Lawrence “LJ” Cirillo uses Audio-Technica BP28L Line



An odd thing happened to golf on television in the last two years. Golf broadcasts have generally had plenty of background noise, as the sport brought spectators close to the action at each hole, creating mini “stadiums” for onlookers. But then Covid came along and banished those crowds, leaving golf with a virtual blank audio canvas for its natural sound effects, such as birds and crickets, but also clearing the way to listen in on strategy conversations between golfers and caddies on challenging greens. But that opportunity required unique tools – namely, a better shotgun microphone, to capture all of the newfound sound. Enter the new Audio-Technica BP28L Line + Gradient Large Diaphragm Condenser Microphone, a solution chosen by an increasing number of leading broadcast audio professionals, and the new go-to long-distance audio capture tool for Lawrence “LJ” Cirillo, a veteran golf broadcast mixer.

Cirillo, who has been working on golf broadcasts for most of his 35-year career in television sound, first encountered the BP28L shotgun mics at a golf event in Japan during the pandemic. In fact, that same pandemic’s supply-chain disruptions are what brought Cirillo and the BP28L microphones together in the first place. His previous go-to shotgun mics that he had relied upon for years were unavailable. Instead, he reached out to Audio-Technica, who was able to source their new BP28L product. He and his crew had to make a few minor adjustments, such as modifying the windscreens, to reduce the microphone’s overall footprint for use as the “landing” mics on greens and dual mono mics on tee-boxes (two techniques that he himself pioneered), but from its first moments on the course, he knew he had discovered his new golf shotgun. “I was floored!” says Cirillo “I kept pushing the fader and more of the sound I wanted kept coming through. Sounds that were off-axis were quiet but natural. That’s because the BP28L, in my opinion, has a lower noise floor than any shotgun microphone on the market today, allowing the audio

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mixer to increase gain with minimal self-noise.”

Cirillo has been a fan of A-T’s transducers for years. “I use Audio-Technica’s AT4050ST stereo mics at the 127-degree internal setting,” he notes. “They help create the fullest, sweetest sound and can handle the threshold of a Ryder Cup roar, which is the biggest explosion of sound in golf.” Cirillo has been using Audio-Technica side-address mics for years but didn’t add their shotguns to his arsenal until this year. “The BP28L at The Ryder Cup worked great in tandem with the AT4050ST. The directionality of the shotgun gave the rovers superior control at this emotionally charged event, while the AT4050ST blended nicely to create a big, accurate sound.”

Cirillo continued to embrace the BP28L and chose to use it on more of golf’s signature events, including The Ryder Cup, the Hero Challenge, the PNC Championship and the Opens. “The Ryder Cup provides the most expansive landscape, as there are literally 18 mini stadiums,” he says. Two of the BP28Ls are used as landing mics, picking up the plop of the ball as it hits the green, a role they’ll be playing in his kit going forward, he says. “You often have to use processing and microphone choices together to get what you need,” he says. “That’s why I was so happy get hold of those BL28L shotguns. They get me around the wind noise and the ‘Ryder Cup roar’ like other shotguns can’t.”

At the Hero Challenge in the Bahamas, the course’s limited gallery and wealth of natural sound provided a real canvas for the BP28L. “I can push the faders to capture more club heads and ball strikes because it is a more pristine environment,” says Cirillo “The BP28L did not disappoint, giving me full sound for every stroke.” One particular achievement of Cirillo’s work using the BP28L was capturing father-and-son duo Tiger Woods and Charlie Axel Woods at the December 2021 PNC Championship in Orlando, where Cirillo’s field A2 had the BP28L follow the pair the whole match. “Our rover could keep a good distance so as not to distract from the dialogue between the father-son pair but still capture a lot of detail,” he explains. “And it definitely did!”

But the 2022 U.S. Open was perhaps the ultimate test, with fans back throughout the course and ready to once again cheer on golfers. “It was the Men’s Open that I wanted them for most of all,” Cirillo says. “I knew the mics had passed The Ryder Cup test, but in all fairness, with a partial crowd and didn’t have quite the noise level that a US Open crowd has. And they passed every test. Even with fans screaming right into the end of it, and crowd roars of immense volume, never once did the mic flinch or come close to distortion of any kind. Despite airplanes and generators and other harsh noises, we still captured conversations between caddies and golfers, even the sounds of putts. It was the greatest test, and the mic passed with flying colors.”

The Audio-Technica BP28 14-inch (355.6 mm) and BP28L 22.4-inch (569 mm) Line + Gradient Large Diaphragm Condenser Microphones combine a large-diaphragm condenser element with a 28-millimeter diameter shotgun design for low-noise

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performance. With tight polar patterns and a patented acoustic port design that maintains directionality across the entire frequency range, these shotgun microphones are specially designed to meet the needs of broadcast, film, television, outdoor recording and theater applications. Particularly suitable for long-distance miking for audio acquisition for film or professional broadcast, BP28 and BP28L offer a highly directional pickup pattern, with the BP28L’s pattern being exceptionally narrow. They provide a flat frequency response and low noise levels (BP28: 8 dB; BP28L: 3 dB) — transformer-coupled outputs that produce a smooth sonic character. Extremely high sensitivity (BP28: -28 dBV; BP28L: -23 dBV), wide dynamic range (135 dB), and high-SPL capability (BP28: 143 dB; BP28L: 138 dB), and they are equipped with a switchable 80 Hz high-pass filter and 10 dB pad. Both. The mics’ rugged housing are made of lightweight, structural-grade aluminum alloy.

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