

That little matter of instruction is one of the most serious problems we face. How, or what can be done to make the early period of learning to shoot sufficiently interesting so that initial interest can be carried over the hump of awkwardness, over the first few discouraging days when the arrows seem to go everywhere except where they should go, over the tedious time spent in looking for arrows that have found a secure nesting spot deep in the roots of the grass? If you know how to sustain interest through these discouraging moments, then you are the exceptional instructor. It can be done, and it should be done if your efforts are to be worth while, or if the results are to be a credit to you and the institution you represent.

The letters for the next few months will dwell on subjects of this nature. I am going to assume that you have any one of the modern books on archery instruction and have probably had instruction in shooting. In other words, my purpose is to supplement the academic with applied archery psychology, to make the sport a permanently interesting, individual activity for those now about to learn it.

So, for a starting point, let us survey the vitally important consideration of interest development. Try to see it introspectively by determining the factors which would have appealed to you before you ever tried shooting. There is no doubt that an entirely different set of emotions sway boys and girls. It is unnecessary to go into a psychological analysis of the whys and wherefors, but here are a few points gained from questioning many boys and girls.

Girls like archery because--it is a sport they feel confident that they can do successfully. They appreciate the grace and poise of arching, knowing that they will appear to advantage in the eyes of others. There is a natural desire in most people, which includes girls, to want to draw back a bow and release the arrows, sending it swiftly off into space.

Boys like archery because--they conjure up a few mental pictures of Robin Hood or Indians hunting big game in the wood, and then inject themselves into the picture. This is displaced later by other motives such as excelling in the sport and the craft side of archery when they make their own equipment. There is a definite objection or resistance when boys are required to learn archery under a woman's teaching. The line of least resistance should be followed by playing on the primary urges. Suggest to girls the picture of gracefulness and poise when shooting after they have learned to do it properly. Explain that everyone feels awkward at first, but the awkward sensation is overcome by practice. Make it known to them that shooting will definitely develop their bodies for a slim waist and a well developed bust, and that any normally co-ordinated person can learn to shoot well.

Since some of these articles will not exactly co-inside with seasonal instruction work, I suggest that you keep them together for future reference.

Very truly yours,

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