



# MYTHS AND MISCONCEPTIONS

DUNCAN BUSBY BREAKS DOWN SOME OF THE RUMOURS THAT CAN SURROUND COMPOUND ARCHERY

Over the many years I've been involved in this sport I've seen compound archery grow in popularity across the world. Attitudes towards this once new and overlooked discipline have evolved so much that compound archery now commands the largest international prize funds in most professional tournaments.

It hasn't, however, always been the smoothest of rides. Though compound archers no longer suffer the same exclusions and restrictions of the past, there are still misconceptions about this discipline that continue to accusingly follow what has become known as the 'dark side' of archery.

I've been looking into the various myths that surround compound archery to expose the truth behind them, with the hope that a little more understanding will help to further boost the popularity and acceptance of what should be seen as the most progressive form of the sport. So here are some of the most common criticisms I continue to hear about compound archery ...

## "COMPOUND ARCHERY IS 'CHEATING' BECAUSE IT'S TOO EASY"

Many recurve and traditional archers believe that the technology of a compound bow removes any of the skill needed to make an accurate

shot, but skill is still required to use it to your advantage; an increase in technology can be just as much an impediment as a benefit if it's misunderstood or used in unfavourable conditions.

Whereas it is true that compound archers benefit from a peep sight and magnifying lens, lighting in particular is critical to your results.

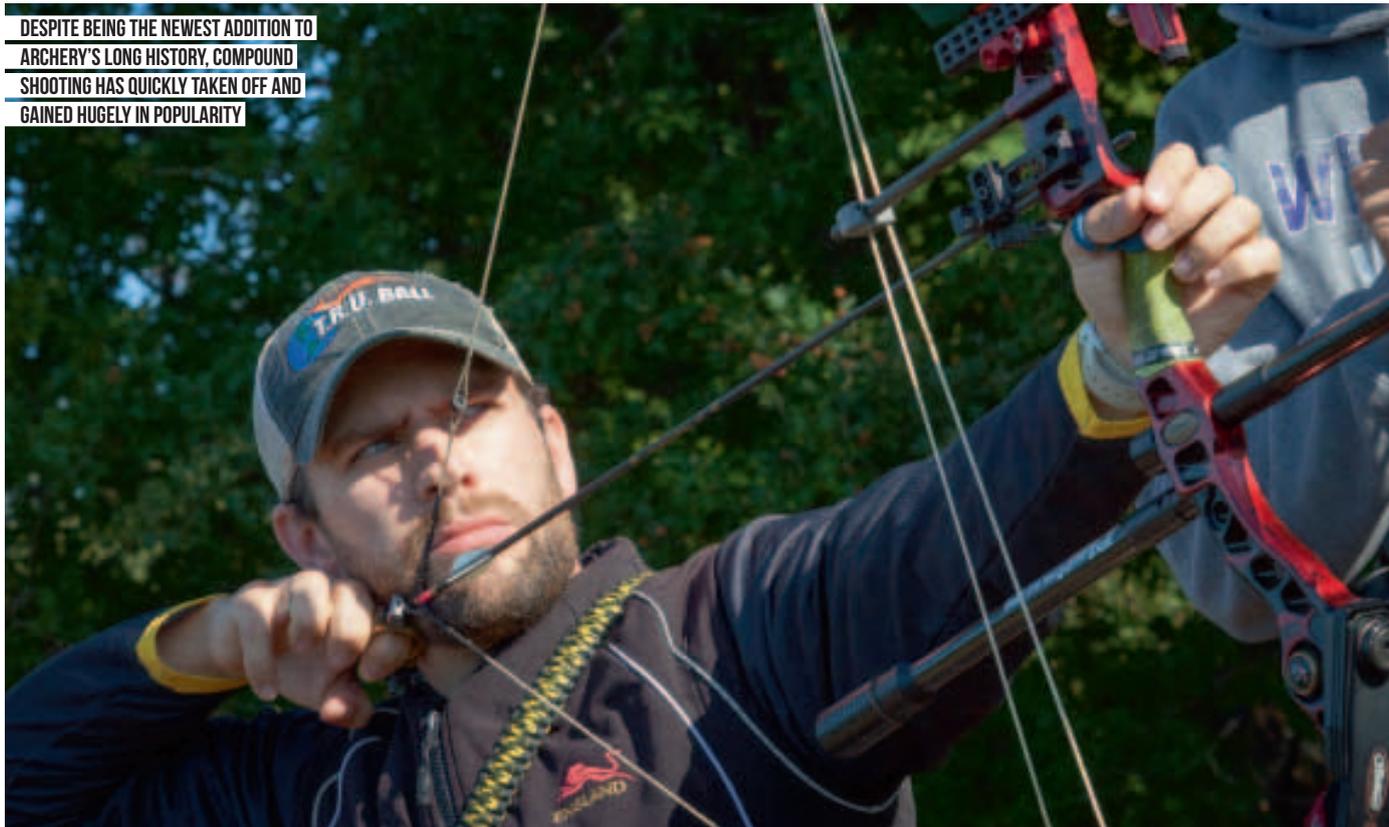
Badly-lit sports halls play havoc indoors and can cause visibility issues up at the target, and it can also make your front and rear sights difficult to align which can further lead to problems with your reference point. Strong light can hinder outdoor shooters too, as you are susceptible to glare from your lens, so contending with these issues are skills all compound archers must learn.

Compound shooters also benefit from the use of release aids which can enable a cleaner, more consistent shot, but the importance of a well-executed release is no less fundamental than it is with a recurve; simply stabbing at the trigger will lead to poor results, so learning a controlled and smooth shot execution is vital in maintaining consistency.

It is believed that a compound bow's fixed draw length and let-off provide the archer with an unfair advantage, but the critical nature of a compound bow means that unless these are set correctly they will

ARCHERY IS A SPORT FOR ALL AND AS SUCH WE ARE ALL IMPORTANT

DESPITE BEING THE NEWEST ADDITION TO ARCHERY'S LONG HISTORY, COMPOUND SHOOTING HAS QUICKLY TAKEN OFF AND GAINED HUGE IN POPULARITY



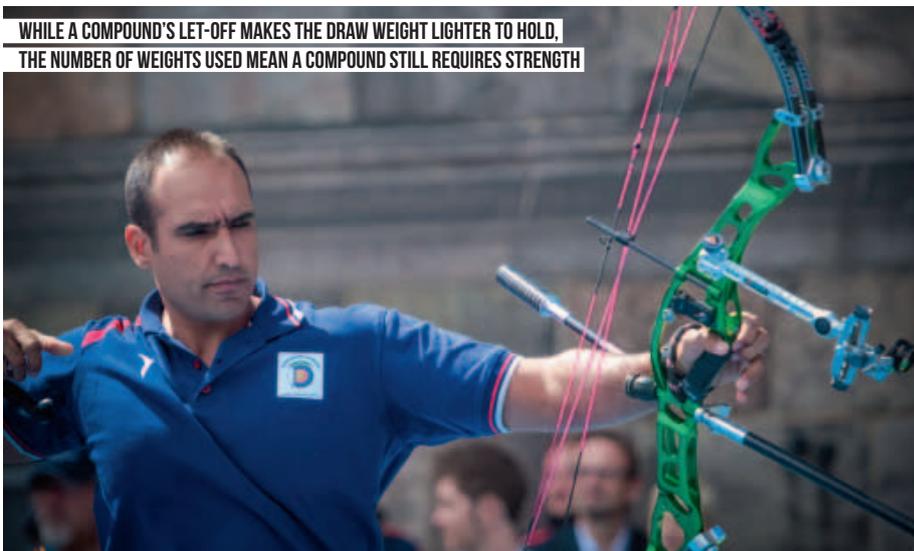
ultimately be of detriment to your results. The stops on the cam should make it easier to maintain a consistent and comfortable draw, but setting your draw length isn't always simple, especially because it can differ from bow to bow. Shooting with your cams out of alignment can cause frustration as well, particularly when your bow is once again producing inconsistent and confusing results. While the let-off given by the cams does allow you to shoot a heavier draw weight and aim for longer, a lighter holding weight can make compound archers susceptible to aiming problems, especially in windy conditions, so extra attention must be put into your stabilisation and mental game to avoid this.

Just as with a recurve, a compound still needs to be set up and tuned correctly in order for it to perform well; there's just more to learn with a compound bow. There are no short cuts or easy solutions, and badly set up or poorly used equipment will only ever be a disadvantage.

### **“YOU DON'T NEED TO PRACTICE WITH A COMPOUND”**

Despite the added technology on a compound bow it's still important to shoot with a correct and consistent technique, and practice is the only way to achieve this. A compound archer needs to shoot the same number of arrows as a recurver in order to learn and refine their shooting form; the lower holding weight and easier draw cycle of a compound bow

WHILE A COMPOUND'S LET-OFF MAKES THE DRAW WEIGHT LIGHTER TO HOLD, THE NUMBER OF WEIGHTS USED MEAN A COMPOUND STILL REQUIRES STRENGTH



won't carry an archer through bad form or technique.

It may also surprise you to know that many of the world's top compound archers practice just as much as their recurve counterparts in order to build up strength – the process to build up muscle memory is the same no matter what sport you are taking part in. Additionally, as most compound archers add significant amounts of weight to their bow and stabilisers to counteract the effects of a lower holding weight it means that you need a different kind of strength to that of a recurve archer, one that allows you to hold a considerably weighty piece of equipment out

in front while you aim as steadily as possible.

So where it is true that it takes less time for a compound archer to progress to a reasonably competent level, it takes just as much time and effort for them to reach the top of their game and maintain this level with practice as it does a recurve archer.

### **“EVERY ARCHER SHOULD FIRST LEARN TO SHOOT WITH A RECURVE BOW BEFORE THEY MOVE OVER TO COMPOUND”**

Some archery coaches believe that it is easier to learn correct shooting form and technique with a recurve bow, but I argue that a good compound technique will share many

similarities to that of a recurve. Maintaining good placement to the target and creating solid skeletal alignment are the foundations of both disciplines. Clear and knowledgeable instruction is the only important factor in learning how to shoot; good coaching will allow you to learn correct shooting form with a compound, just as much as poor coaching can lead a recurve archer to shoot badly. Unfortunately there seems to be less compound-specific coaching available, which can lead many compound archers having to improvise and developing problems as a consequence.

I've often heard the line 'a good recurve archer can shoot a compound well, but a good compound archer can't shoot well with a recurve' but this is not strictly true. Although a compound bow will allow you to achieve competent results fairly immediately, good shooting form and technique are vital to achieving significant progress with a compound in the long term. Though the basic shooting technique is similar for both disciplines, the finer parts of the shooting process are very individual to the bow and the archer and time is needed to learn to do these well.

I started shooting with a compound immediately after my beginners' course and have never spent any time shooting a recurve bow, but I don't feel that this has held me back in any way. I have had to work hard to develop my shooting form over the years, but so has any archer who shoots at a high level whatever their discipline may be.

### "COMPOUND ARCHERY IS LESS IMPORTANT THAN RECURVE BECAUSE IT'S NOT IN THE OLYMPICS"

I realise that this is a very political point but it is something I have come across so many times I've decided to approach it here.

As many archers know, the Olympics generate a lot of media interest and subsequently they bring in a large amount of financial investment. It's also a great platform on which to showcase top level sports and drive interest at a grass roots level, so it's important that archery is included.

Though compound archery appears in the Paralympics and it proves to be as popular as recurve from a spectators' point of view, it's not yet included in the able-bodied event and as such receives less funding and interest. But compound archery has an ever-increasing following and many sponsors are seeing the opportunity for investment at other events; the growing numbers of international compound archers that promote our sport and win the medals that help to keep their governing bodies running are just as important to our sport as their recurve counterparts.

The unnecessary division between the two disciplines creates a fragmented sport, and only when the unique strengths and importance of every discipline is recognised will we be able to fully capitalise on what we already know – that archery is a sport for all and as such we are all important.



A RELEASE AID CAN ENABLE A CLEANER, MORE CONSISTENT SHOT, BUT STILL NEEDS PRACTICE FOR AN ARCHER TO USE ONE EFFECTIVELY

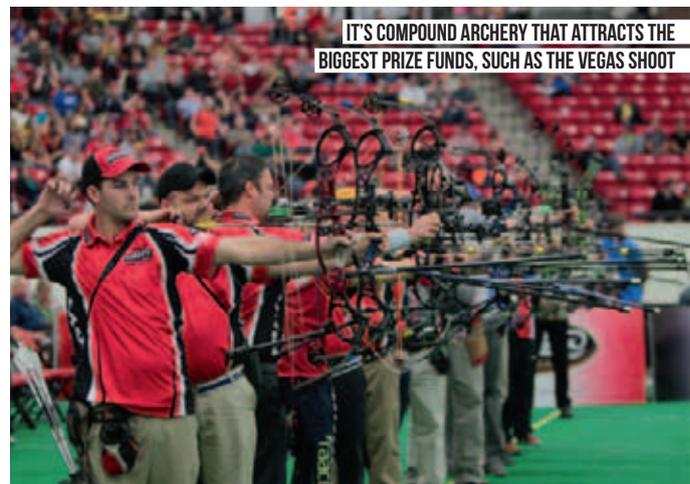
These arguments are only a few examples of the many I've heard over the years and I'm in no doubt that compound archery and its position within the sport will continue to generate debate. I hope in addressing them, at least from a compound archer's viewpoint, that I've helped to dispel some of the more unfair criticisms and demonstrated that, as we've all developed from the same ancient discipline, we really aren't that different. Compound archery is still developing and advancements in design and technology are being made every year; compared to longbow and recurve archery it's still in its infancy, but it's come a long way. Compound archery deserves respect and recognition, after all, what other sports are criticised for modernising? We don't think any less of Lewis Hamilton's talent for not driving a classic car!

Every discipline of archery helps to keep this sport growing and none are any more or less important than the others, so enjoy the sport and support your fellow archer whatever discipline they choose to shoot. ☺

[www.duncanbusbyarchery.com](http://www.duncanbusbyarchery.com)



A PART OF THE PARALYMPIC GAMES, COMPOUND ARCHERY PROVED IT COULD DRAW THE CROWDS JUST AS WELL AS ITS RECURVE COUNTERPART



IT'S COMPOUND ARCHERY THAT ATTRACTS THE BIGGEST PRIZE FUNDS, SUCH AS THE VEGAS SHOOT