

Passion for Teaching

Thanks to Peter Jacobsen's prodding, Jim Hardy helps PGA Professionals become better instructors

To hear PGA Professional Jim Hardy tell the story, Peter Jacobsen may be the reason Hardy is still passionately teaching golf at age 64. And "Jake" may be the reason why Hardy is the **2007 PGA Teacher of the Year** after being named the Harvey Penick Teacher of the Year by the Southern Texas PGA Section in 2002 and 2005.

"I had formally quit teaching in 1983," assures Hardy, based in Houston, Texas. "But Peter dragged me back into it. Peter kept saying, 'Jim, you have some ideas with the golf swing that need to be heard.' It was his steadfast enthusiasm for the way I have always approached teaching, and his confidence in my teaching, that convinced me to give it another go. I've never regretted that decision."

Hardy and Jacobsen – now partners in Jacobsen/Hardy Golf Design in Houston – met in June 1983 while doing a corporate outing on the Monday of U.S. Open Week at Oakmont, Pa. Jacobsen was intrigued by Hardy's golf-instruction philosophies and looked up the longtime instructor prior to the 1983 PGA Championship at Riviera Country Club.

"Peter and I had talked a lot at that outing before the U.S. Open at Oakmont, and he sought me out early in the week at the PGA Championship in August and said, 'Will you take a look at my swing and help me?'" remembers Hardy. "We worked on a few things, and Peter stood on the 72nd hole of that PGA Championship one shot out of the lead. He ended up finishing two shots behind Hal Sutton, but that's what rekindled my passion for teaching and that's where the relationship with Peter really began."

Today, Hardy's homespun humor mixed with his passion for teaching have made him a popular presenter at PGA of America national, regional and local seminars. He conducts an average of 12 two-day "Teaching and Playing Seminars" for PGA Professionals each year and has been a featured presenter at The PGA's Teaching & Coaching Summit multiple times. Hardy is the author of two books, including the worldwide best-selling instructional book and DVD "The Plane



Truth for Golfers," published in 2005. "The Plane Truth for Golfers Master Class," was released earlier in 2007.

Hardy maintains he is always learning while teaching and takes pleasure in sharing his teaching principles with other PGA members, believing that is the most effective way to reach the greatest number of people. Hardy's own principles were formed by exposure to teachers such as PGA Life Member Harold Hoffman – his high school golf coach – and England's John Jacobs, with whom he worked in the 1970s.

"I've always been passionate about learning; when we quit learning we start dying," says Hardy. "The other day, I was working with 26 golf professionals sharing our teaching methods and ideas. At this stage of my life, when I'm teaching Mrs. Abernathy, I'm impacting one golfer at a time, which is still enjoyable for me. But when I'm helping other PGA Professionals become better teachers, I'm impacting thousands of golfers."

Hardy currently works with tour professionals Jacobsen, Scott McCarron, Tom Pernice, Bob Tway, Olin Browne, Duffy Waldorf, Jay Delsing, Stan Utley, Don Pooley and Graham Marsh, and has been involved in the development or management of 60 golf courses. He understands that The PGA has fostered "an incredible heritage of helping" when it comes to golf instruction.

"Once a teacher exposes and explains practical theories to other golf professionals and they understand what works and what doesn't, those golf professionals will pass that on to the next generation of golfers and teachers," notes Hardy. "I don't know of another sport that has such a heritage of helping each other. Only in golf, a game of honesty and integrity, do we help each other with our swings, our games and with our teaching methods. It's amazing, when you think about it." ■

PGA Teacher of the Year Award

Presented annually since 1986, this award is based on the PGA Professional's overall performance in teaching. It includes unusual, innovative and special teaching programs the honoree has initiated or played a key role in implementing; articles published in books and magazines; as well as outstanding golfers the PGA Professional has instructed.