

No More Don't Ask / Don't Tell!

What Golf Students and Teachers Need to Ask to Succeed.

edited by Jeff Carpineta.

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1.5-3 million new people participate in golf each year, but half as many golfers don't stay involved in the game.* For sure, some folks take their spikes off because there's just not enough time or tighter budgets at home. Some new golfers just didn't have partners to tee it up with, and there are some who realized that it was just not for them. We've even heard reports that some folks can't find the right outfit on Sundays. But there's another group we've learned about- the folks who called it quits because they just couldn't get the ball up in the air consistently, or after their 7th (or 17th) round, their games just weren't getting any better.

This issue here is satisfaction. For beginning players, a Sunday victory isn't about scoring in (or even close to) the 70's. It's about doing a little better than the week before, and to get there golfers seek a thousand remedies- harnesses, gadgets, films, tidbits and tips and tricks. We know there's a virtual fine print at the bottom of every device.... 'If ailments persist, consult your local PGA Professional who will have the right prescription for you on the lesson tee.'

And while we know that each year hundreds of thousands of beginners and still struggling vets humble themselves to get help from the Pro's, we also know that among them there are too many who didn't meet their own expectations. Hmm..

What were the expectations? Could it be that some well thought dialogue on first contact with a Pro might eliminate uncertainties, reduce anxieties, and set a foundation for confidence and satisfaction? Yes.

In this, the first of a four part series, we rewind and take a look at how Pro's and the students can pave the way for success and happiness from the first conversation when scheduling the lesson, all the way



#1 in a 4 part series from our new contributor
PGA Pro John Carpineta

to graduation day and beyond. Preparation is more than having the checkbook or visa on hand, it's about getting into the right state of mind. The questions below can ensure that the student will bring their most confident self and that the Pro's can give more focused attention to the each student. Pick and choose what makes sense for someone in your shoes.

STUDENT TO PRO: Before the Lesson

What shoes to bring? Is there a dress code? Where do I park? How much of our first lesson will be initial talking? How physically demanding is the first lesson? Is there food on the site? I have insert your injury here - does that matter? How long is the first session? Will there be time for me to ask questions? How long have you been teaching? What communities - age groups - demographics do you serve? Do you have any sliding scale pricing or scholarships? Can you teach my children? What about group lessons with my spouse or partner?

Do you have reading materials or handouts? Can you help fit me for equipment? What are your typical hours? How do you prefer to communicate- email? Text? Do you utilize swing video? What is your swing philosophy? Why do you teach golf? Do you love teaching?

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STUDENT TO PRO: During the Lesson

#1 If something isn't registering or is unclear or uncomfortable ask the Pro to repeat or take a pause and break it down for you. The Pro will be glad to oblige: finding what works is a collaboration. How are you gauging my improvement? Where do you think we made discoveries today? How would you describe the issues in my swing? What are my next steps? What homework do you have? How should I gear my practice? Can I call you if I go off track?

PRO TO STUDENT: Before + During the Lesson

Have you ever studied before? How was the experience? What worked? What didn't work so well? What did you learn? What level do you consider yourself? Are there any physical limitations to know about? Any injuries or surgeries or cardio issues? What other sports activities are you involved in? Any questions or concerns relating to hands-on instruction? Any issues with heat/humidity? What are your goals for the first lesson? What is your understanding of your swing? How many lessons do you anticipate scheduling? How often do you practice? How committed to the learning process are you feeling? What brought you here and where are you looking to go?

PRO TO STUDENT: Upon Graduation

Do you have partners to play with? Can I connect you with a group? Are you aware of events and opportunities? Can I add you to our mailing lists to keep you updated on special events? Can I help you learn more about equipment options?

Check in monthly- in the next 3 articles Johnny 'C' will be looking at some basic elements of the swing with fresh eyes while also disposing of some damaging myths.

John Carpineta is a distinguished member of the Phila. Section of a PGA Professional at the Bensalem Township Country Club. John competes in the FDS winter tour, Bunker Club, and Section events. John represents Titliest and is a passionate teacher of the game and is regionally celebrated for his work with Veterans, Amputees, Seniors, Blind Golfers, Youth, and the Asian Community. John dedicates this series to PGA Professional James Bogan, his pals George 'Squirrel' Schwietzer, all the great teachers of the Phila. Section (currently celebrating its 90th Anniversary), and to the memory of Ron Rolfe and Achilles 'Giggi' Carnivale.

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