

Finding a Coach/Instructor

This is a subject that many people have differing views on. Who should I use to teach me?, how will I know if they are any good? and how do I find the right person?. These are all valid questions, and the answers will vary based on who you ask.

In teaching and learning, I believe, the most important element is the teacher/student relationship. There must be a positive connection and respect. You need to get on well. At school we all had teachers we didn't like and our ability to learn with these was hampered. Not because they weren't good teachers, just because we didn't get on. We've all heard the term "Clash of personalities".

Location and cost are elements to consider. The further you travel the more this adds to the cost of your learning. However, an instructor 100 yards down the road you don't get on with is false economy.

Many instructors won't like it, and may take it personally, but have your initial lessons with more than one instructor. You will soon know who you prefer and who gets the best results out of you. Also, further down the process don't be afraid to change instructors if you feel the need to. This could be based on a lack of progress, or you just stop getting on. It happens!!

Look at the ground they teach at. They may be employed by the ground, or they may be independent working at the ground by agreement. Whichever it is, do they have the necessary insurance and are they registered with a recognised instructor organisation? (CPSA, APSI, BASC etc). This is not a legal requirement but does show a degree of commitment and "Best Practice".

Has the ground got a wide variety and presentation of targets available, and does it have a room for briefing and debriefing? Toilets and refreshments are also a reasonable expectation.

The instructor needs to be able to shoot. Strange as it may sound there are some who cannot shoot to a reasonable standard. They will need to demonstrate methods and routines; therefore, a reasonable standard is required. They do not need to be former world champions or AAA shots at the early stages. You will only require their expertise if you are looking to get to that standard. Having lessons with them however will not guarantee this! But it will cost you more.

Pick your instructor based on your own aspirations. If you want to predominantly shoot game, then choose an instructor who specialises in game shooting. If you want to shoot a particular clay discipline, then pick an instructor that specialises in the discipline you want to shoot. Or pick an all-rounder.

A basic club level instructor at a commercial ground with reasonable facilities and a variety of target presentations will do to begin with but don't be afraid to move on if you don't get on or outgrow them!

