

# WESTERN CAPE ANNUAL AWARDS

COACH

GROW GOLF

Erich Kliem

Stellenbosch Golf Club.

**1. What is your current job title?**

Senior Teaching Professional.

**2. How long have you been in your current position?**

7 years (23 years coaching at the club).

**3. What have been the key deliverables of your position the past 12 months?**

I have implemented a coaching system that is attractive and efficient since it focusses on everyone's individuality from a biomechanical standpoint. It works with a logical sequence so as not to miss anything and focusses heavily on the grip and body / leg action combination, two factors that have been very misunderstood up to now.

This I did with the help of a mentorship with Mike Adams and Terry Rowles. The system is called BioSwing Dynamics and involves screens, tests, and measurements to literally measure an individual's uniqueness and how they will be able to play at their most optimal. It cuts out a lot of unnecessary information making it so efficient.

In order to help my clients understand the way in which their unique grip and body actions work together most efficiently, I managed to convince FlightScope (our club's partner) to invest in a Swing Catalyst 3D Motion Plate which is housed in our studio. All of this is creating a lot of new interest in coaching at the club and has opened the door to more possibilities.

**4. How do you see the implementation of Safeguarding on your position and the industry?**

Positive - it has made me very aware of the very disturbing things that are happening across many sporting codes. I hope it will make a big difference.

**5. Please give us a brief outline of the path you took to lead you to your current position?**

After school I studied B.Sc Sport Science at Stellenbosch University, followed by a Higher Diploma of Education. I was a high school teacher for a few years but knew I wanted to combine my passions. So I began my apprenticeship at Stellenbosch Golf Club under

Graham Webster in 2000 and completed it under Arnold Mentz, together with Louis Destroo our current D.O.G. and PGA of SA Chairperson.

From day one I knew that coaching was my thing. Eventually in 2016 I moved onto the range and a year later into the coaching and fitting studio, which was part of current GM Chris van der Merwe's vision for the club. I also managed the driving range up to now but will soon be focussing fully on coaching.

## **6. Why do you feel that you would be a good candidate to win this award?**

### Coaching:

Many thanks for the nomination. As mentioned in previous nominations, I am extremely passionate about coaching, and what has happened to me over the last year and a half has boosted this tremendously. I am such a lucky and happy coach now and very grateful to the people that have helped get me to this point. I won't explain it all again here! - please see my website ([www.erichkliemgolf.com](http://www.erichkliemgolf.com)) and YouTube channel for more.

What I am so glad I did, was to get out of my comfort zone and explore what the absolute latest trends in coaching were, and what the top coaches are doing. This came about because I also knew deep down that there had to be something more to it than what and how I was coaching.

It came in the form of a great mentorship opportunity that Hall of Fame and #3 coach Mike Adams offers together with Top 50 coach Terry Rowles, called "The Ultimate Golf Lesson", which once again, underlines how each person cannot be expected to do the same things, since everyone has a unique "Golfing DNA". Just how different everyone is I am now witnessing, to my amazement, every day.

My Sport Science background helped me to get my head around the biomechanical aspects of this, and I was so intrigued that I must have spent the best part of 80 hours studying it all, and that was just the beginning! Now with the Motion Plate here, it will be another 80 hours soon - the things I am seeing and correlations I am witnessing are what dreams are made of!!

Ironically so many things that were previously believed, especially in terms of the grip and the upwards action (vertical force) have turned out very different and sometimes even the opposite - all thanks to more than 40 years of research which Mike started in the late 70's already, helped by many top bio mechanists and even orthopaedic surgeons, which has been accelerated by technology lately. Just to illustrate Mike's contribution, he chose to buy a force plate over a house way back in 1982 because he was so keen to see what people do differently! He has also screened many of the top 200 players.

An exciting thing that you can see described on my website as well, is that I can offer what Swing Catalyst's Chief Researcher, Dr Scott Lynn does in the US, which is literally consulting - when a coach and player realize that they have hit a ceiling and something is

preventing the player from improving further, or worse, the player starts losing speed or gets injured - then player and coach can come to the studio, I do the BSD screens and testing with the player, using the Motion Plate as well, and then I can show the coach exactly why it is happening and what can be done, similar to what Dr Lynn described he did with Tony Finau and Collin Morikawa in his webinar a few weeks ago - the coach does not have to feel bad about this as its not their fault, and all of this is also very "recent" - if I compare what I would have told or expected my clients to do just two years ago as opposed to now, I can fully understand where things can go wrong!

In fact, the reason why I also truly believe in the system and understand it so well, is that I am such a good example of all of this in action - after 25 years of sticking to a strong (new term under) trail hand grip - mainly because subconsciously not wanting to use what had unfortunately been termed a weak grip (new term cover or on top), and because of the belief that such a grip makes the ball go right (even though we now know that some of the best ball strikers – Snead, Hogan (was strong went to weak and played better), Nicklaus, Koepka, Garcia - I ended up with a rather serious knee injury as a result of all the compensations I was doing to try and hit the ball straight with the unmatched grip! I could also never get to the kind of speeds that I should have been able to.....now that I can with the correctly matched grip, the damage has been done, but at least I can help others because of this understanding - every dark cloud does indeed have a silver lining.....!

So much of the system has to do with removing someone's restrictions and compensations - once this happens, I always see the key factors improve (path, face, smash and speed) - without the person trying harder at all, which is always such a joy to see! The feedback I then get from them is great, mostly that it feels like less effort. You can watch much more detail about this and myself as the example on my YouTube channel.

I have also applied to begin a Master's degree through the university using the data I am gathering, with which Dr Lynn and the Sport Science Professor at Stellenbosch (who coincidentally specialised in Biomechanics) will advise me on - I already have my eye on the grip and its many effects.....!

I would also love to play a role in the PGA in terms of coaching education if that should be possible somewhere down the line.

I also know that biomechanics is only one aspect of golf - in 2020 I followed another mentorship with Will Robins in which I learnt so much about how I can help my clients manage themselves better on the course, as well as how to better take their games from the range onto the course. As you can imagine, this now makes for such a great combination – I could see this in action with 16-year-old client, Erica Chen, who became our Ladies Club Champion in March - she first received the self-management grounding, followed by the BioSwing Dynamics aspects, making her a very confident player.

I also pride myself on being an "allrounder" – something I also admired about Mike Adams' coaching whilst being fortunate enough to observe him for two days in his

studio in New Jersey last September - I coach young and old, beginner and tour player, low and high handicaps, as well as blind golfers - you may have seen a post by the PGA after the first World Blind Golf Championships held in SA, at which PGA member Rachel Howard also took part, and I am setting up a post about this very special aspect of my coaching and what it has given me. I am also fluent in German which many tourists appreciate a lot.

Finally, as mentioned I am such a happy coach now, and I have to thank Stellenbosch Golf Club as well as the PGA of SA for giving me the freedom to explore and develop myself more, and naturally Mike Adams for making the material so accessible to anyone who wants to learn and develop more as a coach, as well as Henri Johnson and his company FlightScope, our clubs and our PGA's partner, for their generosity.

#### Grow Golf:

All the above also applies here in terms of my contribution toward growing the game - and I am looking forward to how much more I can play a role in growing golf.

#### **7. How do you promote a career in golf and the PGA to people who aspire to a career within the industry?**

I hope that my social media pages can inspire young people to go the route. I don't hesitate to invite anyone to observe my coaching as well, and I encourage them to live out their passion.

***Would you like the PGA to share your profile via our social media platforms? Yes***

Instagram - <https://www.instagram.com/erichkliemgolf/>

Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/erichkliemgolf/>

Linkedin - <https://www.linkedin.com/in/erich-kliem-573822125/>

YouTube - <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCRiFBimUvIOmvBPfr3LYFeg>

