbetter, McLean, Chuck Cook, Mitchell Spearman and Robert Baker. I also played with the best players and we learned from each other. After trying to do television for quite a few years I finally got a real shot at being a broadcaster from XM covering the PGA Tour in 2008 thanks to Chris Castleberry. He took the time to coach me and help me improve, even asking me to take some voice lessons in Orlando in 2009. That said, I feel I now have a lot of insight as a former player, instructor, and broadcaster. I can say that I have learned a lot from the great guests that I have had on the show.

How did you develop your ebook?

I was sending email follow-ups to my students and I realized I was writing a lot of the same things, so I started copying and pasting them into a Word file and soon I had 3-5 pages on putting, short game, and distance wedges. I added golf swing and course management which became the fourth and fifth modules or fundamentals. I added pictures and two appendixes, on mental weapons and goal setting. When a friend looked at what I had he said all you need is a cover page and table of contents and at the last minute I added the 11 video lessons. I had an ebook.

What is wrong in golf instruction now?

I understand the kinematic sequence and the importance of the bigger muscles, but I also believe that the role of arms, hands and wrists is not talked about enough. Bob Toski always said the hands are the most influential part of the body and we are not teaching golfers hand-eye coordination today. I also think putting needs to be more intuitive and instinctive and less "engineered." Less than 10 percent of the people move the putter with their shoulders intuitively and instinctively and everybody has some hand and wrist action, according to 3D. Teachers need to understand each golfer better, and coach the person in front of them in

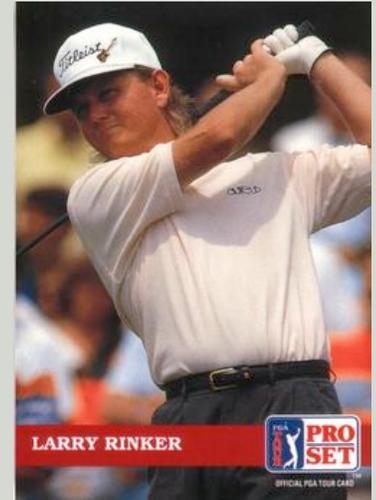
the ways that they can improve. I would also say that, in my view, the people who are teaching golf are not playing enough golf. I believe playing golf allows instructors to continue to learn new ways coach more effectively. It's their opportunity to try out new techniques and understand where people really want to improve their game the most.

Read any good books lately?

I used to read all the time. I was drawn to the game's psychology—authors like Bob Rotella, Dick Coop and Fred Shoemaker.

"I would say that the people who are teaching golf are not playing enough golf. Playing naturally allows instructors to coach more effectively. It's their opportunity to try out new techniques and add validity to their teaching."

-Larry Rinker



Is Larry Rinker in an old-school professional or new-school?

I would say I am a blend of the two. I try to hold onto the old-school values while keeping up with new-school tools and information. I feel that my work ethic and burning passion for the game has me trying to learn all I can and that means I need to learn as much as I can about tools like TrackMan so that I can simplify that information for my students. I follow up every lesson with video reviews and a copy of my ebook. To me follow-up is the great indicator of how much you care and that builds relationships. Highly developed communication skills is an old-school value. I remember how Toski used to chew our butts off if we answered him with the wrong word. Bob knew there was an art to communication and taught me those communication skills. Take the everyday golf-pro word "drill." Bob would tell us it was an "army term." He wanted us to be very precise and specific about the terminology we used.

What are you excited about learning for 2015?

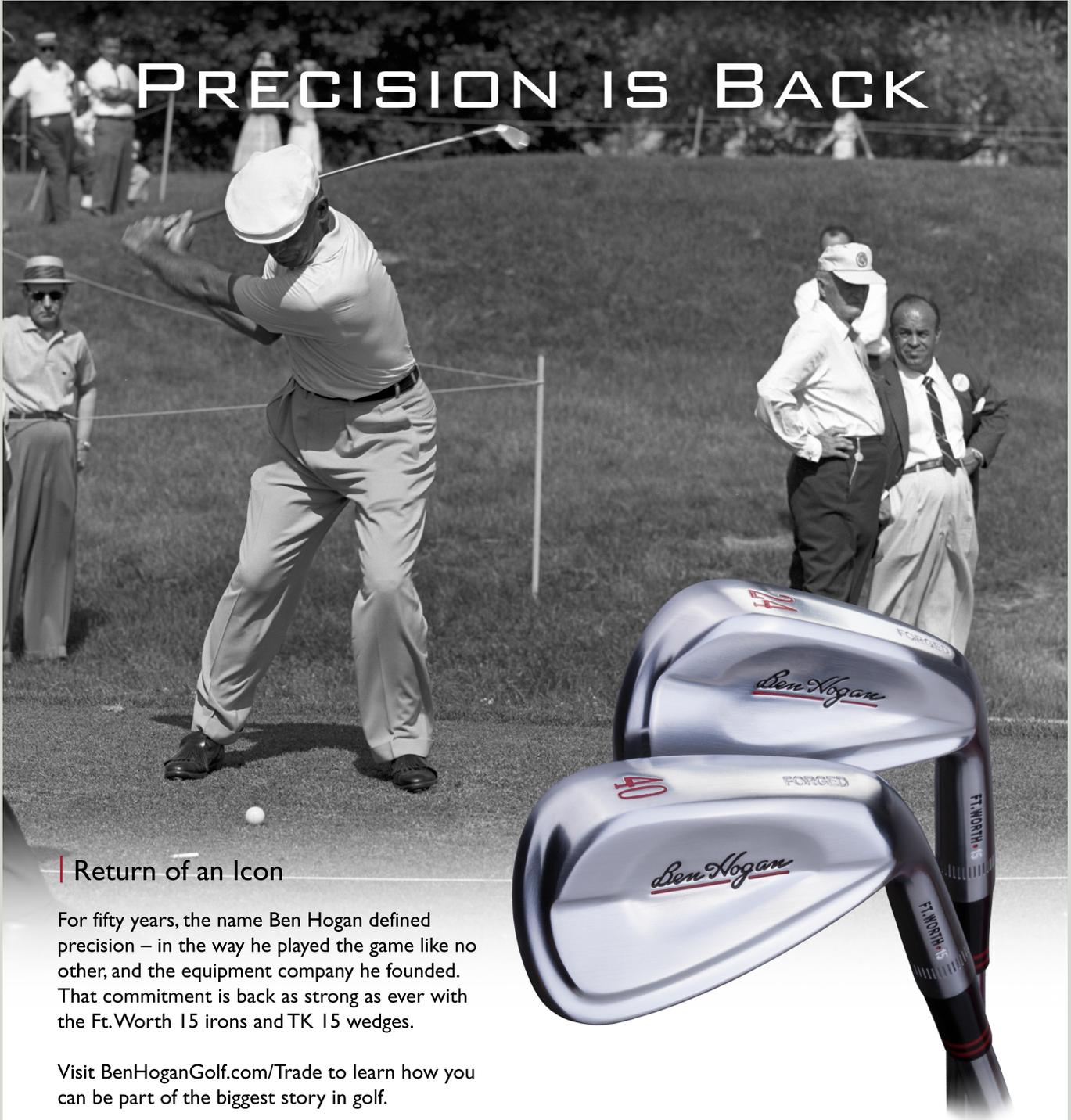
In 2015 I want to learn more about how people move differently and coach into that. I think I need to better understand how to effectively coach players whether they have fast or slow hips. When I played competitively, some coaches tried to get me to turn faster through the ball with my core. It never worked for me. In general I will keep looking for new ways to help people move in the most effective manner possible. That way my students can keep their individual style and improve in the ways that they can. I want to be known as a teacher who works with what you have and helps you to get the club in a better delivery window coming into the ball, which will make your impact alignments better. I also want to help people understand their game so well that that they can fix themselves out on the course.

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT: BEN HOGAN

Ben Hogan
GOLF EQUIPMENT COMPANY

BenHoganGolf.com

PRECISION IS BACK



| Return of an Icon

For fifty years, the name Ben Hogan defined precision – in the way he played the game like no other, and the equipment company he founded. That commitment is back as strong as ever with the Ft. Worth 15 irons and TK 15 wedges.

Visit BenHoganGolf.com/Trade to learn how you can be part of the biggest story in golf.

MEMBER MILESTONES

Please Welcome Proponent Group's March New Members

Aaron Fagan, Ritz-Carlton Grande Lakes, Orlando, FL - Full member.

Craig Hocknull, The Outback Golf Academy, Gilbert, AZ - Full member.

Cathy Kim, TPC Summerlin, Las Vegas, NV - Associate member.

J. Rodney Loesch, The Connecticut Golf Club, Easton, CT - Full member.

Sal Spallone, Sandridge Golf Club, Vero Beach, FL - Associate member.

Steve Whidden, Rosedale G. & C.C., Bradenton, FL - Full Member

April Webinar: The Paradigm Shift in Golf Instruction with Joseph DiChiara

On Tuesday, April 28th at 7pm EDT, Proponent Group's webinar series continues with member **Joseph DiChiara** presenting: The Paradigm Shift in Golf Instruction.

Joe is the founder of NEXUS Golf which is headquartered at the Legacy Golf Resort, a Golf Channel Academy facility, in Phoenix. He is a U.S. Kids Golf Top 50 Junior Instructor and was the 2011 NJPGA Junior Golf Leader.



Joseph DiChiara

This webinar will focus on three critical areas that show how well-designed performance coaching creates superior results compared to traditional lessons:

- The benefits of performance coaching over a focus on swing technique lessons.
- The process of developing competitive players.
- An overview of the NEXUS Golf platform.

The login information will be included in future Members' Weekly Rundowns including on the day of the webinar.

Here are Just Some of the Ways Proponent Can Save You Money

FedEx

Proponent members can register for discounted FedEx delivery services. Savings depend on volume and size of packages but generally savings for overnight express is about 30 percent and from 7-18 percent on ground shipping. Call Proponent Group at 407-878-1235 to register your FedEx account for these extra discounts.



Sundog Eyewear

The Sundog brand has become one of the most popular sunglass choices for all levels of golfers. Proponent Group members are able to purchase any current models at www.sundogeyewear.com at 40% off of the listed retail price. Use our Proponent Group CONFIDENTIAL code when ordering: PROGRO40. This Proponent Group benefit also includes free shipping within North America. If you have any questions, please call our Sundog contact Gary Makar at 403-516-6614 or email him at garym@sundogvision.com.



Summit Golf Brands including EP Pro, Fairway & Greene and Zero Restriction

All current products from ALL three outstanding lines are available to Proponent Group Members at the following preferred pricing: Without brand logo: 30% off wholesale pricing. With brand logo: 50% off wholesale pricing. To place an order: Go to the brand-specific website pages exclusively for Proponent Group members:

<http://pg.fairwayandgreene.com>, <http://pg.eppro.com> or <http://pg.zerorestriction.com>. For questions regarding your order, contact Customer Service at 855-924-2228.



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.