



# The Female Factor

By Katie Haymes

## The Waiting Game

**W**aiting is something we all have to do from time to time. I am not talking about “waiting on a woman” like Brad Paisley sings about, though I am sure there is a handful of you that have experienced that. I am talking about the waiting we endure in general everyday life. For instance, it could be in a checkout line, for paint to dry, for the laundry to be done, for a bus to arrive or on a bench while your kid plays at the park or has soccer practice. Whatever you are waiting for, isn’t it nice to have a comfortable place to wait and something to help pass the time?

Let’s put this in the context of a retail shop: particularly those that offer lessons, offer leagues, hold fun shoots or host other events at which there might be parents or participants “waiting” around. Do the guests have a comfortable space to wait? If they are already archers or bowhunters, they likely love having a few spare minutes to explore your shop and new products while they wait. What about the parents or babysitters that aren’t archers, though? Do you have something to help keep them busy and a space for them to hang out? Odds are they won’t meander around your shop, as they probably don’t know much about archery or what to look for. It could be a short 10 minute wait or an hour-long lesson. Either way, it seems like a great opportunity to begin educating them about archery, your shop and maybe even bowhunting. Why not? They have nothing else to do. Then again, they may have work but I am sure they would enjoy a break and everyone needs an excuse to put their phone down for a few minutes.



*No chairs? No problem! Parents lug these folding chairs all over to other sporting events, practices and picnics. Let them know you have room and that they can bring one along if they like.*



*Have reading materials available for parents and kids as they wait. Resources like the ATA’s Explore Bowhunting Student Handbook could help introduce and interest non-hunter customers to the sport.*

Unless you have a rule in place stating it is mandatory for parents to stay during the lesson, the moms (or dads) likely have a choice to make. They could stay until it is over or they could run errands. My gut tells me even if you don’t have that rule in place, you would want to have a few amenities on-site to make the stay of those that choose to more enjoyable. Keep in mind these parents may have more kids than the one in your lesson and these kids might be tagging along too.

First of all, if there is no place for the guests to wait, odds are they won’t stay. Not having a place is a good tactic if you don’t want them to stay but honestly, it is not very customer friendly. I have sat in my car in the parking lot on a number of occasions waiting on someone due to the fact that there was no place for me to wait inside. I opted to not stand awkwardly against the wall or sit on the floor. A designated “waiting place” could literally be a section of wall lined with chairs or simply a designated space for parents to park their own chairs. Think about other sports. Parents lug folding camp chairs all over the place and I am sure they would be happy to bring them along if there were a spot to put them. Just be sure to let the parents know when they sign their kids up for the class that they are welcome to bring a chair and stay to watch.

If you have the space for a small table or two, a basic beverage station (a water jug or coffee) and an accessible Wi-Fi network, those would all be welcomed by your guests as well. Lastly and likely most importantly, you should have a functioning and clean bathroom. Not only is this great to



**A quick game of “what is this” to test someone’s knowledge can help pass the time and build the interest and confidence of those waiting. A bow and accessories could be attached to the wall in the waiting area.**

have for your store customers but if you plan to have people in your shop for any length of time, including participants in a class, this would be essential.

We have established the need for a space for parents (possibly with kids) to wait. What now? They could play on their phones or watch the lesson but why not engage them in something archery-related that might benefit you in the long run? Hopefully, some of the following ideas you will find useful, might spark your creative mind, will help your guests

pass the time and may even create another archer or two.

**R e a d i n g** materials. Have reading materials accessible to the seating area. These materials could range from books and magazines to field guides or articles you have come across and printed to share. This is an opportunity to control the content available for reading. I wouldn’t suggest putting all of your outdoor magazines there, as it is likely many guests won’t be hunters (yet). However, you may want to subtly introduce

bowhunting in a friendly, conservation-minded way. Get a few copies of the Explore Bowhunting Student Handbook to set out. It is full of skills, equipment, tips and tricks that help engage someone new to the sport. You can get a copy by contacting the ATA directly at (866) 266-2776.

**Local events.** Have you heard of local archery events and opportunities coming up at nearby schools, archery clubs or parks? If they provide a flyer, make sure it is posted somewhere or out on a table for parents to take note of. If their kids love archery (and they will thanks to your lessons), the parents will always be on the lookout for more opportunities.

**Test their archery knowledge.** Why? Many parents want to better understand the sport their child is playing so they can help them practice and succeed. They may even want to participate themselves. For instance, my dad had never watched a soccer game until we kids began playing in a recreational league. He started reading and absorbing information from our coaches and ended up becoming our coach through middle and high school. He practiced with us too, which means he bought equipment. A knowledge test could be as simple as having a bow’s parts labeled with letters and paper and pens on hand for participants to write down the part’s name and correlating letter. There are also a number of “archery quizzes” found in a quick Google search on a number of topics such as range safety, archery in the movies, archery history and more. Make sure you provide an answer key, though or that is what you will become.

**Help those waiting explore your shop and all it has to offer.** I am not saying you need to offer guided tours but a scavenger hunt would do the trick. Provide a list of items that one must find and take a picture of as proof in return for a small incentive. Maybe you could have parents find a pack of field tips, a rest, bow cases or a trail camera. These items could even be aligned with the class their kids were there taking as equipment they might need or gift ideas. This will allow parents to get a feel for your shop’s “lay of the land” and may help them feel more comfortable and confident enough to make future purchases on their own. Plus, they might leave with a handful of ideas of what to get.

**Board games.** If you are going to have a few games on hand for kids (and big kids at heart) to play while they wait, they might as well be hunting- or game-animal-related, right? The White’s Tale and Whitetailopoly are two board games that are just that and both can be purchased online with a quick search of the title.

I hope this quick article has reminded you of the moms and dads that sign their kids up, purchase equipment and wait for their kids to take lessons. It would be wise to consider how welcoming your shop is to them during their time there. Maybe a few “waiting games” would make it that much more enjoyable for them and your register.

**Editor’s Note:** Katie Haymes has a degree in wildlife science and worked for four years for the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife. She was the Education Programs Manager at the Archery Trade Association (ATA) before leaving that position this spring to spend more time with her young daughter Lacie and husband Caleb. The Haymes family now lives in Virginia.

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