

## STATE OF THE INDUSTRY

# A Few Thoughts on Rocco's Teacher Bashing



So the big news last week in Phoenix was that Tiger's game is still a mess and, according to Rocco Mediate on "Feherty Live," it's all the teacher's fault. Why? Because Chris Como has never won a major - or something like that.

I have a cousin who is a famous opera singer. She worked with many of the top voice coaches in the United States, but none of them were world renowned opera singers themselves. Still, they were able to take her to a higher level than they had ever achieved. Sure, she had amazing natural talent but that talent had to be coached all along the way to truly flourish. People who win the Nobel Prize in Economics are taught by professors who themselves never won the Nobel. There are coaches in the NBA and NFL who never competed at that level who have been very successful in their respective leagues. The examples could go on all day.

So when Rocco Mediate says that teachers like Chris Como simply don't have the playing background to help someone at Tiger Wood's level, he's not making sense. He then went on to question the validity of a recent article in Golf Digest authored by Como. Rocco further intimated that only another major winner could help Tiger Woods put the pieces back together.

Let's remind Rocco that nobody who helped Tiger along the way to winning his current stash of 14 majors had ever even *played* in a major.

Jack Grout, who taught and coached Jack Nicklaus for his entire career, didn't seem to be a hindrance in Jack's march to 18 professional majors, even though Grout was winless in the biggies.

And when Rocco finished by suggesting that he could fix

Tiger's short game in one session if only Tiger would let him, he showed a jaw dropping level of ignorance of the arduous process that he himself had used to improve throughout his career working with Jimmy Ballard and others.

It's not just the technical information that matters, it's the entire process of coaching someone through the ups and downs of developing and maintaining a highly refined skill such as hitting a golf ball every day on the PGA or LPGA Tours.

And I can assure Rocco that if we took all the living major winners and lined them up to teach at a big driving range in, say, Chicago they would have a very hard time getting the quality results that dozens of professional instructors in the Windy City are able to achieve every day.

During my years as an editor at Golf Digest and Golf Magazine I interviewed hundreds of Tour professionals including dozens of major winners about their games and more often than not they couldn't explain how someone else could emulate what they do. They had a personal feel for what they were trying to do during their swing, but no idea how to convey that feeling or motion to someone else. Ninety percent of the time they told me to call their instructor for a better explanation.

That's the thing that Tour players like Rocco Mediate don't appreciate: Golf instruction is a big part science and a big part art of communication. Guys like Rocco don't do the golf world any favors by dumping on the people who are on the front lines every day creating both future Tour champions and engaging future 12 handicappers in the game of a lifetime.

By the way Rocco, how many majors did Jimmy Ballard win? That didn't seem to stop you from wanting his help with your game, did it? Next time I hope Rocco and the rest of the Touring pros realize how much time and effort top instructors put into this craft and how the game would be so much less for so many without their guidance.

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