

# The draw of archery

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The arrow ricocheted around the narrow range, coming to rest far from the target. OK, so it had been a long time since I'd shot a bow. Something about it kept me shooting.

"It's very addicting," said **Rhonda Crabtree**, owner of Glendale's Corner Archery and my tutor for the afternoon.

Photos and plaques and what looked like super-long arrows hung on the walls around us. Crabtree explained the oddities are called Robin Hoods - when an arrow splits the shaft of an arrow already in the target. These were trophies, each marked with the archer's name and the date.

The one directly in front of me belonged to Crabtree, an archer since she was 10 and a bow hunter involved with a 3-D league that resumes in October at El Oso Park.

After a few more rather pathetic rounds with the recurve, a growing bruise on my forearm evidence of poor form, Crabtree suggested I switch to a compound bow.

A recurve, a simple bow with a single string, is the form used at the Olympics. A compound bow uses a system of pulleys and cables to produce a substantial drop-off in the draw weight, or the amount of force needed to pull the bowstring back. Many hunters favor compounds; it takes much less effort to hold a compound bow at full draw.

Recurves still rule at **Diné College**, but **Greg Redhouse**, coach at the Tsailie campus, said the team will incorporate compounds this year.

This year marks the 30th anniversary of the team at Diné, formerly known as Navajo Community College, the only college in the state with a full-fledged archery team.

There are not enough teams in the United States to support separate competition of two- and four-year colleges, so Diné, fourth in the country, competes against some big-name colleges. At the U.S. Intercollegiate Archery Championships in May, the women's team beat Stanford on its way to fourth place, and the men defeated UCLA but lost to Texas A&M in the gold-medal round.

"Archery is 90 percent mental and 10 percent physical," Redhouse said. "You're using your subconscious and conscious mind to react to the equipment."

That equipment can be a big question for those wanting to get started in archery. Many stores rent range time, and a few, such as Trailhead Outdoors, 3110 N. 35th Ave., rent equipment.

Redhouse suggests getting to know the sport a little before purchasing anything other than very inexpensive equipment; Crabtree recommends a lesson or two at the shop where you buy your bow and then joining friends or organized shoots to practice.

Either way, equipment must be tailored to the archer. Posture and body dimensions determine the best draw length and arrow size. A recurve can run from \$30 to more than \$1,200, compounds from \$300 to \$1,500.

A \$30-\$70 commitment is likely all parents will want to make at the start.

"The kids that come in and they've seen *Lord of the Rings*, the Olympics, stuff on TV, their parents don't want to make the investment," Crabtree said.