



# THE WINNING PLAYBOOK

**ONE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN athlete and agent that stood the test of time is Steve Loy and Phil Mickelson. In 1987, Loy accepted the head coaching position for the Arizona State University (ASU) golf team. Mickelson arrived two years later and, in 1992, turned professional. The successful pairing can't be in doubt.**



## *The Coach and Lefty partner together at The Stone Canyon Club*

ORO VALLEY, ARIZONA: If you type in the term “branding” in the Amazon search box, you’ll find over 3,000 books on the subject. A brand name can be one of a company’s most valuable assets. In order to reinforce and perpetuate their brands, America’s 100 biggest advertisers spent over \$100 billion last year marketing their products.

The golf industry is not immune to the power of branding. All major golf equipment companies carefully track how their company is perceived by the public.

During the early days of the PGA TOUR, branding was more or less an afterthought. Tour players, at most, would endorse an equipment company with a logo on their golf bag. As tournaments received television coverage, golf and non-golf companies realized the marketing potential of logos on shirts and visors. Now, it is a rarity to see a professional golfer without multiple logos adorning their wardrobe.

Phil Mickelson is one of the most prized PGA TOUR players for endorsements. His charisma, raw skill (he has

won more than \$75 million in prize money), and family-man reputation made him the gold standard.

### *A DYNAMIC DUO*

Mickelson’s success off the golf course can be traced to his agent, Steve Loy, nicknamed “Coach.” Over the past 25 years, Loy has been Mickelson’s coach, caddy, agent, business partner, and close friend.

“What people think they know about who Phil is, multiply his grace, kindness, and loyalty by ten and you have who he really is. Oh, by the way, he is truly a great business partner as well as my client.” smiled Loy.

“We are constantly on the go. Since Phil turned pro, golf has become much more globally connected. I know it is somewhat of a cliché, but we really have to run a 24/7 operation to tend the Mickelson brand. It is a tremendous responsibility with its ups and downs. I love it and feel blessed to have the opportunity.”

Mickelson developed his first golf course in Arizona



An artist rendering of the clubhouse

**“STONE CANYON SITS on the most remarkable desert site I’ve ever seen. It is an awesome piece of land.”** – JAY MORRISH, GOLF COURSE ARCHITECT

**MEMBERS AT The Stone Canyon Club have reciprocal privileges at The Rim Golf Club and Chaparral Pines in Payson, Arizona, – two courses also owned by Phil Mickelson.**



almost two decades ago. “We designed it and still own it to this day,” said Loy. “We don’t operate a build it and leave business.”

“Golf is still economically challenged in *all* areas,” advised Loy. “It is a competitive landscape that will have its fair share of winners and losers. So with our financial muscle, business expertise, and strong brand, we decided to increase the number of golf clubs under ownership.”

“One club on our radar for several years was Stone Canyon, about 20 minutes to the north of Tucson,” said Loy. “It is in the high growth corridor of Oro Valley and has one of the top private golf courses in the Western United States. The original developer never lived up to his original promises, and the community languished.”

Loy and Mickelson partnered together in a 50/50 ownership of The Stone Canyon Club.

“Legacy matters to us,” said Loy. “Stone Canyon is

that good. Jay Morrish did a superb job. The surrounding hillsides are dotted with huge rock formations unlike anywhere I have seen,” described Loy. “I call them boulders on steroids.”

*Golf Digest* currently rates The Stone Canyon Club the 4th Best Course in Arizona and a Top-100 Best Practice Facility in America.

Mickelson’s first reaction was equally complimentary. “Coach, you were wrong! You told me it was one of the prettiest desert courses in Arizona. It is the prettiest.”

#### **QUALITY IS JOB NO. 1**

When couples consider relocating, one of their tough decisions is whether to own dual residences. “There are always trade-offs in the process,” said Terri Ernest, member at The Stone Canyon Club. “When my wife Cathy and I considered moving from Michigan to the Southwest, we

wrestled with the dramatic change in lifestyle. Since we didn’t have family in Dearborn, we had no personal attachments tearing us into two directions.

“My career was spent at Ford Motor Company,” continued Terri. “We lived in Mexico for several years while overseeing Ford’s maquiladoras and became familiar with Arizona. At first, we thought we would end up in Scottsdale. It was impressive, but not a fit for us. We spent a long time looking. We didn’t base our decision on a weekend introductory trip.

“We wanted a private golf club. When we heard about Stone Canyon, we drove down for a look,” said Terri. “The course wasn’t completed yet and, during the tour, our Lincoln Navigator got stuck on a boulder! As the real estate agent pondered what to do, Cathy turned to me and said, ‘Look around. What other place looks like this?’” “One of my concerns was whether we would fit into a

club of this ilk,” said Cathy. “We made a decision I highly recommend to everyone. After we purchased our home-site, we delayed building for a year. The time allowed us to validate whether we made the right decision before committing significant resources into construction.”

Stone Canyon’s 25,000 square-foot, Erik Peterson designed clubhouse opens this month.

“We have been waiting years for the clubhouse,” explained Cathy. “When we heard there may be a change in ownership, we became apprehensive. Uncertainty is never a good thing. The Mickelson organization has delivered on every promise and the opening of our new clubhouse starts a new chapter in our club’s history. They are an ownership group who knows how to run a club.” ■

*For more information on The Stone Canyon Club, please contact [StoneCanyon.com](http://StoneCanyon.com).*