

VARSITY PROGRAM POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW!

COMMUNICATION WITH COACHES

EMAIL AT SUPPORT@MIKESGOLFCENTER.COM OR CALL OUR OFFICE AT 630-797-5058.

MAKEUPS

MAKEUP WEEKS ARE DESIGNATED "OFF WEEKS" WE DON'T HOLD REGULARLY SCHEDULED CLASSES.
STUDENTS MAY NOT MAKEUP CLASSES ANYTIME ASIDE FROM DURING "MAKEUP WEEKS"
STUDENTS MAY BOOK UP TO 2 MAKEUPS PER "MAKEUP WEEK"

2024/2025 MAKEUP WEEKS

AUGUST 26TH THROUGH SEPTEMBER 2ND
DECEMBER 30TH THROUGH JANUARY 5TH
MARCH 24TH THROUGH APRIL 2ND
MAY 26TH THROUGH JUNE 1ST
AUGUST 25TH THROUGH SEPTEMBER 1ST

2024/2025 INSTRUCTOR HOLIDAYS

AUGUST 31ST THROUGH SEPTEMBER 2ND
NOVEMBER 25TH THROUGH DECEMBER 1ST
DECEMBER 23RD THROUGH JANUARY 1ST
MAY 24TH THROUGH MAY 25TH
JULY 4TH THROUGH JULY 6TH

MEMBERSHIP CANCELATION POLICY

MEMBERSHIPS WILL CONTINUE RECURRING INDEFINITELY UNTIL CANCELLED.
TO CANCEL YOUR MEMBERSHIP YOU MUST EMAIL SUPPORT@MIKESGOLFCENTER.COM

**TRACK YOUR
STUDENTS SKILLS!**

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/11OeXZsVWr8MI1WYFFLaMA_AcLsaFYwhC-TeAjiXuN40/edit

VARSDITY PROGRAM - 12 WEEK ITINERARY

A LOOK INTO OUR WEEKLY ACTIVITIES ITINERARY

COACHING FOCUS

Full Swing

Short Game

Full Swing

Short Game

Full Swing

Short Game

Full Swing

Short Game

Full Swing

Short Game

Full Swing

Short Game

TESTING

Short Game Test

Full Swing Test

Short Game Test

Full Swing Test

Fitness/Rules/Etiquette Test

Full Swing Test

Short Game Test

Full Swing Test

Short Game Test

Full Swing Test

Fitness/Rules/Etiquette Test

Full Swing Test

COACHES FOCUS ON VARIOUS SKILLS WHEN INDIVIDUALLY WORKING WITH EACH STUDENT DURING THE “INSTRUCTION” PORTION OF CLASS.

STUDENTS TAKE VARIOUS SKILLS ASSESSMENTS DURING THE “TESTING” PORTION OF CLASS, STUDENTS COMPLETE TESTING ACTIVITIES.

AT THE END OF CLASS, COACHES INPUT TEST RESULTS INTO OUR “RESULTS TRACKING” SPREADSHEET.

VARSETY PROGRAM COACHING CONCEPTS

A LOOK INTO SOME OF OUR CLASS COACHING TOPICS!

PUTTING CONCEPTS

Clubface controls direction that ball rolls
Constant Tempo, Back/Forward swing same length
Distance Control=most important skill, Focus on where ball stops
Setup- Butt out, Chest down, Elbows bent, Wrists locked
Routine- Mark ball, Read green, Lineup ball, Practice, Setup, Go
Green Reading- Feel slope with feet, Visualize path, Pick aim point

CHIPPING CONCEPTS

Setup= Feet Close, weight forward, shaft leans forward
Don't lift ball, Thump ground to pop ball up
Short follow through, Clubhead stays low
Plan out correct landing zone, Get ball rolling when possible
Change direction and height of ball by twisting clubface at setup

WEDGE/IRON CONCEPTS

Wedge ball position middle/back of stance
Iron ball position middle/front of stance
Weight forward, Ball First Contact, Divot after ball
Minimal wrist hinge, Stay wide, rotate body
Clubface effects the direction the ball starts/curves
Finish in balance with trail foot tapping ground

DRIVER CONCEPTS

Swing Up, Launch ball high, Long full finished swing
Rotational backswing, Core twist creates power
Centered contact, clubface awareness, Understanding Impact
Proper tee height- 1/2 ball above top of club
Driver ball position front of stance, Head tilts behind ball

GOLF COURSE CONCEPTS

Assess the shot- Distance, Potential hazards, Layup spot, etc.
Choose correct club given your situation
Mental Stability- Don't get too high/low emotionally
Process- Stick to gameplan, Think through each shot the same
Scorecard- Keeping score, stats, Scoring terms

FITNESS CONCEPTS

Fine Motor Skills- Juggling, catch/throw, Stick/ball actions
Explosive Movements- Jumping, Shuffling, core twisting
Pushups
Planks
Burpees
Broad Jump

TEST INSTRUCTIONS: 20-40-60-80 IRON TEST

20YDS

40YDS

60YDS

80YDS

SHOT 1

CARRY DISTANCE

CARRY DISTANCE

CARRY DISTANCE

CARRY DISTANCE

SHOT 2

CARRY DISTANCE

CARRY DISTANCE

CARRY DISTANCE

CARRY DISTANCE

SHOT 3

CARRY DISTANCE

CARRY DISTANCE

CARRY DISTANCE

CARRY DISTANCE

SHOT 5

CARRY DISTANCE

CARRY DISTANCE

CARRY DISTANCE

CARRY DISTANCE

SHOT 5

CARRY DISTANCE

CARRY DISTANCE

CARRY DISTANCE

CARRY DISTANCE

SHOT 6

CARRY DISTANCE

CARRY DISTANCE

CARRY DISTANCE

CARRY DISTANCE

AVG

TEST INSTRUCTIONS: DRIVER/7IRON SPEED TEST

DRIVER

7IRON

CLUB SPEED	CLUB SPEED
CLUB SPEED	CLUB SPEED
CLUB SPEED	CLUB SPEED
CLUB SPEED	CLUB SPEED
CLUB SPEED	CLUB SPEED
CLUB SPEED	CLUB SPEED
CLUB SPEED	CLUB SPEED
CLUB SPEED	CLUB SPEED
CLUB SPEED	CLUB SPEED

**DRIVER
AVG SPEED**

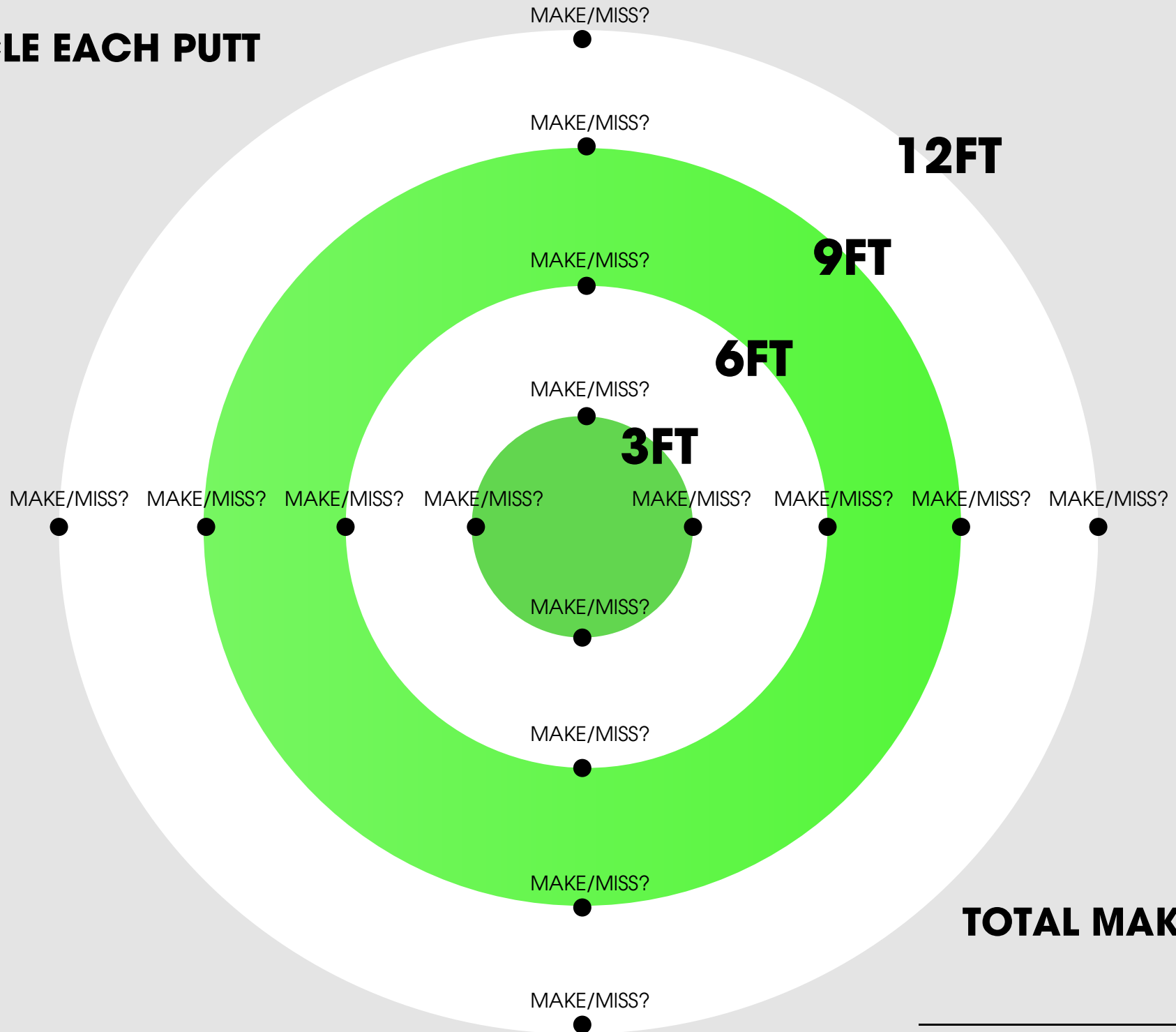
**7IRON
AVG SPEED**

**LONGEST
DRIVE (YDS)**

**LONGEST
7IRON (YDS)**

TEST INSTRUCTIONS: AROUND THE WORLD PUTTING TEST

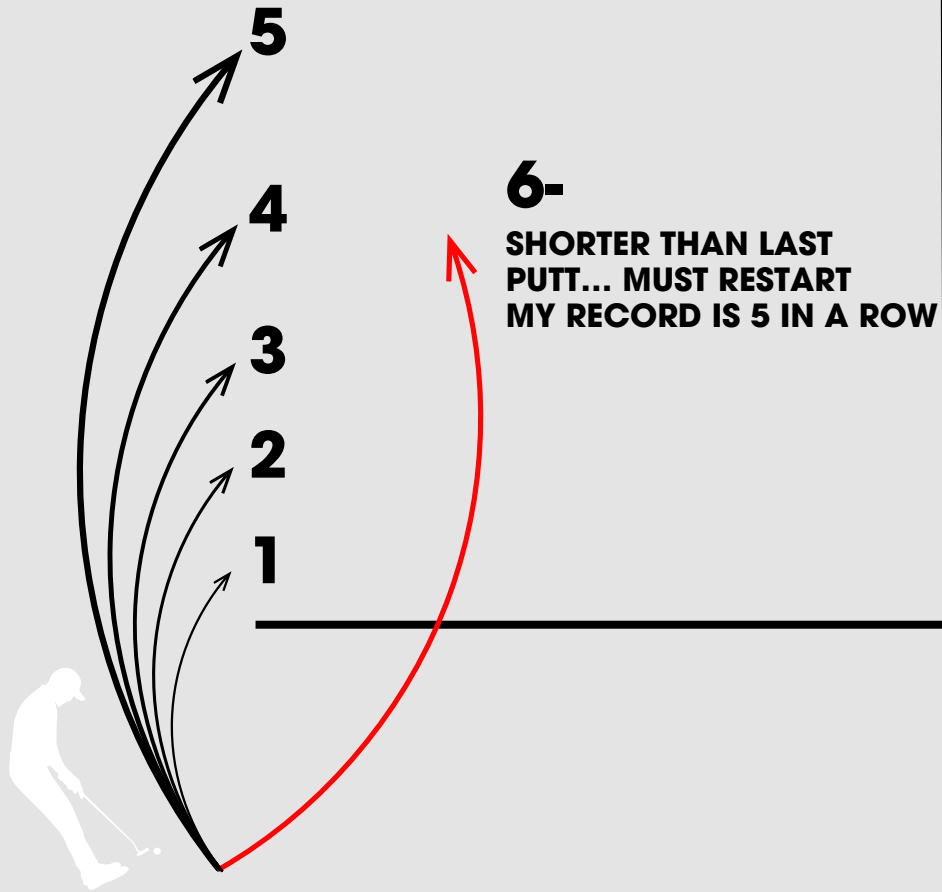
CIRCLE EACH PUTT



TOTAL MAKES

TEST INSTRUCTIONS: LEAPFROG PUTTING TEST

EXAMPLE:



YOU:

**RECORD
"IN A ROW"
BEFORE FAILING**

The diagram shows the 'YOU' side of the test. It features a golfer silhouette on the right, with five black curved arrows representing putts of increasing length, pointing towards the center. A horizontal line is positioned below the text 'BEFORE FAILING'. The entire diagram is set within a coordinate system defined by two horizontal lines and a central vertical line.

TEST INSTRUCTIONS: FITNESS TESTS

PUSHUP TEST- RECORD HOW MANY PUSHUPS IN A ROW YOU COMPLETE (NO BREAKS AND GOOD FORM)

PLANK TEST- RECORD HOW LONG YOU HOLD A PLANK (NO BREAKS AND GOOD FORM)

SIT UP AND THROW TEST- RECORD YOUR FARTHEST THROW AFTER 5 ATTEMPTS (8LB MEDBALL, SITUP AND THEN OVERHEAD THROW THE MEDBALL)

GRIP STRENGTH TEST- RECORD THE MAXIMUM MEASUREMENT ON OUR GRIP STRENGTH DEVICE

BROAD JUMP TEST-

VERTICAL JUMP TEST-

**PUSHUP
TEST**

A large, empty white square box with a black border, intended for recording the results of the Pushup Test.

**PLANK
TEST**

A large, empty white square box with a black border, intended for recording the results of the Plank Test.

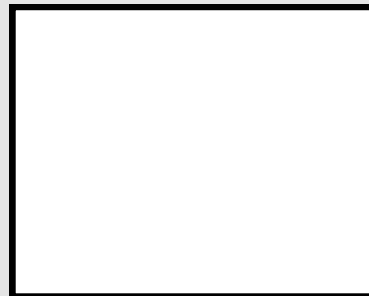
**SIT-UP & THROW
TEST**

A large, empty white square box with a black border, intended for recording the results of the Sit-up & Throw Test.

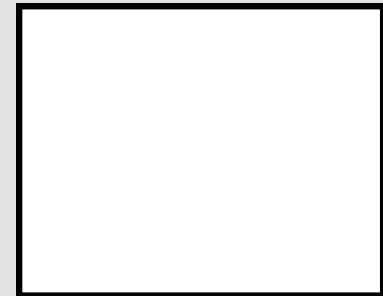
**GRIP STRENGTH
TEST**

A large, empty white square box with a black border, intended for recording the results of the Grip Strength Test.

**BROAD JUMP
TEST**

A large, empty white square box with a black border, intended for recording the results of the Broad Jump Test.

**VERTICAL JUMP
TEST**

A large, empty white square box with a black border, intended for recording the results of the Vertical Jump Test.

TEST INSTRUCTIONS: 9-HOLE CHALLENGE

PLAY 9 HOLES AT HUGHES CREEK- US KIDS WITH DEFAULT SETTINGS AND LIGHT WIND

T
O
T
A
L

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

FAIRWAY HIT? Y/ N
IF FAIRWAY MISSED- L / R?

APPROACH SHOT DISTANCE?
HIT GREEN? Y/ N

IF CHIPPING-
DISTANCE TO PIN?

1ST PUTT DISTANCE TO HOLE

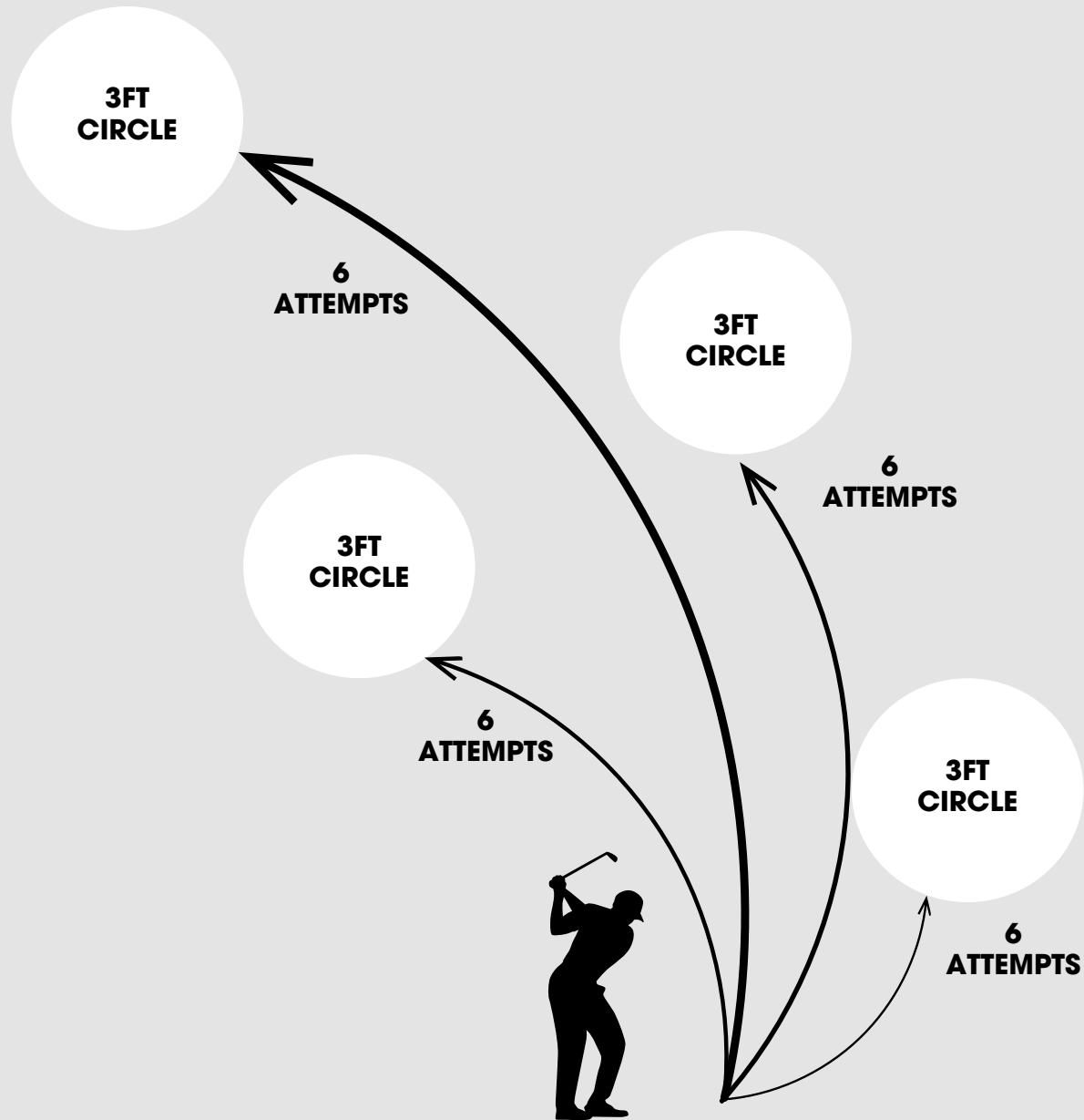
2ND PUTT DISTANCE TO HOLE

SCORE

REFLECT

TEEBOX COLOR / YARDAGE

TEST INSTRUCTIONS: CHIPPING LANDING ZONE



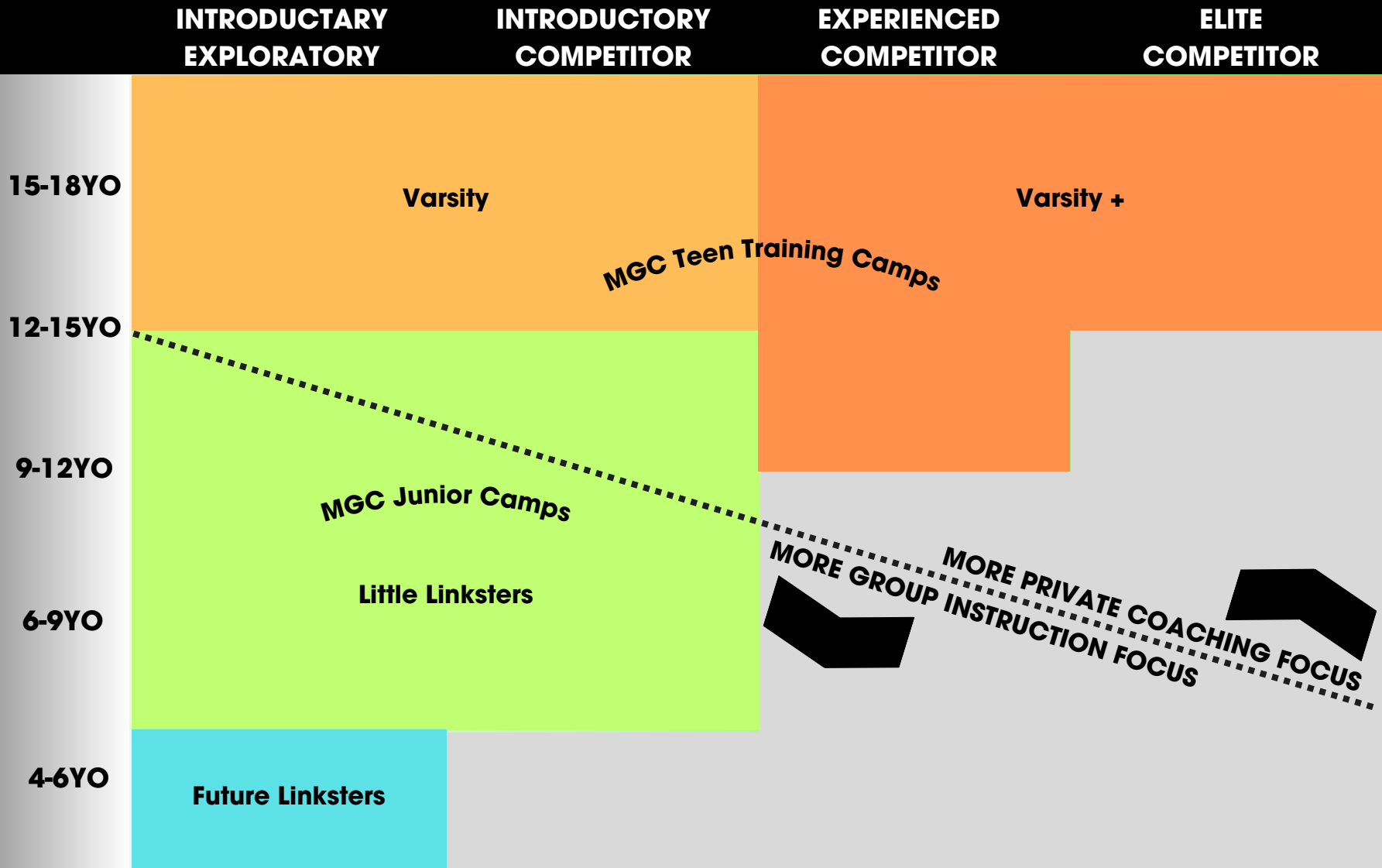
PRACTICE LOG

[illegible]

MGC JUNIOR GOLF COMPETITIVE PATHWAY

	INTRODUCTORY EXPLORATORY	INTRODUCTORY COMPETITOR	EXPERIENCED COMPETITOR	ELITE COMPETITOR
15-18YO	FOX VALLEY JUNIOR GOLF TOUR	FOX VALLEY JUNIOR GOLF TOUR	IJGA/MAJGT	
12-15YO	FOX VALLEY JUNIOR GOLF TOUR	FOX VALLEY JUNIOR GOLF TOUR	IJGA/MAJGT	
9-12YO	FOX VALLEY JUNIOR GOLF TOUR PGA JUNIOR LEAGUE	FOX VALLEY JUNIOR GOLF TOUR PGA JUNIOR LEAGUE		
6-9YO	FOX VALLEY JUNIOR GOLF TOUR PGA JUNIOR LEAGUE			
4-6YO	N/A			

MGC JUNIOR GOLF COACHING PATHWAY



BALLS

VICE GOLF

PRO PLUS: \$39.99

PRO AIR: \$27.99

DRIVE: \$19.99

GLOVES

VICE GOLF

PURE GLOVE: \$21.99

DURO GLOVE: \$14.99

US KIDS GOLF

GOOD GRIP GLOVE: \$11.99

TOUR GRIP GLOVE: \$15.99

CLOTHES

US KIDS GOLF

PULLOVER: \$59.99

SHIRTS: \$39.99-49.99

SHORTS: \$39.99

SKIRTS: \$49.99



GET NEW GOLF CLUBS, THEY ARE WORTH IT!

HAVING THE PROPER CLUB HEIGHT/WEIGHT IS CRUCIAL TO SWING DEVELOPMENT.

MGC OFFERS 10% OFF RETAIL PRICING FOR ALL JUNIOR GOLF CLUBS



MIKES GOLF CENTER



MGC is proudly partnered with U.S Kids to provide the best clubs for youth golfers. Utilize our 6th Club Free form to take advantage of this offer after ordering.

Please email us at support@mikesgolfcenter.com to place your order today!

<u>Ultralight</u>	<u>MGC Pricing</u>	<u>Bag Colors</u>
5 Club Set (48")	\$261	Black/Teal White/Pink Navy/Red
5 Club Set (51")	\$270	Black/Orange Silver/Navy Pink/White
5 Club Set (54")	\$279	Black/Purple White/Pink Navy/Navy
5 Club Set (57")	\$288	Black/Green Navy/Red
5 Club Set (60")	\$297	Black/Maroon Silver/Navy
5 Club Set (63")	\$306	Black/Gold Navy/Navy
7 Club Set (48")	\$306	Black/Teal White/Pink Navy/Red
7 Club Set (51")	\$315	Black/Orange Silver/Navy Pink/White
7 Club Set (54")	\$324	Black/Purple White/Pink Navy/Navy
7 Club Set (57")	\$335	Black/Green Navy/Red
7 Club Set (60")	\$342	Black/Maroon Silver/Navy
7 Club Set (63")	\$351	Black/Gold Navy/Navy
<u>Tour Series</u>		
7 or 10 Club Set (51")	\$585, \$630	Navy/White Black/White Silver/White/Blue Blue/Camouflage
7 or 10 Club Set (54")	\$585, \$630	Navy/White Black/White Silver/White/Blue Blue/Camouflage
7 or 10 Club Set (57")	\$585, \$630	Navy/White Black/White Silver/White/Blue Blue/Camouflage
10 Club Set (60")	\$630, \$675 (Graphite)	Black/White Silver/White/Blue Navy/White
10 Club Set (63")	\$630, \$675 (Graphite)	Black/White Silver/White/Blue Navy/White
10 Club Set (66")	\$630, \$675 (Graphite)	Navy/White Black/White Silver/White/Blue Blue/Camouflage

FIT BY HEIGHT

ULTRA UL LIGHT Beginner to Intermediate	PLAYER'S HEIGHT IN SHOES	TOUR TS SERIES Intermediate to Advanced
ULTRA 63" LIGHT	APPROX. AGE: 12 SWING SPEED: up to 72 mph	64" 63" 62" APPROX. AGE: 12 SWING SPEED: 74 mph & up
ULTRA 60" LIGHT	APPROX. AGE: 11 SWING SPEED: up to 68 mph	61" 60" 59" APPROX. AGE: 11 SWING SPEED: 69 mph & up
ULTRA 57" LIGHT	APPROX. AGE: 10 SWING SPEED: up to 63 mph	58" 57" 56" APPROX. AGE: 10 SWING SPEED: 64 mph & up
ULTRA 54" LIGHT	APPROX. AGE: 9 SWING SPEED: up to 58 mph	55" 54" 53" APPROX. AGE: 9 SWING SPEED: 59 mph & up
ULTRA 51" LIGHT	APPROX. AGE: 8 SWING SPEED: up to 53 mph	52" 51" 50" APPROX. AGE: 8 SWING SPEED: 54 mph & up
ULTRA 48" LIGHT	APPROX. AGE: 7	49" 48" 47" APPROX. AGE: 7
ULTRA 45" LIGHT	APPROX. AGE: 6	46" 45" 44" APPROX. AGE: 6
ULTRA 42" LIGHT	APPROX. AGE: 5	43" 42" 41" APPROX. AGE: 5
ULTRA 39" LIGHT	APPROX. AGE: 4	40" 39" 38" APPROX. AGE: 4

Use player's
HEIGHT to
determine
club size
and player's
driver
SWING
SPEED to
choose
Ultralight or
Tour Series.

**GET NEW
GOLF CLUBS,
THEY ARE
WORTH IT!**

**HAVING THE PROPER CLUB
HEIGHT/WEIGHT IS CRUCIAL
TO SWING DEVELOPMENT.**

**MGC OFFERS 10% OFF
RETAIL PRICING FOR ALL
JUNIOR GOLF CLUBS**

**ADD TEEN
CLUB
OPTIONS-
TOUR EDGE,
SRIXON,
TAYLORMADE**

PARENT EDUCATION

VIDEOS

- **Caddy Tips for a parent of a junior golfer**

https://youtu.be/_F6Syl7vDqU?feature=shared

- **Golf Parent for the future**

<https://youtu.be/Et37GNp8x0Q?si=L7uMz5CfUcdj3m-U>

- **Parent Junior Golf tournament cheat sheet**

<https://youtu.be/F1eWAmG5d-M?si=CNSnC6wdEuvfPOYW>

- **How to navigate Junior golf to college golf**

<https://youtu.be/Sz1ptgQ2HbE?feature=shared>

- **Sean foley great advice for parents**

https://youtu.be/cqblkiUN2GQ?si=_b5Cs-3p04lUKSif

- **Junior Golf Orientation**

<https://youtu.be/0ui5azlj6A0?feature=shared>

- **A decade of Development for young golfers**

<https://youtu.be/ycvCmrU0oRM?si=U0qxkbLpLZbkJq4v>

- **The Philosphy Driving Junior Golf Development**

1- <https://youtu.be/39WJP5R3ERQ?si=nClvb77WgG-XiLv>

2- <https://youtu.be/jBTscRdsofM?si=JxaA9isa8vn8cuhy>

3- https://youtu.be/shbxNx-qyKM?si=jqxZ_67pk2uHyVRo

4- <https://youtu.be/1Zh73SUsr4?si=c8OSDo4AVunxd7c9>

PODCASTS

- **All Pro Dad Podcast**

<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/all-pro-dad-podcast/id1718772295>

- **Coaching Juniors from beginners/elite**

<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/doug-lawrie-coaching-juniors-from-beginners-to-elite/id1462809170?i=1000645757078>

- **US Kids Golf GAMECHANGERS PODCAST**

<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/u-s-kids-golf-game-changers/id1355824376>

- **James Hong on Junior Golf**

<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/on-the-mark-golf-podcast/id1096925460?i=1000410048875>

- **How to develop a junior golf w/ James Hong**

<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/the-sweet-spot-golf-podcast/id1552917994?i=1000603866913>

- **Larry Mucha Junior Golf Parent**

<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/34-larry-mucha-junior-golf-parent/id1449731962?i=1000471823548>

PARENT EDUCATION

SOCIAL MEDIA

- **Why your child plays sports**

https://www.tiktok.com/@powertechonline/video/7230612741566778630?_t=8mIDJCb3Yao&_r=1

- **Remember your role as a parent**

https://www.tiktok.com/@powertechonline/video/7228737708393303301?_t=8mIDKiVR8OM&_r=1

- **Allow your child to steer their ship**

https://www.tiktok.com/@coachdanblewett/video/7271608883603426606?_t=8mIDTVIVgIJ&_r=1

ARTICLES

- **Mike Thomas' Advice for junior golf parents**

<https://www.ajga.org/news/mike-thomas-advice-for-junior-golf-parents>

- **Michelle Holmes advice for junior golf parents**

<https://www.lpga.com/news/2020/michelle-holmes-advice-for-junior-golf-parents>

- **Operation36- Parents of Junior Golfers**

<https://operation36.golf/category/parents-of-junior-golfers/>

- **How to be a Better Parent**

<https://golfweek.usatoday.com/2020/04/18/golf-instruction-how-to-be-better-parent/>

- **Why Juniors Should Continue Playing Multiple Sports**

<https://www.pga.com/story/why-junior-golfers-should-continue-playing-multiple>



Model Good Etiquette

Keep it fun

Think long-term

Under-coach

Make it social

Teach humility

Golf is not life

Show patience

Be a teammate

Play golf

Double Goal Coach: Coaching for Winning and Life Lessons

POSITIVE
COACHING
ALLIANCE

The 8 Rules of Parenting

#1: Keep Expectations Low

- Separate effort from outcome

#2: Support them Unconditionally

- Be their biggest cheerleader!

#3: Enjoy the Car Ride Home

- Let them start the conversation

#4: Perspective is KEY!

- Better person > Better golfer
- "You are much more than just a golfer, you're identity isn't in golf"

#5: Struggle and Frustration are Normal and Expected

- Allow your child to fail. Failure is learning and learning is a process!

#6: Adopt a Growth Mindset

- Too many families focus only on score, outcome or results.
- 1% better each day or "Brick by Brick"

#7: Be Aware of Your Tone

- Your child will hear what you say and how you say it, be aware

#8: Parental Success can be Developed!

- Just like your child is learning, you can always work on your communication skills

Characteristics of the WORST Parent/Player Relationships

- Parents praise intelligence, ability or outcome
- Parents visibly showing their disappointment – vocally or with poor body language
- The parent is more vocal or emotional, and visibly cares more than the player
- Parents gossiping about performance
- Parents overstating their child's true athletic ability while trying to live vicariously through their child

Relationships where the player and parent are almost inevitably on "different pages" – mentally and emotionally

Characteristics of the BEST Parent/Player Relationships

- Parents praise 'the process', hard work, and independent creativity
- Junior Golfer is in charge and takes center-stage, organizing their weekly schedule and making their own decisions
- Unconditional love & "Parents just being Parents"
 - Supportive, patient, and unemotional, "find the fun" in every situation
 - Reinforcing patience and proactiveness



GREAT DEBATE—EARLY SPECIALIZATION

ISTVAN BALYI, CANADIAN SPORT FOR LIFE, LTPD EXPERT

If you want your child to become a professional golfer, figure skater, or other high performance athlete, when should they specialize in that one sport?

It's a question that often generates heated discussion among coaches and sport parents. All too often, in most sports, children are pushed to specialize too early.

Too many coaches and parents push them to focus on one sport long before high school in the belief that they will miss out if they don't. The thinking is that they need to "get ahead of the pack" by putting in the extra hours and staying away from other sports.

Meanwhile, the research suggests that specializing too early probably prevents most kids from reaching their full potential in their sport. They might win the district championships for Grade 8 or Grade 10 basketball, but that will be their peak achievement. They won't make the cut for the national team and go on to having success in their given sport internationally at age 19.

It seems counterintuitive. How could specialization reduce your success? It's connected to physical literacy and the need to develop a wide range of physical, mental, and emotional skills within sport. When researchers look at top athletes across a range of sports, the majority of them are distinguished by broad athletic ability from playing a variety of sports as children.

This kind of broad athleticism doesn't happen when kids specialize in one sport from an early age.

(Please note: We haven't even mentioned the problem of overuse injuries to tendons, ligaments, and bone growth plates due to premature specialization. There's enough research on that subject to write a book. Premature specialization is also linked to kids dropping out of sports early.)

Is early specialization wrong for all sports? No. But research shows very few sports where it helps.

Sports and activities such as gymnastics, figure skating, diving, and dancing generally require early specialization. To reach the highest levels of competition, your child needs to start young and spend most of their time practicing that sport or activity.

However, sports such as golf, hockey, soccer, basketball, baseball, and tennis are late specialization sports. If you want your child to have a chance to go to the highest levels in these sports, the evidence suggests they should also play other sports until at least age 14. This is called *sampling* or *early diversification*.

When you feel the urge to make your child specialize early, remember that Steve Nash didn't even start playing basketball until he was 13-years-old. Wayne Gretzky started hockey young, but he also played baseball, lacrosse and tennis into his teens.



GREAT DEBATE—WHAT IS MY ROLE AS A PARENT?

JEFF THOMPSON, CHIEF SPORT OFFICER, GOLF CANADA

This is one of the most frequently discussed and most delicate aspects of a young golfer's development. The parent's role is super important as an integral part of the overall performance team. I have to emphasize that last part: as an integral part of the overall performance team.

All too often, we see incidents where the parent's perspective or involvement, often inadvertently, becomes unhealthy and actually counter-productive to the young player's development. We, as a sport, may be somewhat to blame for this, simply because of the unique nature of golf. In other sports, the child is taken to a practice or a game or a tournament where the coach is always present. In golf, the child is taken for a lesson or practice session, but seldom is their coach present when they are in a competition, particularly in the early stages of their development. This is not an invitation for parents to step in as pseudo-coaches; rather, it is an opportunity for the young golfer to develop decision-making skills and a sense of independence.

My best advice for parents who may be on the verge of becoming overly involved is to take a step back and ask themselves what is best for their child. That is the best indicator, in my opinion.

A couple of years ago, we produced a publication called *The Role of Parents and Coaches* (visit golfcanada.ca/LTPD).

In it, we summarized the following vital contributions of a parent/guardian to the healthy development of young golfers. To provide each child with unconditional love regardless of their golf performance; to provide appropriate food, clothing, and shelter to the best of your ability; to communicate with coaches and golf officials as necessary; to have a discussion with the child to find out exactly how they want you to act as a golf parent; to interact with each child as a human being, not a golfer; to support and encourage coaches, local PGA of Canada professionals, personal coaches and golf officials.

In general, your role as a parent is to love, support and reward your child. Don't judge, don't coach, don't live vicariously through your child. Golf is tough enough already!

The **PARENT'S** ROLE

The temptation as a parent is to measure your child's relationship with the game by their competitive performance.

The relationship with the game, depending on your child's age, should influence your thinking.



At this age, it is about discovering lots of different activities, and experiencing fun while learning fundamental movement skills.



The complex coordination required in golf makes it possible for the child to specialise, with regular coaching and practice, earlier than in other sports.



If golf is now their chosen sport for their future, the child requires focus and a much more specialised and personalised coaching programme.



Participate in the activity with them.



Encourage activity in a range of sports to develop athletic skills.



Learn about the ABC's of athletic development (ability, balance, coordination, speed).



Be careful not to set expectations, it's what your child wants that counts.

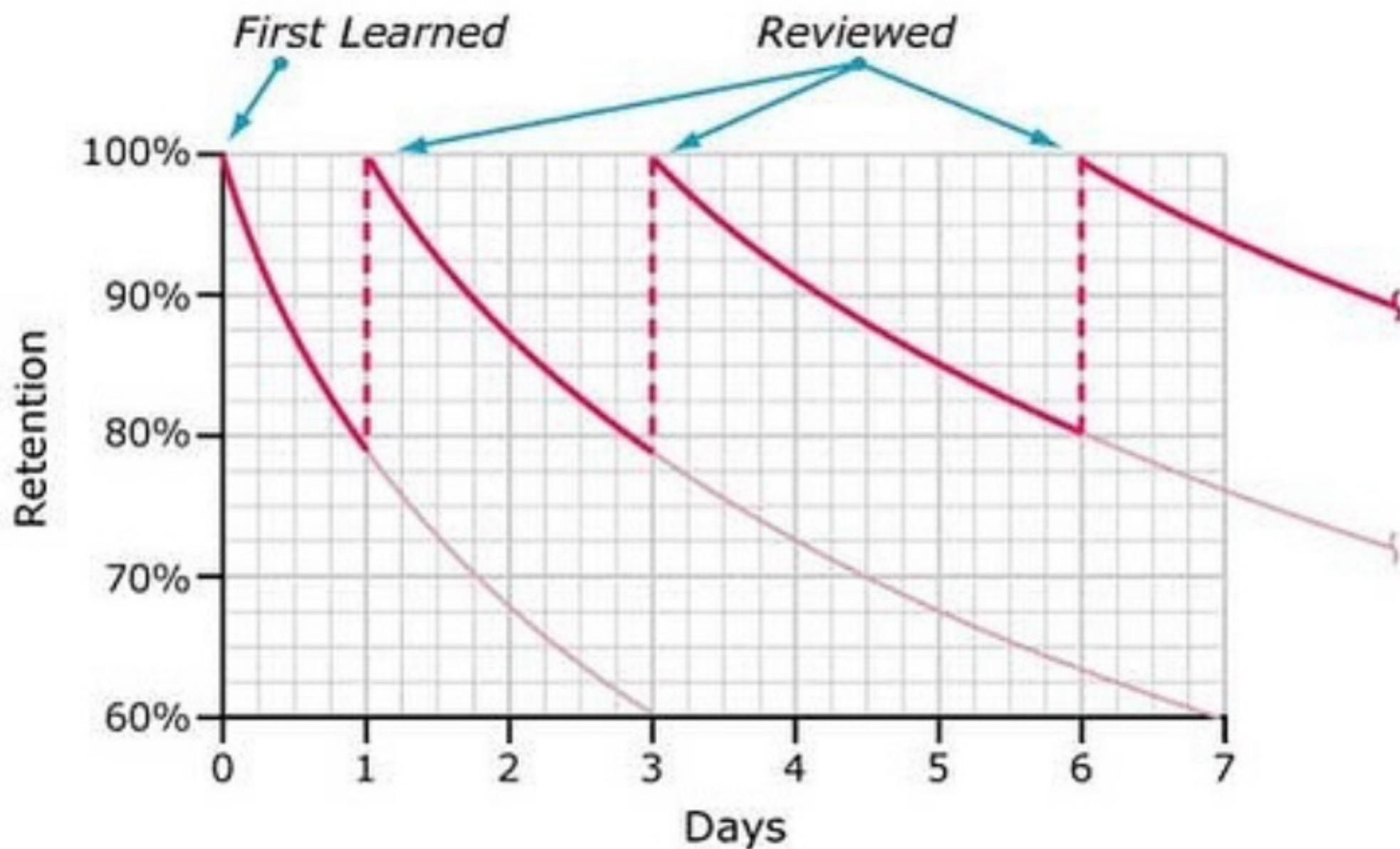


Encouragement and support are required, not analysis and criticism.



Understand the pathway for growth and development in golf.

Typical Forgetting Curve for Newly Learned Information



KEY FACTORS INFLUENCING LONG-TERM PLAYER DEVELOPMENT

1 PHYSICAL LITERACY

Physical literacy is key to both the enjoyment of participating in sport and serves as requisite as we develop participants through the various stages of development. The development of physical literacy (much like establishing a base level of reading, writing and arithmetic in school) should be a major focus prior to the adolescent growth spurt. The process of becoming physically literate is influenced by an individual's age, maturation and capacity.

Typically, individuals who are physically literate demonstrate a wide variety of basic fundamental movement skills, and fundamental sport skills. In addition, these individuals move with poise, confidence, competence, and creativity in different physical environments. Individuals who are physically literate are also more likely to be active for life as they have developed a sense of confidence through his/her development.

Golf relevance: a basic physical literacy aids in the learning, accomplishment and longevity of the specific actions required by the game of golf.



2 SPECIALIZATION

Sports are often categorized as either *early* or *late* specialization activities. Typically, early specialization sports include artistic and acrobatic sports such as gymnastics, diving and figure skating, particularly for female participants. A possible rationale is that these activities involve very

complex skills learned at a young age due to a much greater difficulty in mastering those skills if taught after a significant level of maturation. Negative aspects of early specialization include one-sided sport-specific preparation; a lack of fundamental movement and sport skills; a high incidence of overuse injuries; and an early retirement from training and competition.

In contrast, most other sports are late specialization which benefit from a solid physical literacy and, at times, an early engagement in the activity (i.e. an introduction to the eventual targeted activity).

Golf relevance: Golf falls into a late specialization category where experience of similar actions (swinging a bat, stick, racquet) and/or an early engagement (but not specialization) assists in eventual mastery.



3 DEVELOPMENTAL AGE

Children of the same *chronological age* can differ by several years in his/her level of biological maturation. Growth, development and rate of maturation result from a complex interaction of genes, hormones, nutrients and the environment in which an individual lives. These interactions are particularly evident over the first two decades of life as an infant evolves into a young adult.

Growth vs. Maturation vs. Development

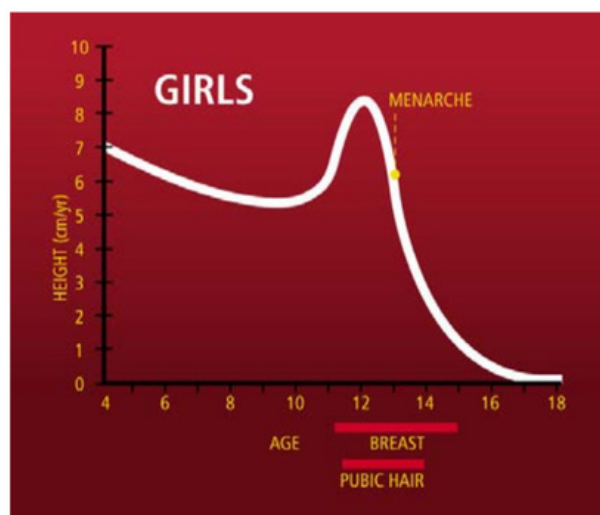
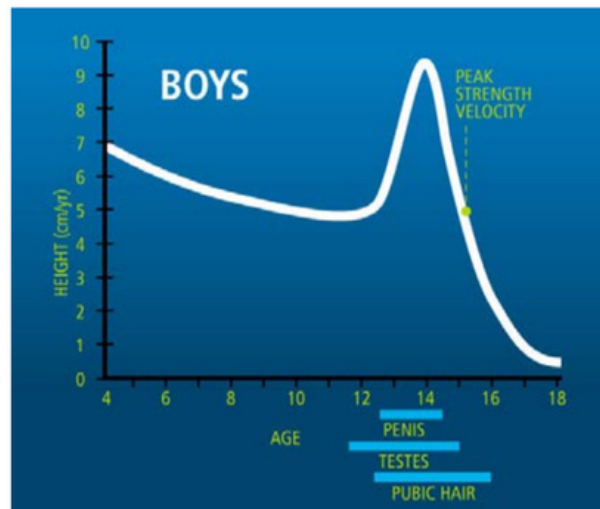
The terms *growth* and *maturation* are often used together and sometimes synonymously, however, each has a distinct meaning:

Growth: the observable step-by-step changes in quantity and measurable changes in body size such as height, weight and fat percentage.

Maturation: the qualitative system changes, both structural and functional, in the body's progress towards maturity such as the change of cartilage to bone in the skeleton.

Development: in contrast to the previous terms, development refers to both biological and behavioral contexts; including aspects such as cell specialization and how the youngster adjusts to his/her cultural milieu (i.e. develops beliefs and values).

The tempo of a child's growth has significant implications for athletic training because children who mature at an early age have a major advantage during the *Learn to Compete* stage compared to those of average or late maturation. After all athletes have gone through his/her growth spurt, however, it is often those who mature late who have the greater potential to become top athletes provided he/she experience quality coaching throughout that period.



Golf relevance: Long-Term Player Development requires the identification of early, average and late maturation in order to design appropriate instruction, coaching and competition programs in relation to optimal trainability and readiness. The beginning of the growth spurt, as well as the peak of the growth spurt (Peak Height Velocity; PHV), are critical landmarks for LTPD applications concerning training and competition design (see appendix 5 for additional information on how PHV diagrams relate to coaching).



4 SENSITIVE PERIODS

A sensitive period is a broad time frame or *window* when the learning of a specific skill, or the development of a specific physical/cognitive capacity is particularly effective. The entire period of childhood can be viewed as a sensitive period for mastering fundamental movement skills.

Trainability during the sensitive periods of *accelerated adaptation to training* refers to the body's responsiveness to training stimuli at different stages of growth and maturation. Although the physiological systems of the athlete can be trained at any age, there are sensitive periods when individuals are especially responsive to specific types of training. The concept of trainability has caused considerable discussion within sport and academic communities. Trainability is well documented in coaching and research literature and provides reasonable evidence of periods of sensitivity for accelerated adaptation to training and/or exposure to various stimuli.

Golf relevance: establishing sound golf-specific technical execution throughout the main growth and maturation periods should be seen as the priority, coupled with an understanding of the speed of execution of the golf-specific movements in relation to the individual's development.

7 PERIODIZATION

Simply put, periodization is time management. As a planning technique, periodization provides the framework for arranging the complex array of training processes into a logical and scientifically-based schedule to bring about optimal improvements in performance.

Periodization sequences the training components into weeks, days and sessions. Periodization is situation-specific, depending on priorities and the time available to bring about the required training and competition improvement. In the context of *LTPD*, periodization connects the stage a player is in to the requirements of that stage.

Periodization, far from being a single fixed process or methodology, is in fact a highly flexible tool. When used appropriately in conjunction with sound methodology as well as ongoing monitoring and evaluation, it is an essential component in optimal sports programming and athlete development at all levels.

Golf relevance: The competition stream of LTPD is typically a 10–15 year process optimizing physical, technical, tactical (including decision making) and mental preparation as well as the supporting ancillary capacities. Each annual plan is based on identified periods of athletic preparation, competition and the transition into the next calendar plan.

6 MENTAL, COGNITIVE AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

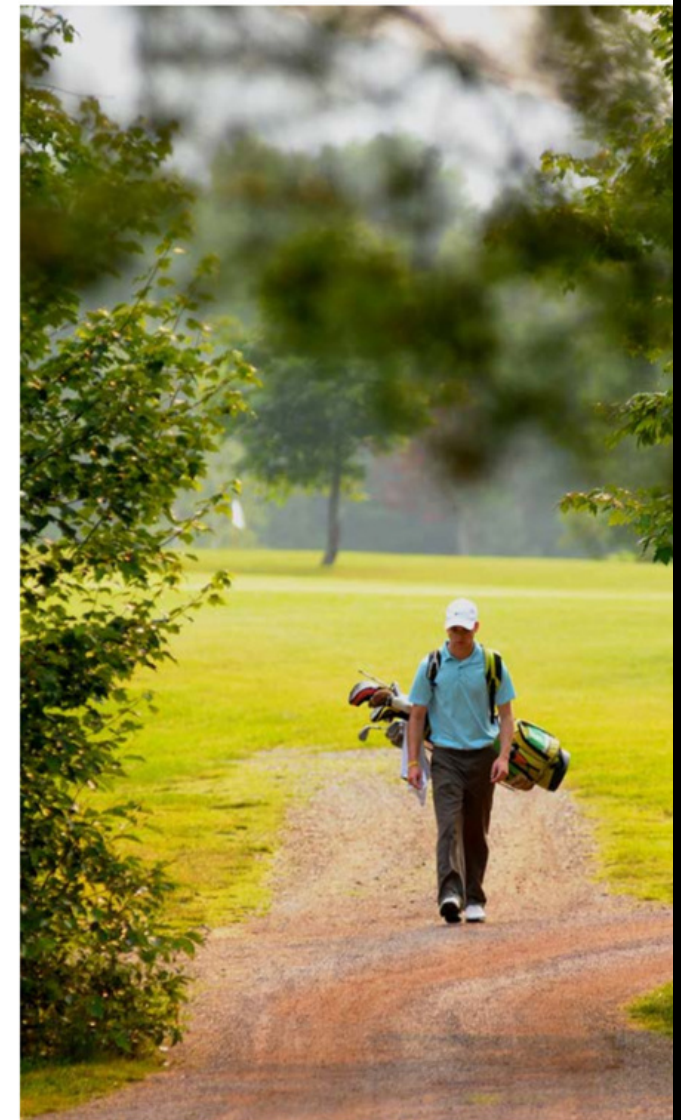
Mental, cognitive and emotional factors are essential to each player's development. Not only is holistic development—which encompasses all of these factors in addition to physical development—beneficial to the individual, but all of these skill sets are interlinked.

Just as physical and technical skills require long-

term and sequential development, so too do the psychological aspects of athlete development. This includes a range of knowledge sets such as the underpinnings of fair play and ethical sport; mental skills for performance; emotional regulation; sequencing; and decision-making. A major objective of *LTPD* is a holistic approach to player development which includes emphasis on ethics, fair play and character building throughout the various stages—an objective that reflects

Canadian values. Programming should be designed with consideration for the player's cognitive ability to address these concepts.

Golf relevance: the rules and etiquette of golf, together with the psychological platform required for golf practice and competition, set a unique challenge for players to develop over years a repertoire and fortitude to perform on demand.





8 COMPETITION

Optimal competition calendar planning at all stages of *LTPD* is critical to athlete development. At certain stages, developing the physical capacities take precedence over competition. At later stages, the ability to compete well becomes the focus. It should be noted that optimal sport-specific competition ratios are required for all stages of *LTPD*. Level and length of the competition season should be aligned with the changing needs of the developmental player progressing through the stages.

Over-competition and under-training at the *Learn to Golf* and *Introduction to Competition* stages will result in a lack of basic skills and fitness. The appropriate level of competition is critical to technical, tactical and mental development at all stages.

9 EXCELLENCE TAKES TIME

It has been suggested a minimum of 10 years of practice (sometimes stated as 10,000 hours) is needed for expert performers in any field to reach the elite level. Other evidence indicates elite players require at least 11–13 years of practice to reach levels of excellence. The essential lesson is the same—there are no short cuts to achieving excellence.

Player development is a long-term process and elite players will require approximately a decade or more of practice to achieve international standing. As part of this process, short-term performance goals must never be allowed to undermine long-term player development.

Recently, the validity of the 10,000 hours concept has been questioned and it has been suggested athletes can achieve excellence in much shorter periods of time. These suggestions, however, do not take into account the sports and activities that players participated in prior to specialization. Principals of *LTPD* emphasize a multi-sport approach and that all former activities should be

included in the assessment of the process as they are an integral part of the extensive investment in the pathway. Whether it is 10,000 hours (or less), excellence always takes time.

Golf relevance: the LTPD pathway requires a significant investment of time devoted to practice, play and appropriate competition experience coupled with a multisport/activity background. It has been suggested that in golf, closer to 20,000 hours is required to achieve excellence.



10 SYSTEM ALIGNMENT AND INTEGRATION

A critical goal for the *Canadian Sport for Life* movement and specifically for each sport is the alignment of all stakeholders and partners under a common overarching objective with a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of all concerned.

11 CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT — KAIZEN

The *LTPD* framework is based on the principle of continuous improvement, both in its dynamic evolution and in its application.

Golf relevance: the entire golf community must constantly strive for and ruthlessly act to continually improve every facet of the golf industry.