

McCleery Golf Academy

Hiring and Firing a Golf Coach

Balancing Reality and Expectation

While reading an article regarding the state of the coaching relationship between David Leadbetter and phenom Michele Wie I ran across a quote by Tiger Woods coach Hank Haney.

"There are only two kinds of golf coaches, one who is being fired or one who is about to be fired."

Pretty harsh words, I'd say but none spoken so true, so why is it that golfers "fire" their coaches either moving on to find another or giving up on the assisted learning process entirely.

Firstly, imagine a company that would fire it's staff 4 hours into an operation and with such abandon. Would it mean that the employees are incompetent, unable, untrained or more likely reflect back on the companies hiring practices, management skills or understanding of the nature of the task at hand. Would it not reflect back more on the intelligence with which the company was using in making it's decision to hire and execute a plan.

Now in golf, the coach is typically perceived as the expert in the management issues and in many ways should be. But how would the student know how expert his or her prospective coach is.

In business, those with the strongest resumes and record of success are usually given the upper hand but then there is the interview process. When a company undertakes a hiring process it is with certain established objectives in mind. In golf the golfers objectives typically need to be reframed because the golfer sees and wants outcomes and isn't necessarily interested in the process but probably needs to be more highly motivated to embrace the process. Or vice versa believe it or not.

It is imperative that the golfer and the coach understand the magnitude of the challenge before proceeding. Coaches with greater success and experience work intuitively and this can create a gap between the golfer and the teacher as sometimes the golfer might not see the relevance of a direction due to a lack of his or her own experience and trust issues may develop. The coach needs the golfers trust in the process knowing that if the student perseveres, he or she will "get it", why, because they have witnessed such success many times before.

The experienced coach has record of how much time and effort it will take to achieve certain ends given starting points and complexity of the challenge, unfortunately the golfer does not. The golfer may lack the will or the resources to stay the course, meaning no matter how proficient the coach, the result is the same, sadly, eventual termination of the relationship.

In both success and falling short of desired outcomes the coaches end is typically the same and victory and achievement, failure and underachievement are always the domain of the golfer.

In summary, hiring a Coach that continually seeks to develop his or her skills and understanding of his or her golfing students will not make the Coach immune to the inevitable, but will certainly ensure that the relationship has it's best chance to grow and help the golfer achieve his or her golf related objectives.

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