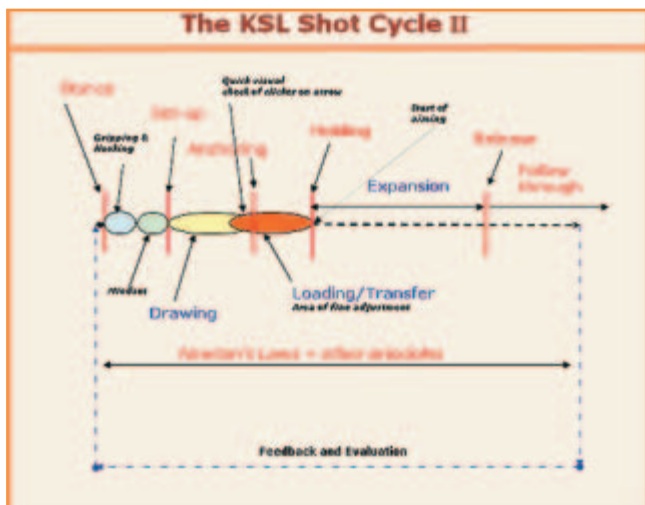


WE MUST ACCEPT THAT ANY TEACHING SYSTEM DEVELOPS and will be refined over time and explanations of the methods will change to provide for clearer understanding; however, the underlying principles do not change. Through the numerous questions raised by his audience at his various lectures, including his archers at the Olympic Training Center at Chula Vista, Coach Lee has been given a better insight into some of the difficulties experienced by some in the understanding of his teachings. He has developed a variety of ways to provide a clearer understanding and implementation of his knowledge and experience. In this article I will try to highlight some of the developments since the first and second editions of **Total Archery**. Using the KSL Shot Cycle, reproduced below, as the basis, I will try to highlight some of the finer points of the various steps, not contained in **Total Archery**.



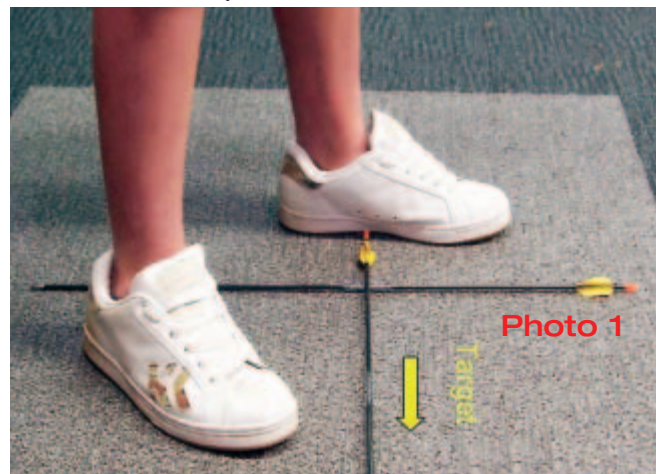
The B.E.S.T. method can be likened to a necklace; if one link is missing, things do not connect. Therefore, the B.E.S.T. system must be seen as a total system for optimum performance.

### The Stance

Lately there has been a lot of talk about and questions raised regarding the Koreans having changed to a square stance, rather than the open stance as advocated in **Total Archery**. In a recent international tournament in Australia I noted that, of the eight Korean lady archers, only one lady archer shot with an open stance and the others were basically square or nearly

square. Why? Firstly, let me make it clear again that the B.E.S.T. method is not modeled on the Korean style of archery, but is based on biomechanics. However, to consider this in some greater detail, in Korea, as in most other countries, beginners are started with the square stance, as it is the easiest to duplicate. It puts the shoulders in line with the target, whilst with the open stance, more often than not, the shoulders stay open to the target, being a poor biomechanical alignment and more difficult to achieve proper back tension. Further, it is easier for equal weight distribution, as an open stance can favor more weight on the front foot, which in itself is not all bad.

As stated before, it is an easier stance to reproduce and will in all probability, for most archers, give less possibility of variation from shot to shot than an open stance. However, a square stance is for obvious reasons less stable in windy conditions.



Coach Lee encourages an open stance (see *Photo 1*), as it has more advantages than drawbacks when compared to the square stance. It allows for a squarer face onto the target, which neurologically provides for a stronger bow arm, as demonstrated many times by Coach Lee during his lectures. In addition, it allows for more of a side anchor without interference of the chin on release and allows the drawing elbow to come more in line with the arrow, providing for a stronger and consistent shot and better overall posture and alignment (see *Photos 2 and 3*). Therefore, biomechanically, it is a better stance.

Posture, being part of the stance, is what we could

# The Evolution of B.E.S.T.

by Robert deBondt

call the critical column of the house. Good posture provides power and strength. The old notion of standing “tall”, head back and chest out is biomechanically weak, as the center of gravity is elevated and too much weight is on the heels. Think about it, if a boxer would stand tall, chest out and weight more towards heels than balls of his feet; the first good punch would sit



Ha Neul, Kim



Park Sung Hyun—  
WR 1405 FITA Round

him on the canvas. The B.E.S.T. method doesn't say you have to lean forward, but if you bring the head position slightly forward, chest down and “tail” in, it will fix the posture. Also note the tilt of the hips. This posture is biomechanically stronger and will reduce/prevent lower back pain, suffered by many archers.

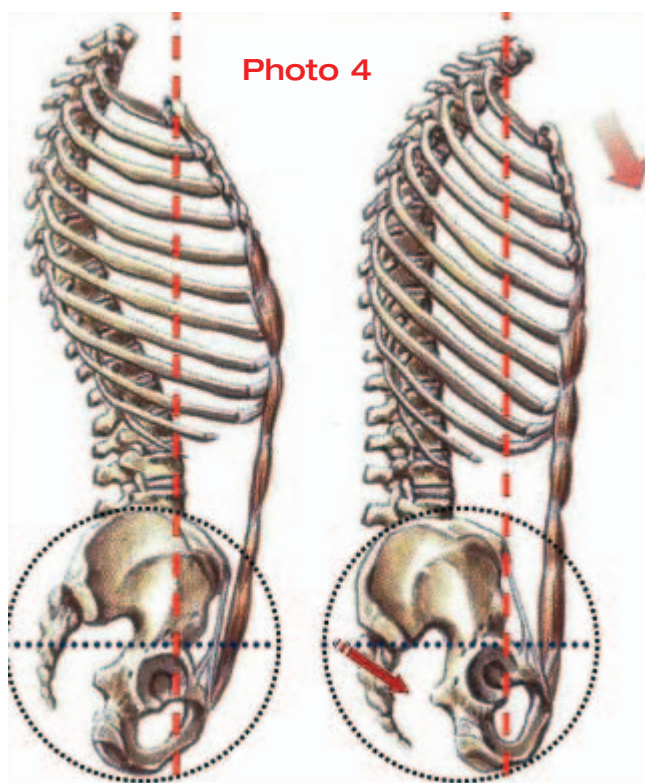
I won't detail every step here, as these are described and featured in detail in **Total Archery** and also on our web site [www.kslinternationalarchery.com](http://www.kslinternationalarchery.com). However, I will highlight differences or provide additional information for the various steps.

### The Set-up

Check points before Set-up (see Photo 5) are:

- Gripping & Hooking
- Open stance and hip alignment
- Chest down
- “Tail” in

It is recommended that the final finger pressure on the string should be at least 40% on the index finger and maximum 50% on middle finger with the ring finger taking up the remainder. It is easier to tell the archer to have an equal load of 40/40 on index and middle finger and 20% on the ring finger. This is a



Bad posture (left) and good posture (right) are related to the angle of the hips.

slight departure from recommendations 30/50/20 in **Total Archery**. Please note that this change in pressure distribution has, at this stage, not as yet been scientifically tested, however, Coach Lee has found this revised pressure distribution in practical application to be more consistent and repeatable.

The set-up should be at about eye level. A little lower is okay, but it must be above shoulders (see Photo 6 next page).

Points to check after set-up are:

- Low shoulders
- Shoulder alignment



Continued on the Next Page



- Posture
- Ready for draw with core muscles
- Relaxed hands
- Tight draw arm triceps to ensure front shoulder does not move

### Drawing

It is important to set the head position with no leaning back. Once the head is set, that is where it stays throughout the shot. If you move your head during the draw you will lose control of the shot. Ensure when starting the draw to set the rear shoulder more behind. To demonstrate this, draw whilst facing a mirror head on. The rear scapula should be seen by the archer when at full draw. Do not draw directly to the chin as this will “break” the draw wrist and put more tension in the wrist area. It will also promote leaning away from the target. The string does not yet need to be lined up. You do not have to be careful with the draw at this point, as there is no aiming involved yet.

### Loading/Anchor/Transfer/Holding

*The Loading, Anchor, and Transfer to Holding* are most important steps as most archers do not achieve Holding. Holding is essential to be able to consistently per-



form well under pressure, especially during match play.

*Loading to Anchoring* The draw scapula must be set back and down and “locked” from the end of Loading to Anchoring. The draw scapula must stay down, as many archers when raising the draw hand to their anchor position, will also raise their draw scapula (see *Photo 7 below left*).

If we assume back tension to be 100% just prior to release, then back tension, which must be controlled from the Set-up, would be, say 60% at Set-up and about 80% at Loading. I must clarify this to say that Coach Lee doesn’t mean the intensity to be 100%, but to highlight the differences between the steps.

As already stated, the preference is for a side



anchor to achieve a better face-on head position to the target (see *Photo 8*). This will also provide for a stronger and better controlled bow arm.

*Transfer* When you pull back the bow you will have to use a certain amount of hand and forearm, as you just cannot pull the string back with your back muscles alone. Therefore, transfer means that the tension in the hand and forearm needs to be transferred to the core muscles. Visualize the draw fingers being connected to the draw elbow via chains. If we divide the body in two, parallel to the shooting plane, then the tension in the front half needs to be transferred as much as possible to the core muscles in the back. Without this transfer we can never come to the Holding to be able to go from a linear to an angular movement. Transfer can be seen as a type of commitment to the shot.

*Holding/Expansion/Release/Followthrough* are the final stages of the shot and will be looked at in greater detail in the next article.