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## Lamorinda golfers take advantage of class offerings off the course

By Jon Kingdon



Tom Rezendes works with a client at NorCal Golf Academy. Photo provided

As a golfer, living in the Bay Area has many advantages. Weather permitting, one can conceivably play golf 12 months a year. Unless you belong to one of the two very fine private clubs in the Lamorinda area, The Orinda Country Club and The Moraga Country Club, one is forced to find a course to play or practice outside of the immediate area. The nearest driving ranges are at Tilden Park in Berkeley, Buchanan Fields and Diablo Creek, both in Concord.

However if you are looking for a more local opportunity to take lessons or just practice and learn with video cameras and computer analysis, there are two options: NorCal Golf Academy, which is just west of Lafayette at 2094 Mt. Diablo Blvd. in Walnut Creek and is run by longtime Orinda residents, Tom and Kjersten Rezendes, and East Bay School of Golf at 3330 Mt. Diablo Blvd. run by Dave Gannon and Mark Majers, both of whom live in Lafayette.

NorCal Golf Academy has been in operation for several years. With three practice bays and two practice putting greens, Rezendes employs two other teaching pros: Curtis Rhoads and Jenny Park Choi. Rick Eisenhour, the head golf coach at Carondelet High School, exclusively teaches the Aim Point Technique in putting.

Rezendes brings a mechanical background along with a lifetime of golf experience, having worked for a top fuel drag racing team. With a true love of golf however, he committed himself to golf instruction, saying: "I just wanted to teach and improve the way people played golf. I believe that I have created a clean welcoming environment for golfers where they will receive lots of feedback from trained, certified instructors."

Rezendes, a certified PGA teaching pro since 2004 who has appeared on the Golf Channel in a teaching segment last year and will be on their morning drive in late November, and was recently named 14th among the top 50 instructors in California by Golf Digest, relies on cutting-edge technology in teaching his students who range in age from 10 to 80. "Utilizing TrackMan radar technology, Swing Catalyst Balance Plate and GEARS Motion Capture I can measure every facet of my student's motion and give quantifiable data on what needs improvement and what is working properly," he says.

The improvement in golf technology is constant. According to Rezendes, "You can tell within the thickness of a piece of paper how much a golf shaft is bending, the exact body position of the golfer and where the ball hits on the club face. This equipment is being used by the professional golfers as well." NorCal also utilizes SAM putt lab to help the golfers improve their putting technique.

Over the past five years, NorCal has seen thousands of students, ranging from beginners to scratch golfers, ages 8 to 80. They have students that are now playing at Pepperdine and Yale and a student that qualified for the Drive, Chip and Putt tournament at Augusta. Rezendes philosophy is "to gear each lesson to the golfer's specific needs."

The facility is also available for the golfer who would like to simply

utilize one of the hitting bays for their own TrackMan analysis, and to be able to play golf utilizing E6 Simulator Software on over 50 renowned courses.

In addition to providing instruction, Rezendes is a certified putter and club fitter for Edell, Mizuno and Cobra.

The East Bay School of Golf opened six months ago. They only have one service bay to hit into, but Gannon takes pride in that "it's the largest screen available with TrackMan and high speed video."

Gannon has been a PGA Club Pro since 1996, having played golf for the past 27 years and met Majers, a PGA member since 2002, when both were teaching at the Presidio Golf course.

East Bay welcomes all levels of golfers with beginners as young as 5 years old, as well as low handicapped players and seniors. Gannon has a simple philosophy in analyzing his students swings: "We want to keep

what is right and adjust what is wrong." Gannon and Majers believe that a player can learn faster in their facility due to the new technology and the ability

to analyze so many aspects of the swing that a lesson at a driving range can offer.

Gannon feels that an experienced golfer should see improvement immediately though a true beginner will take more time.

East Bay has various options for their students. A student can take individual or a series of lessons. Besides lessons, at East Bay golfers also have the opportunity to simulate play at over 40 different courses along with swing analysis. There is also the opportunity to utilize every club (besides the putter) and receive immediate feedback as to the direction and distance of every shot along with the club path and speed, launch and face angles of the club. In fact, the TrackMan technology can provide up to 25 different measurements of an individual's swing.

Because of their proximity to the studio, Gannon and Majers are flexible enough to come in early or stay late should someone call and request an odd time.

For info about East Bay School of Golf or NorCal Golf Academy, visit [NorCalGolfAcademy.com](http://NorCalGolfAcademy.com) or [EastBaySchoolofGolf.com](http://EastBaySchoolofGolf.com).

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