

ARCHERY BUYING GUIDE by ANSON (anson2@hotmail.com)

DISCLAIMER: The following is merely BASIC information provided for persons interested in the sport of archery within the Laguna Woods Archery Club.

FIRST AND FOREMOST, DO NOT GO OUT AND START BUYING ARCHERY GEAR WITHOUT THE BASIC KNOWLEDGE OF ARCHERY AND THE EQUIPMENT THAT SUITS YOU. IT WOULD BE LIKE BUYING GOLF CLUBS FIRST WITHOUT ANY KNOWLEDGE OF THE SPORT!

RECURVE BOW vs. COMPOUND BOW

Generally people start out learning on Recurve Bows instead of Compound Bows because of its simplicity and start-up cost, not to mention Compound Bows are adjusted to fit a particular shooter and cannot be shared. A basic Recurve Bow runs between \$100 to \$150, whereas a Compound Bow goes from \$350 to +\$4,000.

Regardless of the bow type, both require mastering the same basic archery techniques and skills.

WHAT SHOULD I BUY FIRST?

Before buying a bow, the club suggests you start with getting some safety gear of your own so there's no need to use "shared" property:

Forearm Guard protects your bow arm (*the arm that holds the bow*) from being struck by the bow string upon releasing the arrow. You will painfully remember when that happens to your unprotected bow arm. The guard is sold as a set at Amazon.com for \$15 or individually. The set includes the Finger Protector. If you do not want to wear a guard, a long sleeve may be adequate.

Finger Protector prevents your finger tips from getting raw due to drawing (*pulling*) and releasing the bow string multiple times. It comes in two different types: (1) three finger glove-like or (2) a tab where you place between the string and your three fingers each time. The three-finger glove-like type is included with the Forearm Guard as a set at Amazon.com for about \$15 and/or sold individually. If you do not want to use any finger protector, a soft, thin golf glove works just as good. It will be for the hand that draws (pulls) the string.

WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW WHEN BUYING A RECURVE BOW?

RIGHT-HANDED BOW? Generally, get a right-handed bow if you are *right eye dominant*.

LEFT-HANDED BOW? Generally get a left-handed bow if you are *left eye dominant*.

(Simple eye dominance check: fully extend any hand forward & line up the thumb to a fixed object with both eyes opened; then close the right eye and if the thumb moves away from the fixed object, you are right eye dominant. The thumb should not move with your left eye closed.)

BUT, you could be right-handed with left eye dominant or left-handed and right eye dominant. For example, if you buy a right-handed bow because you're normally right-handed but you're left-eye dominant, you WILL start tilting your head to the right so that your left eye can look straight down the shaft of the arrow to aim. If not, your arrows will continue to fly to the right or left and definitely away from the bullseye. Not only will this strain your neck, you will not hit the bullseye when aiming directly at the bullseye; instead, you will be forced to aim at a spot on either side of the bullseye to compensate for the arrow's path that is determined by your eye dominance.

BOW LENGTH? It is safer for an archer to shoot a longer Recurve Bow than one that is too short. The length of the bow is affected by your *draw length*. Draw length refers to the distance of the bow string from the bow to your Anchor Point measured in inches. In general, the bow tip of the lower limb should touch the ground and the tip of the upper limb should be about eye level or higher when measured vertically. If you're significantly taller than the bow, you could draw the string too far back and hyper-extend the limbs; that adversely affects limb integrity. The limbs could break and cause injury.

BOW DRAW WEIGHT? Draw weight refers to how many pounds of strength are required to *draw* (pull) the string to your anchor point (the point where you stop drawing/pulling). A more visual explanation is to imagine there is a 15 lb. weight on the floor and you have to be able to lean forward and use only one arm to pull that weight up to your shoulder while still bent forward; that's the equivalent of a 15lb bow draw weight. So a bow with 30lbs Draw Weight is like pulling a 30lb weight up to your shoulder with one arm while bent forward.

You should be able to comfortably *draw* (pull) the bowstring to FULL draw length (*to your Anchor Point*) without struggling and straining. A "Rule of Thumb" is to pick a Draw Weight wherein you can draw the bow to your anchor point about 20 consecutive times without a break in between. If the draw weight is too heavy, your arms start shaking and your arrows will fly accordingly, not to mention you will be limited to only a few arrows before your muscles are too sore to shoot more. Our Club's available Recurve Bows range from 17-27 pounds at a 28" draw length, so if you want a heavier bow weight, it's time to get your own.

NEED A BOW SIGHT? A Bow Sight helps with aiming, as you can focus and place the pin of the sight on the target for each shot. After the Bow Sight is adjusted to your eye level and target distance, placing the sight pin on the bullseye will guarantee a bullseye (IF) you are able to consistently perform the basic steps of archery: stance, body position, anchor point, extended and locked bow arm, loose and proper grip, follow-through, etc. If you can master the basics and place that sight pin on the bullseye, that is where the arrow will land each time. Without a bow sight, you would have to rely on looking down the shaft of the arrow and possibly aim the tip of the arrow at the bullseye. The Bow Sight makes that easier and only cost about \$15. Just look for a Bow Sight that fits Recurve Bows. Amazon.com has it.

WHAT TYPE OF ARROWS SHOULD I GET?

ARROW TYPES? *Carbon Fiber* arrows are lighter than aluminum, wood, and fiberglass/plastic. The arrow *Fletching* (*feathers or plastic vanes*) are personal preference, although plastic vanes are more durable than feathers. Carbon arrows are preferred because they're lighter and more durable. Their prices range from \$3 to \$20 per arrow. For the purpose of paper target shooting at the Village range, the cheaper ones are more than adequate. I believe Amazon.com sells 12 carbon arrows for \$35 or less.

ARROW LENGTH: The standard Arrow Length is 30". The arrow should be long enough so that the tip extends at least one inch in front of the arrow rest at full draw. So if your Draw Length is 30", you'll need arrows longer than 30". Any shorter than that would be dangerous as it could fall off the arrow rest and impale your bow hand/finger upon release. (*To figure your **Draw Length**, open your arms wide like forming a cross; measure from the tip of your index finger to the other index figure; divide that measurement by 2.5 and the result is your Draw Length in inches.*)

ARROW SPINE: The Spine is the relationship of the arrow's weight to its stiffness. The arrow's spine should be matched to your bow's dynamics. In the case of a Recurve Bow and our limited shooting at the Village club, a Spine rating of 400-500 is adequate.

ARROW TIP/POINT: The Arrow Tips may or may not be included with the arrows. If not included, the tips cost extra (*from 85 cents to \$1 each*). "Bullet" Tips/Points are the only type allowed at the Village archery range.

IF YOU ARE STILL CONFUSED AND NEED HELP IN FIGURING WHAT TO BUY, PLEASE ASK AND I SHALL MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO GUIDE YOU ACCORDING TO YOUR SHOOTING STYLE, SKILL LEVEL, AND PHYSICAL STATURE.

WHERE CAN I BUY ARCHERY EQUIPMENT?

It's quite evident that I suggest shopping at Amazon.com over local archery retailers. The reasons are personal and I shall share them:

- 1. Retailers are in business to sell because that is their objective and livelihood, so I understand; however, there have been a few of our members who purchased the wrong equipment because the retailers did not make the effort to tailor the purchases to the customer's lack of knowledge, needs, and physical limitations.*
- 2. In general, Amazon prices will be lower than local retailers and the convenience of buying online with free delivery to your front door are hard to beat.*
- 3. Amazon return policy is far superior to local retailers who are not obligated to provide a refund.*
- 4. Amazon Customer Reviews provide a better assessment of the product than company advertising and sales pitch.*

Here are local retailers:

ORANGE COUNTY ARCHERY (6 miles) 5% discount with a LW Archery Member ID Card
 25782 Obrero Dr., Mission Viejo, CA 92691 (949) 916-6855
 Mon-Closed, Tues to Fri 1100-6:00, Sat and Sun 10-6:00
 RANGE FEE per hour = **\$25 w/Their Gear, \$10 w/Your Gear, \$1 Target** (LIMITED INVENTORY & QUESTIONABLE EXPERTISE)

HI-TECH ARCHERY (26 miles)
 1912 W. Commonwealth Avenue, Fullerton, CA 92833 (714) 449-9744
 Mon-Closed, Tues to Fri 11:00-7:00, Sat 11:00-6:00, Sun-Closed
 RANGE FEE per hour= **\$10 w/Your Gear, NO Rental Equipment Available, \$1 Target** (SUPERIOR INVENTORY & EXPERTISE)

DICK'S SPORTING GOODS (online)
 Most local stores do NOT carry archery equipment, except in Huntington Beach; however, their online prices are competitive and come with FREE shipping as well. www.dickssportinggoods.com

AMAZON (online)
 VERY Competitively Priced, Quick Delivery, Good Return Policy, Product Reviews by Customers, but availability of items vary from day to day. www.amazon.com

DO NOT BUY USED ARCHERY EQUIPMENT UNLESS YOU HAVE EXPERTISE