

## ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

### First in a Series: Education and Certification

# Among Certification Programs, Vision54 is Unsurpassed

By David Gould, Staff Editor

Vision54, the golf performance program developed by Pia Nilsson and Lynn Marriott, earns accolades regularly. Among recent praise is a sky-high rating for “54Coach” in Proponent Group’s 2014 member survey of specialized training programs. One of three offerings in the Vision54 training portfolio, 54Coach is a multi-day course (open to instructors only) that conveys the distinct and holistic philosophy honed by Pia and Lynn through the years. Within 54Coach there are two units—“Coaching for the Future,” three days in length, and “Tournament Coaching,” a two-day unit geared toward work with the tournament player.

Vision54’s strong results in the poll are based on a combined numerical score indicating how useful and valuable Proponent members found it to be. Other certification programs in the survey had a higher sample size—meaning more survey respondents had gone through them. Tops in that category was TPI Certified Golf Fitness, which 51 members had successfully completed (with another 21 in-process toward certification). For Vision54, the numbers were 13 and 40, respectively, for already-completed and likely-to-complete. Other programs with heavy participation include Trackman University, the U.S. Kids instructor program, Aimpoint Technologies and the Certified Golf Coaches Association offering.

Asked if Vision54 “significantly added to their skill set,” 100 percent of those surveyed said yes. On the question of whether it “somewhat or strongly enhanced their reputation,” 90 percent agreed. The same 90-percent “yes” answer was tallied when asked if Vision54 “was a good or outstanding value.” Those responses don’t leave much doubt as to member enthusiasm for what Pia and Lynn provide to teachers on their way up the learning curve.

As stated in the official course description, this teaching is based on a belief that “performance in life and golf is multi-dimensional and therefore needs to be approached from an integrated view.” Even compared to the process used by top “mental game” gurus, the Vision54 concept seems especially wide-open to the inner life of the human being holding the club.

The duo is based at Talking Stick Golf Club but their travels and writings have made them a worldwide influence



Vision54’s Pia Nilsson and Lynn Marriott

on golf learning and development. Vision54 is Lynn and Pia’s coaching system as well as their educational brand—its name reflects the score for a round of golf featuring 18 birdies. Marriott and Nilsson are both on the top-50-teachers list published by Golf Digest as well as on GOLF Magazine’s Top 100 Teachers ranking. Golf Digest rated them the No. 1 and No. 2 women teachers in America in 2012. In the testimonials provided to coaches who are considering enrollment, Vision54 flashes

some instruction star power—names like Dave Pelz, Sean Foley and David Leadbetter.

During a live lesson at Talking Stick Resort during the 2013 Proponent Group Summit, the two worked with Italian-born LPGA Tour member Giulia Molinaro on a wide array of emotional experiences that come and go during practice or a round of golf. The player’s trust in the process and her ease in describing the spectrum of feelings that arise made it clear that this whole-person approach can produce self-awareness and emotional-management skills that work well in any context, not just golf.

“The coach needs to look deeper at the mental, physical and emotional state of the performer,” is how the concept gets summarized. “The social context and implications also need to be addressed. And perhaps most importantly, research on motivation and passion needs to be applied. What is the performer’s spirit of the game?”

Pia and Lynn, who are longtime Proponent Group members, spoke on the record for the Proponent newsletter as part of our “What I’ve Learned” series. Among the definitive statements that emerged from their exclusive Q&A is the comment from Pia about “a big shift from teaching to coaching” now happening in Europe and to some degree in North America. “We really believe golf instruction needs a new baseline, it needs a new definition,” she commented. “Either you are a teacher or you’re a coach. The future is ‘team teaching,’ with no egos on the team. Instead, everyone is an expert in their field and each brings a unique contribution to the team effort.”

There is little doubt that golf instruction’s top practitioners will continue to experience the Vision54 philosophy, as its notoriety spreads. In future installments of this series, we’ll throw the spotlight on other high-ranking certification programs of interest to Proponent members.