

Learning Through Lessons

CARLO BORUNDA, DIRECTOR OF INSTRUCTION AT NEWPORT BEACH COUNTRY CLUB, REVEALS HOW IMPORTANT LESSONS CAN BE TO IMPROVING ON THE GOLF COURSE.

BY ASHLEY RYAN



Ask your coach to demonstrate the modifications to your technique so you may better understand how to improve.

Sometimes, improving your golf game is as simple as gaining new knowledge and technique from professionals, no matter where you are in your journey with the sport. Taking on-the-course lessons ensures interactive learning sessions where you can work on a variety of different elements in your pursuit of success.

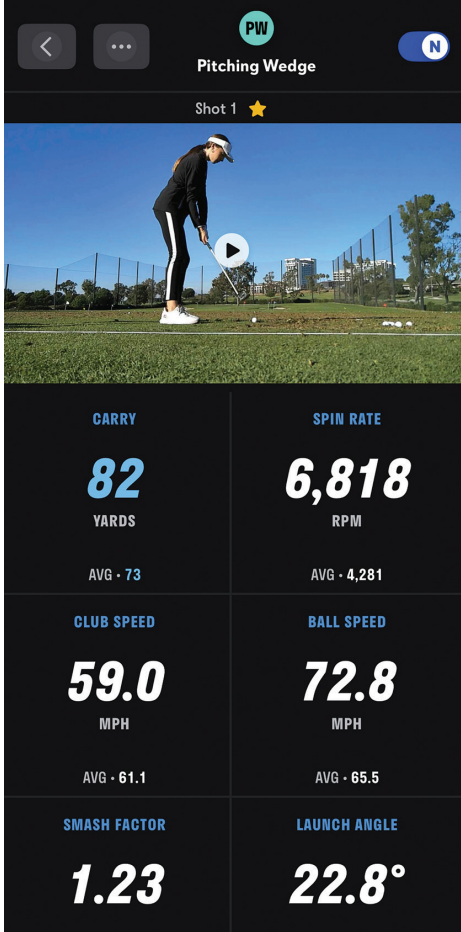
“Lessons are the most effective approach to learning new skills, rectifying swing flaws and developing improved playing strategies,” says Carlo Borunda, the director of instruction at Newport Beach Country Club.

Here, Borunda reveals why these lessons are

so effective, how often you should take them and what you need to do to get started.

BAY WINDOW: *Why is it important to take golf lessons?*

CARLO BORUNDA: If you are new to golf, the best place to begin is to work with a PGA coach. The same is true for everyone looking to lower their score. The most common reason golfers should take lessons is to correct flaws in their swings before making unnecessary adjustments that may compromise their confidence and overall feel of their swing.



Launch monitor analysis is an excellent method to gain a better understanding of how the golf club and ball interact during impact.

BW: *How can lessons impact your golf game overall and what can a golfer expect to learn?*

CB: A session from a skilled coach will help you learn faster and play with greater confidence. Most lessons begin with an interview to determine whether the golfer has any physical restrictions as a result of injury as well as what they hope to accomplish and how they intend to practice to attain these goals. Your coach will then need to watch you hit a few shots to evaluate your fundamentals and swing technique. A coach’s role in a lesson is to help you understand your swing tendencies and discover a better approach to swinging

your golf clubs in a more efficient manner. Your progress and the manner in which you are able to implement changes to your technique are dependent on your level of dedication to practice. Changing some aspects of your technique will come naturally while others will take longer to develop. Once you’ve gained a deeper understanding of these concepts, you can apply it to self-diagnose and address difficulties while playing golf. The ability to make subtle adjustments to your swing during a round is essential for saving what would otherwise be a lost day on the course.

BW: *Is it more effective for golfers to take lessons at the driving range to improve their swings or should they seek coaching while playing the game?*

CB: A driving range lesson is the best location to improve your control of the golf club, the strike of the golf ball and, ultimately, the flight of the golf ball. A successful coaching session at the driving range will help the golfer gain confidence in their swing, allowing them to improve their score. A session on the golf course is the ideal setting for a coach to evaluate a golfer’s decision-making and playing ability. This is also an opportunity to discuss strategies and address situational skills encountered on the golf course, such as playing from side hill lies, deep rough, fairway bunkers and various options when playing a recovery shot from the trees or other difficult situations. A successful playing lesson will allow the coach to properly advise the golfer on how to practice more efficiently and where they will need to focus their time in future driving range sessions.

BW: *How often should golfers take lessons and is there a preferred method?*

CB: Golfers who schedule frequent sessions are more interested in improving their swing mechanics or want to maintain confidence in their present swing. The student who tends to tinker too much will also benefit from a more regular session schedule to help them stay on track with their technique. The other type of student will only seek advice when their swing breaks down and they require immediate assistance to regain confidence. This student may go up to a year or more between sessions. The best option depends on the player’s preferred method of learning and their goals for improving and enjoying the game.

BW: *What tips do you have for signing up and getting started if you’ve never taken a lesson before?*

CB: Your friends are a great resource for



The driver is one of the most important clubs in your golf bag. Develop confidence with this club by working on your balance and club face control during impact. Ideally, stick to one consistent shape, draw, or fade throughout the round.



obtaining a referral for a good coach. You can also call or visit your local golf course to inquire more details about coaching options and specific philosophies. Some coaches are more technical while others prefer different strategies to help their students learn. Your learning style may differ from how the coach trains, so don’t be afraid to take a lesson from a few different coaches until you find the one who best aligns with your preferences. Unless you already have golf clubs, you should contact the coach you wish to work with and ask if they can supply equipment for your first lesson. During this conversation, you will need to ask them what to bring to the first class. Typically, all you need to wear is golf-specific apparel, athletic shoes and maybe a golf glove. Arrive at least 15 minutes early so you can acclimate to the environment and go through a light stretch to warm up.

BW: *What are some of the biggest things to focus on during lessons?*

CB: Prior to your lesson, make sure to write down the things you want to cover in your session and share these goals with your coach. This will allow you to maximize the time you have together. Be sure to share your past athletic experiences, as this will provide valuable insights into your potential. Many students incorrectly expect immediate improvement during the lesson. Allow time to process the information and follow your coach’s instructions. They are on your team and only want to help you improve. Don’t be afraid to ask questions when you don’t understand something. Encourage your coach

to rephrase what they are saying or possibly demonstrate the technique if the concepts are confusing. At the conclusion of each session, make sure to ask them to summarize the lesson in a few short sentences.

BW: *What types of lessons are available at Newport Beach Country Club?*

CB: Our team of PGA and LPGA coaches provide a variety of sessions to help improve your short game skills, putting technique and full swing mechanics. These lessons cover launch monitor analysis, video analysis and 3D analysis as well as the utilization of cutting-edge training tools to build specific golf swing feels. We also provide playing lessons to help golfers improve their play plus learn the rules and etiquette of the game. During these sessions, our coaches will teach you how to effectively navigate the golf course and further develop your ability to play in challenging situations. We also offer professional club fitting sessions several times a year where each manufacturer will bring a wide variety of options to fine tune the equipment in your set to optimize your ability to produce consistent results.

BW: *How can NBCC members sign up for a lesson?*

CB: The best options for NBCC members to schedule a lesson with our team of golf coaches is to use the NBCC app or contact the golf shop for more assistance. The PGA Coach app is an excellent resource for anyone seeking assistance from a local PGA professional.