

# TIM MAHONEY

**GLOBAL DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND COACHING, TROON**

INTERVIEW BY PAUL RAMEE, JR

In his position as Global Director of Education and Coaching for Troon Golf, longtime Proponent Group member Tim Mahoney oversees all instruction programs and instruction staff at select managed/ owned properties throughout Troon's international network. Among major achievements he can claim since assuming this role in 1995 are creation of the Troon Golf Academy, Troon Golf Institute and the David Duval Golf Academy.

When he's not training other teachers, Mahoney teaches all levels of golfer from his home bases at Troon North Golf Club and Whirlwind Golf Club, both in Scottsdale, Arizona. During the summer months he teaches at the Club at Cordillera in Vail, CO.

His commitment to the game is evident in his involvement in so many areas, including lecturing at teaching seminars, consulting in the development of computer software for golf swing analysis, development of learning centers and practice facilities and, most of all, the hours spent on lesson tees with amateur and professional players alike.

Mahoney has been listed among America's Top 50 Greatest Teachers as ranked by Golf Digest, and has been among the "Top 100 Teachers" in America as ranked by GOLF Magazine for more than a decade. He appears regularly on Golf Channel's "Golf Academy Live" and has been a featured instructor on ESPN. Tim has instructed members of all four major

American tours. His students have included Billy Mayfair and David Duval. For the Golf Digest Golf Schools he conducted more than 3,500 events worldwide. He was also a member of the Golf Digest Pro Panel, contributing more than 40 instruction articles to the magazine including three cover stories. In 2013, when Proponent's annual Summit was held at Talking Stick Resort, Tim was our host professional and also a featured presenter.

Paul Ramee, in this recent Q&A with Tim, leads the award-winning coach and golf executive through highlights of his long and distinguished career.

**Tim, thanks for doing the interview—can you give us the outlines of your career in the golf business?**

In 1979 I started working with the Golf Digest schools and I worked with them for almost two decades. I moved over to Troon Golf in 1997 where I have served as the company's director of instruction, which is really a global job. Currently I teach full-time, over 1,300 hours a year, and I oversee 1,200 instructors worldwide.



**Tim Mahoney began his career with the Golf Digest Schools, where he was mentored by many of the game's biggest teaching names including Bob Toski, Jim Flick, Davis Love, Jr. and Chuck Cook.**





**Mahoney's influence in the industry dramatically increased when he went to work for Troon, where he now oversees more than 250 instructors worldwide at the company's academies.**

**With such a complex job, what is a typical day like for you?**

A typical day for me could take place anywhere in the world. I could be in China meeting with one of our instructors just as easily as I could be on the range working with one of my students. I have been married for 27 years and have two great kids who have allowed me to pursue my passion. Every day starts with a 4:15 a.m. wake-up call and soon I am in some sort of business office setting, whether it is a Starbucks, a hotel room or my home office. I generally work until 7 a.m. on the business side of my job so I am freed up to teach or meet with people the rest of the day. Typically I'm on the lesson tee from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. I hire an intern who gets everything set up and I will typically have 4 to 5 students a day. When it's over I am off to the gym and then home for dinner.

**Working for Golf Digest and then Troon Golf has surely afforded you a long list of mentors. Is that the case?**

No doubt. I've been fortunate in that respect. I think back to working with Jim Flick—he was all about preparation and he understood what people wanted. I was very lucky to have worked next to Jim for so long. Bob Toski is another strong influence. We were doing a school in 1985 and we had 16 students, and so to do the job right Toski, Bob Rotella and I stayed up until 3 in the morning discussing each student. His attention to detail was terrific and the way he

interacted with a group was second to none. Scott Davenport, who is the host professional at Quail Hollow for the PGA Championship this year, also had incredible attention to detail—if Scott was there you knew everything would be set up perfectly. Chuck Cook and Tom Ness prepared me for the use of technology. As for Davis Love Jr., I remember him as the consummate gentleman—we lost Davis too early. Dana Garmany also made an impact on me, with his focus on doing things the right way.

**You teach players of different levels—how does your mindset change with the skill level of the student?**

All players want to get better and every player wants to be treated like an athlete. Similarly, each person you work with wants to know that you care. I teach approximately 96 clinics between June 1 and Sept 1. We schedule Monday, Wednesday and Friday for the women, Tuesdays for the men. Thursday is our Trackman Clinic. Saturday we offer two short game clinics and Sunday we are out on the course. So our offerings are pretty diverse and whether you are a tour player or 22-handicapper, you are going to get the same level of instruction.

**You work at such a busy facility, how do you get people out on the golf course and help them transfer the skill set they acquired on the range?**

It is a challenge due to our volume of play, but our owners understand that it's important to grow the game and that the golf course is the best place for



Mahoney has appeared on the cover of *Golf Digest* three times over the years and has written more than 100 instruction articles for the major golf publications.

people to learn. It is tricky, but it is our job to get them out on the course. There are people who hit the ball well without scoring well, and people who do the opposite, so in general it is imperative to get them on course and demonstrate how to play better. We have also tried to make the practice facility more like the golf course with how we train.

**Can you explain some of the challenges you face in coaching a tour player, given that an agent, a caddie or some other person who supports that player will have their own views?**

We just had a conference call with all the “team members” for a Web.com player I work with. There are so many voices on a team that yes, it can get cloudy. I remember spending some time with Jack Nicklaus and he shared with me that Jack Grout had told him he needs to “take responsibility” for his swing. I like this idea, because I think it minimizes input from others.

**Any books that you’ve read lately, and would recommend?**

I would certainly recommend “Finding the Winning Way” by ex-49ers coach Bill Walsh. It’s a great guide to developing a game plan and succeeding through preparation. Mark Broadie’s book, “Every Shot Counts,” is a continual favorite of mine and it’s loaded with lots of great data. Lately I also have been reading “Energy Bus” by Jon Gordon, based on a person’s mindset.

**You are a cancer survivor, and congratulations on that. Anything you would think to share about the process of beating cancer?**

What comes to mind is the balance between wellness and work. I had been extremely healthy and then one day I was trail running and I lost my balance and fell over. A loss of balance is an indicator of cancer. I went to the doctor and was diagnosed with prostate cancer. This was six years ago. It really derailed everything. Today I am 100 percent cancer-free. I am definitely more patient with things, I stretch more, do pilates and eat better. I was uneducated about cancer, certainly. The stats say that 50 percent of men will get prostate cancer, and to me the important thing is not to panic. It is curable, so you get good care and follow the protocols. I went that route and I got back to 100 percent of my capacities, that I had before the diagnosis. Cancer wins if you change your attitude, and my goal was not to have cancer win.

**Any exciting research on the horizon you can share with us?**

At Troon we are doing a study now, with the working title of “Why do people not play golf?” Injuries would be one category of causes. We know that many golfers feel pain either when they play or after, but why? Do they not stretch? Are they averse to working out? Are they swinging improperly and is that what’s causing injury? From what we’ve learned we now have regular “boot camps” at Troon that focus on diet, nutrition and also the golf swing. You need every advantage you can get, to play this game up to your potential. **PG**