











THE FIRST TEE NINE GOLF FUNDAMENTALS

This chart is a quick glance of The First Tee Nine Golf Fundamentals along with corresponding factors that influence each fundamental.

FUNDAMENTALS		FACTORS OF INFLUENCE		
Distance-response		Size or length of motion	Club selection	Variable amount of energy or speed applied to motion
Target Awareness		Target selection	Distance to the target	Reaction to the target
Get Ready to Swing		Hold	Set-up	Aim & alignment
Body Balance		Balanced finish	Balanced start	Balanced during swing
Clubface and Ball Contact		Clubface direction at contact	Centeredness of hit	Impact position
Swing Rhythm			Swing tempo	Swing sequencing
Routines			Mental and emotional aspects	Variable playing conditions
Preshot				
Postshot			Emotionally neutral response to an undesirable process and/or outcome	Memory storage of a desirable process and/or outcome
Ball Flight			Trajectory	Curvature
On-course Strategies			Self-management	Course management


Birdie

THE FIRST TEE NINE GOLF FUNDAMENTALS


For consistency across The First Tee network, coaches should cover a minimum of the first seven of the Nine Golf Fundamentals as part of *The First Tee Life Skills Experience: Birdie Level*. The order of the Nine Golf Fundamentals as presented is recommended for new coaches; however, the order may be flexible for experienced coaches. Coaches should understand there is an interaction of skill development across the fundamentals. For example, if the golf theme of the day is distance-response, depending on skill level, coaches may have PLAYers explore how size and length of swing, or club selection, influence distance-response. To enhance PLAYers' experiences, coaches should keep all instruction and feedback focused on distance-response.

WHILE EACH FUNDAMENTAL REPRESENTS A DESIRED OUTCOME, coaches need to create learning environments that increase the curiosity of PLAYers. **How?** Coaches should utilize *The First Tee Coach building blocks* to create an environment that facilitates self-discovery through experiencing different sizes of swings, club selections, clubface alignments, ball locations in the set-up, swing tempos, routines and so forth.

When coaches create optimal learning environments, they should blend golf and life skills and deliver core lessons in a manner that utilizes The First Tee Coach building blocks strategies and behaviors. To facilitate this process, helpful charts follow each of the golf fundamentals in this section.

In each chart, the  mastery-driven ideas in the **left-hand column** are starting points to help coaches develop a complete lesson plan—Warm-up, Seamless Games/Activities and Wrap-up—to meet objectives of the lesson. For example, in one class activity, which swing rhythm games could coaches create or utilize that involve PLAYers swinging the club with different tempos for putting, chipping, pitching and/or full-swing and be integrated with Core Lesson 19, Setting Goals that Are Under Your Control?

Tip: When creating seamless games, design different levels of challenge for varying ages and skill levels to explore.

The corresponding questions in the **right-hand column** are starter questions to help coaches create an environment that  empowers youth throughout the games created. For example, during a swing rhythm game that involves swinging the putter with different tempos on the putting green, coaches could ask PLAYers, *What happens when you swing the putter faster (or slower)?* and then follow up with related questions that facilitate self-discovery.

THE FIRST TEE GOLF FUNDAMENTAL: DISTANCE-RESPONSE



DISTANCE-RESPONSE describes the ability to produce the optimal range of motion and/or energy combined with club selection to roll or propel the ball the desired speed or distance. When playing golf, there are several factors that can influence the distance a ball travels, including:

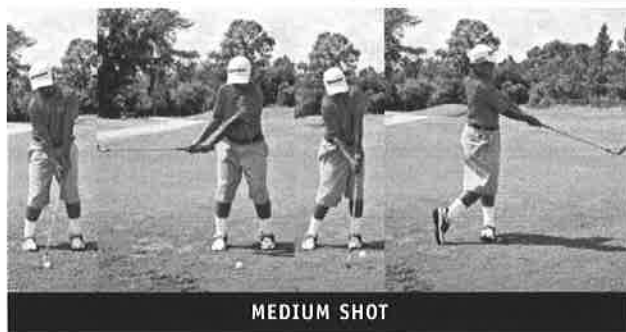
- size or length of motion,
- club selection, and
- variable amount of energy or speed applied to the motion.

At the Birdie level, PLAYers will explore altering the distance the ball travels—with a continued emphasis on size or length of motion and club selection—in order to play different shot lengths on the golf course.

WHEN PLAYers ARE AT YOUNGER AGES DEVELOPMENTALLY, *it is easier for them to develop speed, so this is a great time to train for speed through swings that are full and fast. Coaches should also create opportunities for PLAYers to experience and understand the other golf skill categories of putt, chip and pitch. The way to create a different distance-response for these skills is to modify the size or length of motion and/or the club selection to targets that are not as far away.*

Size or length of motion—Generally, the size or length of the swing needed is directly related to the distance a PLAYER is from the target. That is, when a PLAYER is closer to the target, the size of the swing is smaller or shorter; and when a PLAYER is farther from the target, the size of the swing is bigger or longer.

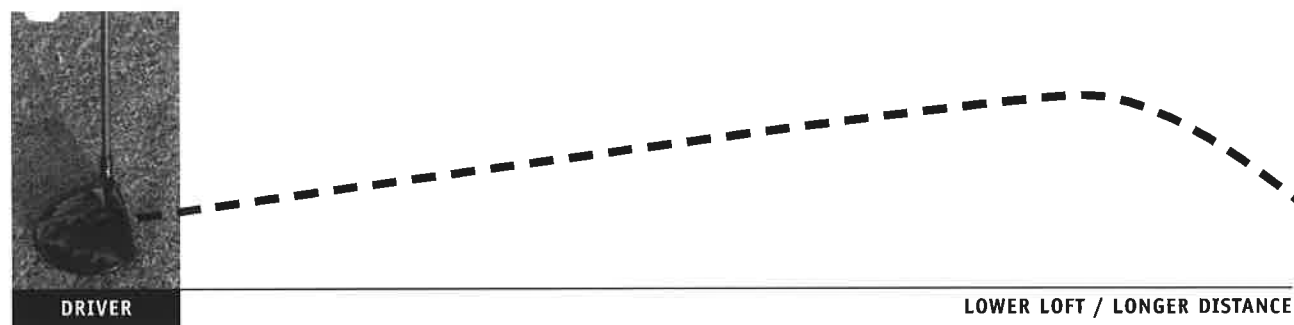
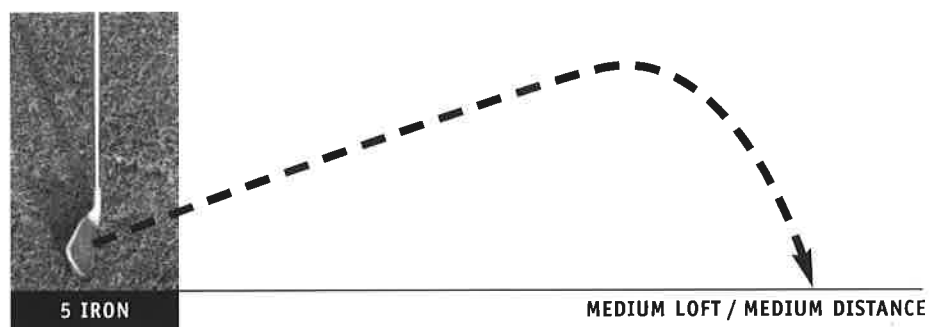
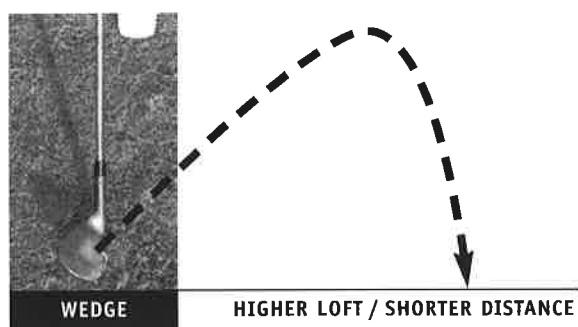
- A simple method for teaching distance-response with young people is to equate the size of the motion and the distance of the shot as follows: little swing = little shot, medium swing = medium shot and big swing = big shot.
- Using the chip motion as an example, the following pictures show a smaller chip motion (little shot), medium chip motion (medium shot) and a larger chip motion (big shot) to hit the same club different distances.



Club selection—One way to modify the distance a ball carries and/or rolls when chipping, pitching or making a full-swing, is the club selection. It is the combination of the club's length and loft that determine a club's power. The length of the golf club determines the speed the clubhead travels, whereas, the loft of the clubface determines the degree to which the ball is propelled up and out toward the hole. Longer clubs travel faster with lower loft (such as drivers, metal woods, hybrids) and have more distance potential. Shorter clubs travel slower with higher loft (such as 8 irons, 9 irons, wedges) and have less distance potential.

New PLAYers may not be able to generate enough speed or make solid contact with longer, lower-lofted clubs, and may find their long-distance club is actually a shorter/higher lofted club such as a 7 iron.

- Rather than changing the length or speed of the swing, a simple way to adjust for distance is to make the same swing with different clubs.
- Below are some examples of the distance and trajectory of different clubs.



DEVELOPING DISTANCE-RESPONSE



Mastery-driven ideas for creating golf games that must be integrated seamlessly with life skills:



Corresponding open-ended questions coaches can ask to **empower youth**:

- Swing the club different lengths (small, medium, big) and see how far the ball goes.

- *What happens with a bigger/smaller motion?*
- *What other sports do you play that require you to swing bigger? Smaller?*

- Swing at full speed or force.

- *How fast can you make a full-swing and keep your balance?*
- *What happens to the ball when you swing fast and keep your balance?*

- Use different types, sizes and weights of implements—such as a tennis racket, baseball bat, golf shafts (with grips on end for safety) or alignment sticks—to hit different types, sizes and weights of balls.

- *What is the same or different when you use different implements to strike a ball?*
- *What do you notice when you strike balls that are different types, sizes and weights?*

- Use the same club to hit the ball different distances.

- *How do you vary your swing length to hit the ball different distances with the same club?*

- Practice putting uphill and downhill to explore distance-response on the green.

- *What do you do to adjust the length of your stroke to the speed of different slopes when putting?*



SEE P. 19 IN THE LIFE SKILLS SECTION OF THIS GUIDE FOR A SEAMLESS DELIVERY TIP PROVIDING AN EXAMPLE OF HOW DISTANCE-RESPONSE AND TARGET AWARENESS MAY BE PAIRED WITH CORE LESSON 16, DREAMS AND GOALS.

Note: This pairing is NOT required; however, it is a suggested starting point for those who are becoming familiar with the seamless delivery of the Life Skills Experience.

THE FIRST TEE GOLF FUNDAMENTAL: TARGET AWARENESS



TARGET AWARENESS involves:

- target selection,
- distance to the target, and
- reaction to the target.

It is essential for PLAYers to understand the ball is not the target. Instead, the target is where they want the ball to land in order to reach the ultimate target, which is the hole. PLAYers will explore becoming more aware of their target in order to get the golf ball in the hole. At the Birdie level, the focus continues to be not only on target selection, but also the distance to the target.

Target selection—Having target awareness begins with standing behind the ball and selecting a target. Standing behind the ball allows PLAYers to look toward the target with binocular vision, similar to shooting a free throw. Sometimes the target on the putting green is the hole or to the right or left of the hole on a sloped green. At other times, the target may be a part of the fairway, or if the hole has a “dogleg” shape, a group of trees through the fairway in the direction that PLAYers want their ball to go.



Distance to the target—For beginning PLAYers, this could be as simple as answering the question, *Do I use my far, medium or short distance club?* or *Is this a big putt, medium putt or little putt?* Intermediate PLAYers could identify the yardage to the hole and select a club for that yardage. Advanced PLAYers may consider factors such as weather-related elements, slope of the ground, type of grass and lie of ball.



DEVELOPING TARGET AWARENESS



Mastery-driven ideas for creating golf games that must be integrated seamlessly with life skills:



Corresponding open-ended questions coaches can ask to **empower youth**:

- Select a target from different perspectives:
 - (1) select a target while standing beside the ball and then hit a few shots or putts;
 - (2) select a target while standing behind the ball and then hit a few shots or putts.

- *What other sports do you play that have targets?*
- *How are they similar to or different from the game of golf?*
- *What do you notice when you select a target from beside the ball versus behind the ball?*

- Use a variety of motions from other sports (such as punt, pass, kick, throw, roll, hit) to propel balls to different types and sizes of targets.

- *What is the same or different when you go to a target in others sports versus a golf target?*
- *How can you use this experience to help you swing to a target in golf?*

- Use different sizes, shapes and colors of targets.

- *What are examples of your targets in golf?*
- *What happens to the motion of your swing when you change the size of your target?*
- *What do you notice when you add shapes or colors to your targets?*

- Verbalize the target—out loud to yourself, a partner or your coach—before swinging.

- *How does having a target influence the motion of your swing?*
- *How does verbalizing the target before swinging impact your swinging motion?*

- Experiment with different lies and how slope can influence the initial line for putting; finding the straight putt line is essential to green-reading and the farther the ball lies from the straight putt, the more break will be present.

- *How does the slope of the green influence the speed of the putt?*
- *How does the slope of the green impact which way the ball curves as it rolls?*



SEE P. 19 IN THE LIFE SKILLS SECTION OF THIS GUIDE FOR A SEAMLESS DELIVERY TIP PROVIDING AN EXAMPLE OF HOW TARGET AWARENESS MAY BE PAIRED WITH CORE LESSON 16: DREAMS AND GOALS.

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THE FIRST TEE GOLF FUNDAMENTAL: GET READY TO SWING



GET READY TO SWING includes what a PLAYer does to put his/her physical body in position to swing. At The First Tee, get ready to swing takes into consideration:

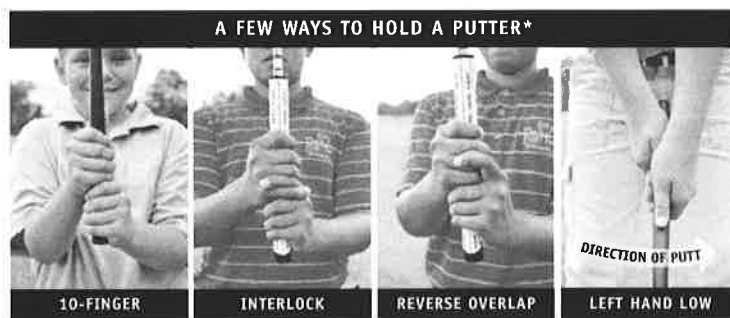
- hold,
- set-up, and
- aim and alignment.

Additional physical factors, as well as an emphasis on the mental and emotional aspects of get ready to swing, are addressed under golf fundamental 7: preshot and postshot routines. PLAYers will explore various methods to hold the golf club, set-up their body to the ball, and aim and align their body and clubface to a target.

Hold—Known as the grip, the hold refers to the positioning of the hands and fingers on the club as well as the amount and consistency of pressure applied to the grip. There are many ways to hold a club with the three most common types of holds being the 10-finger, interlock and overlap. A PLAYer's hold is important, because it impacts the direction and distance the ball goes.

Initial thoughts to consider when holding a club:

- Allow young and/or new PLAYers to hold the club in whatever manner is comfortable, while making sure the face of the club is aiming to the target.
- Explore how holding the club differently (strong hold, weak hold, neutral hold) may impact the direction and distance the ball goes. Various styles include a strong hold, weak hold and neutral hold.
- Keep in mind a PLAYer's hold on a club will adjust and develop as s/he gains experience.
- Allow opportunities to explore very tight to extremely loose holds, because hold pressure varies among PLAYers. Encourage them to feel the in-between pressure—while keeping wrists relaxed—as this should allow for the best result.
 - Explore how varying hold pressures help with different types of shots; for example, a firm hold can be helpful when hitting out of thick rough.
 - Experiment with varying the firmness of your hold pressure in your top, or target-side, hand.
 - Experience various holds for different clubs; for example, a cross-handed hold for putting.



*Photographs of the holds are modeled by right-handed PLAYers. For left-handed PLAYers, the hands would be reversed.

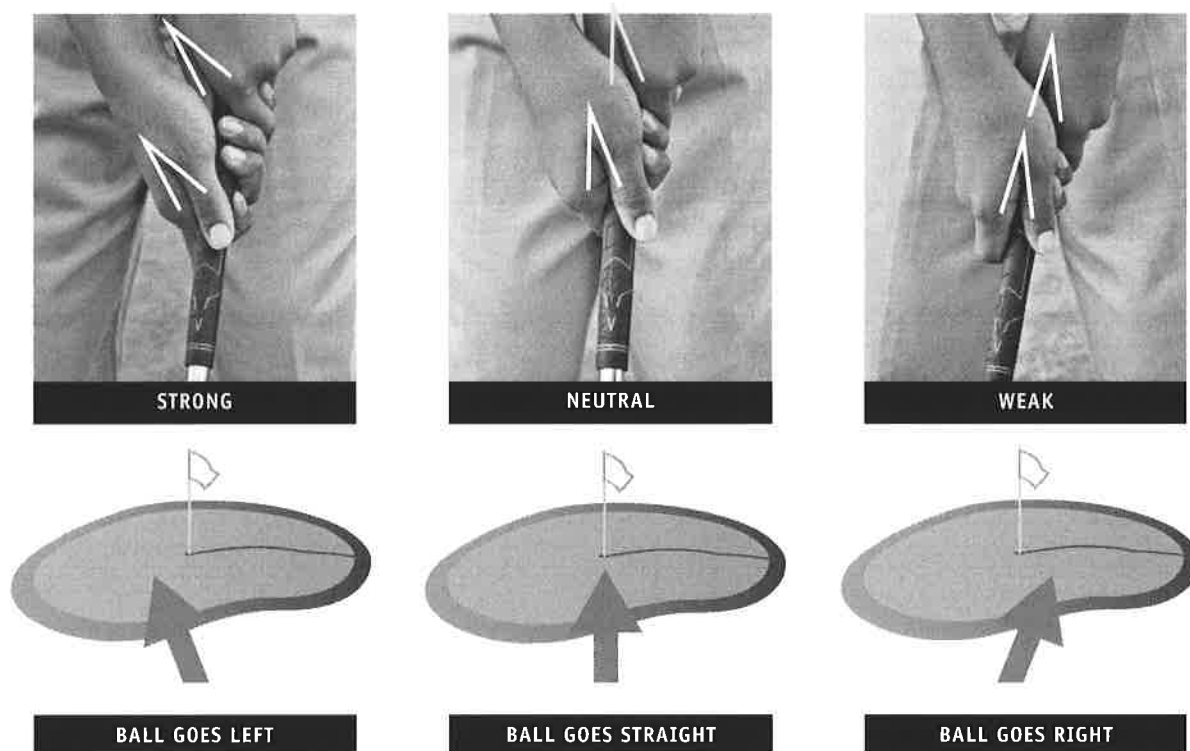
Commonalities among holds for skilled PLAYers typically include having the:

- Hands touch one another,
- Club more in the fingers than in the palms, and
- Left- and right-hand “Vs”— formed by thumb and index finger — parallel to one another (see photographs below).

Basic concepts on how the hold impacts distance and direction:

- Holding the club more in the fingers rather than the palms generally enables the clubface to travel with more speed and return to square (point at the target) when it contacts the ball. All other factors aside, the results are greater distance and increased accuracy.
- Holding the club with a stronger grip typically causes the clubface to be closed, or pointing to the left of the target, when it contacts the ball. The ball, consequently, goes left.
 - Stronger grip: for a right-handed PLAYER, the “Vs” are pointing toward the right shoulder and/or the right hand is more under the club.
- Holding the club with a weaker grip typically causes the clubface to be open, or pointing to the right of the target, when it contacts the ball. The ball, consequently, goes right.
 - Weaker grip: for a right-handed PLAYER, the “Vs” are pointing toward the right eye or ear and/or the right hand is more on top of the club.

How a PLAYER holds the club will influence how his/her swing feels. A PLAYER with a stronger hold on the club will have different swing feels than a PLAYER with a weaker hold on the club. It is important to know that many great PLAYers have had very strong, neutral and very weak grips.



Set-up—Refers to how a PLAYER positions his/her body prior to making a putting stroke or swinging motion. Set-up includes the stance of the feet, body posture and ball position. In general, PLAYers should assume an athletic and balanced posture with the:

- Feet approximately shoulder-width apart (or more narrow for shorter shots such as a chip);
- Hips bent, like bowing to the ball, and knees slightly flexed;
- Arms hanging naturally beneath the shoulders in front of the body; and
- Ball positioned between the PLAYER's feet (or slightly more toward the target side for longer clubs such as a driver).

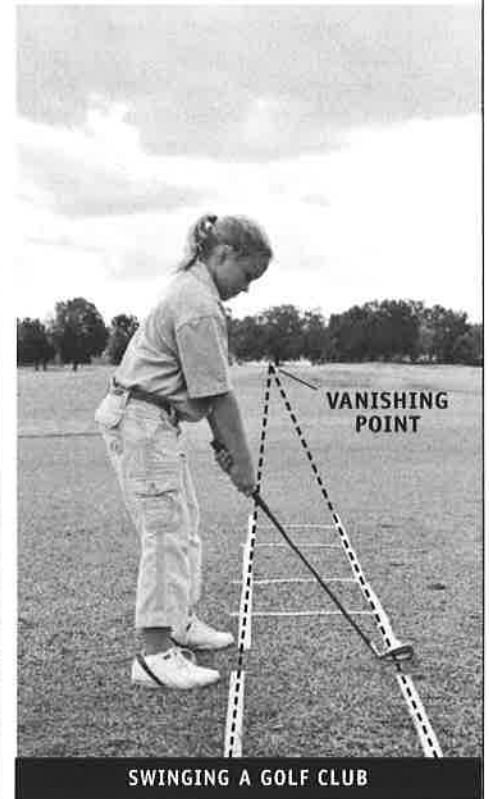
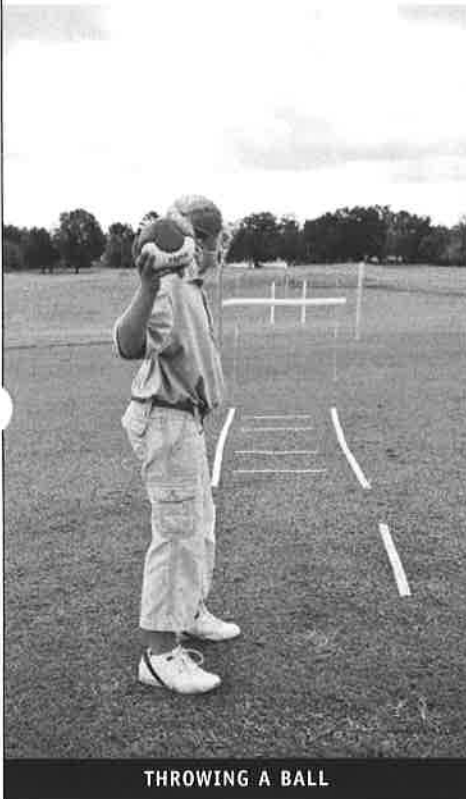
Variations in the stance, body posture and ball position can be unique based on the golf skill being performed as well as the individual, so PLAYers should be encouraged to explore a variety of set-ups.

Strive to have neutral spine posture as in these two examples. Notice the straight line, or neutral, spine posture in these photographs.





Aim and alignment—Aim refers to the placement of the clubface in relation to the ball and target. Alignment refers to the position of the body in relation to the ball and target. PLAYers are positioned in a side orientation to the target similar to hitting in baseball or softball. Ideally, the:

- Clubface is designed to point or aim toward the desired target (also called “square” to the target), and
- Body is aligned approximately parallel to the intended target line.
 - Imagine a railroad track with the target line being the far side of the track and the PLAYER’s body line being along the near side of the track.



LEARNING TO GET READY TO SWING

 Mastery-driven ideas for creating golf games that must be integrated seamlessly with life skills:	 Corresponding open-ended questions coaches can ask to empower youth :
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore different ways to hold the club, as well as amount of pressure when holding the club. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>What happens when you hold the club with your hands closer together? Farther apart? With a tighter hold? A looser hold? Use a 10-finger hold? An interlock hold? An overlap hold? Another hold that you make up?</i> <i>How do you hold the club on shots you like?</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore different ways to set-up to the ball (stand tall, bend way over, somewhere in the middle). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>What happens when you set-up to the ball _____ (standing tall, etc.)?</i> <i>How do you set-up to the ball on shots you like?</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore different widths of stance (really wide, really narrow, etc.). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>What happens when you take a stance that is _____ (really wide, etc.)?</i> <i>How wide or narrow do you set-up to the ball on the shots you like?</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore different ball positions (far back, far forward, etc.). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>What happens when you position the ball _____ (far back, etc.)?</i> <i>Where do you position the ball on the shots you like?</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore different ways to aim the clubface and align the body. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>What happens when you aim (a little left, really left, etc.) and align (a little right, really right, etc.)?</i> <i>How do you aim the clubface on shots you like?</i> <i>How do you align your body on shots you like?</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use your preshot routine on each shot. Be aware of the progression of thoughts, feelings and behaviors throughout your routine. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>What order do you do things on the shots you like?</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use your preshot routine on each shot. Experiment with NOT taking a practice swing on some of the shots. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>What can you discover with a practice swing?</i> <i>How does using a practice swing improve your play?</i> (Note: If it doesn't, don't use one and a side benefit is to speed up your pace of play.)



SEE P. 30 IN THE LIFE SKILLS SECTION OF THIS GUIDE FOR A SEAMLESS DELIVERY TIP PROVIDING AN EXAMPLE OF HOW GET READY TO SWING MAY BE PAIRED WITH CORE LESSON 17: SETTING GOALS THAT ARE POSITIVE AND IMPORTANT TO YOU.

Note: This pairing is NOT required; however, it is a suggested starting point for those who are becoming familiar with the seamless delivery of the Life Skills Experience.

THE FIRST TEE GOLF FUNDAMENTAL: BODY BALANCE



BODY BALANCE refers to how a PLAYER stands, moves and maintains stability before, during and after swinging a club, and includes static and dynamic balance.

At the Birdie level, PLAYers will explore what it means to have a “balanced finish” when they complete their swinging motion as well as how to start in a balanced position.

Balanced finish—Typically, when the PLAYER completes the putting stroke, his/her weight is similarly balanced as it was prior to the stroke. When the PLAYER completes the chipping motion, slightly more of his/her weight is on the target-side shoe. And when the PLAYER completes the pitching and full-swing motions, his/her weight is almost entirely on the target-side shoe. Additionally, for chip shots, pitch shots and full-swings, the PLAYER’s:

- Toe of the non target-side shoe is lightly balanced on the ground,
- Belt buckle is facing, or just left of, the target, and
- Balance is maintained until after the ball lands or stops rolling.

Imagine the PLAYER is holding his/her finish in a balanced position while posing for the camera.



PUTT



CHIP



PITCH



FULL-SWING

Balanced start—Weight is distributed fairly evenly between the target-side and non-target-side shoe prior to making a stroke or swing:

KEY = First number in each ratio below refers to percentage of weight on the target-side shoe.

- *Putt* = approximately 50/50 to 60/40
- *Chip* = approximately 60/40
- *Pitch* = approximately 50/50 to 60/40
- *Full-swing* = approximately 40/60 to 50/50

For most strokes/swings, the PLAYER’s weight is slightly more on the balls versus heels of the shoes.

DEVELOPING BODY BALANCE



Mastery-driven ideas for creating golf games that must be integrated seamlessly with life skills:



Corresponding open-ended questions coaches can ask to **empower youth**:

- Ensure that your stroke finishes before looking for the result; hold finish for three seconds.

- *What are you aware of when you hold your finish?*

- Practice various lies (uphill, downhill, side hill) on the golf course; notice how balance changes when you finish the swing.

- *Which lies are more/less challenging for you?*
- *What do you do to hold your balanced finish on the various lies?*

- Continue to utilize exercises such as swinging with eyes closed to increase balance awareness prior, during and after each shot.

- *What is it like when swinging with eyes closed?*
- *How do you adjust your swing to have a balanced finish with your eyes closed?*

- Know what balanced posture looks like for you. Use a mirror to give yourself a picture.

- *What does your balanced posture look like?*
- *How is it the same/different than your friends?*

- Make adjustments such as foot flare (target-side shoe pointing more toward the target) and width (wide, narrow) for different conditions.

- *How does adjusting foot flare affect your balance?*
- *How does adjusting width of stance affect your balance?*



SEE P. 41 IN THE LIFE SKILLS SECTION OF THIS GUIDE FOR A SEAMLESS DELIVERY TIP PROVIDING AN EXAMPLE OF HOW BODY BALANCE MAY BE PAIRED WITH CORE LESSON 18: SETTING GOALS THAT ARE SPECIFIC AND UNDER YOUR CONTROL.

Note: This pairing is NOT required; however, it is a suggested starting point for those who are becoming familiar with the seamless delivery of the Life Skills Experience.

THE FIRST TEE GOLF FUNDAMENTAL: CLUBFACE AND BALL CONTACT



CLUBFACE AND BALL CONTACT encompass:

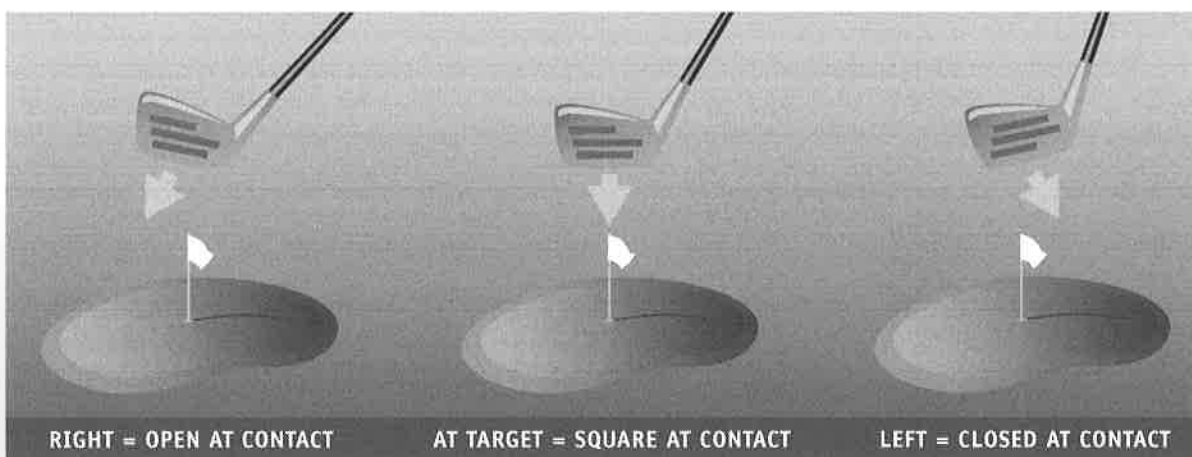
- clubface direction at contact,
- centeredness of hit, and
- impact position.

In almost all instances, solid contact between the clubface and ball occur when the clubface is pointing toward the target when it contacts the ball and when the PLAYER swings through the ball to the target which results in the bottom of the swing occurring after ball contact versus before ball contact. PLAYers at the Birdie level will continue to experience and understand the importance of clubface and ball contact with an emphasis on exploring how the direction at contact can influence the direction the ball goes. Birdie-level PLAYers also will experience and understand the importance of centeredness of hit.

Clubface direction at contact—in simplified terms, the direction the clubface points when the clubface makes contact with the ball is the direction the ball will go.

- If the clubface points right (or “open”) of the target at ball contact = then, the ball typically will go right of the target.
- If the clubface points directly at the target (or “square”) at ball contact = then, the ball typically will go at the target.
- If the clubface points left (or “closed”) of the target at ball contact = then, the ball typically will go left of the target.

For the Right-handed PLAYER:



THEN BALL GOES RIGHT OF TARGET

THEN BALL GOES AT TARGET

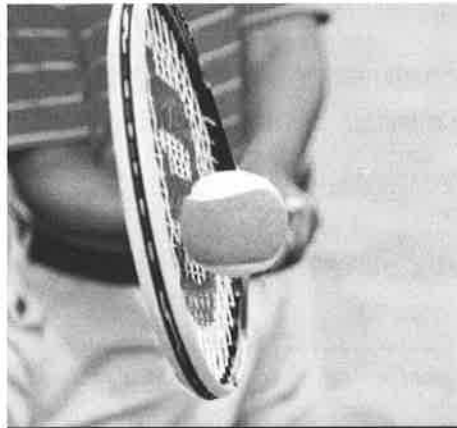
THEN BALL GOES LEFT OF TARGET

Centeredness of hit—The precise clubface location that strikes the ball may vary horizontally or vertically on the clubface.

- In general, when the ball is struck in the center of the clubface (for irons) or just above the center of the clubface (for woods), the ball will generally travel a greater distance.
- The ideal place to strike the ball with the clubface is commonly called the sweet spot.
- Typically, it is easier to hit the sweet spot by starting with smaller swing motions (putt or chip) and then progressing to bigger swing motions (pitch or full-swing).



CENTEREDNESS OF HIT: BASEBALL



CENTEREDNESS OF HIT: TENNIS



CENTEREDNESS OF HIT: GOLF

DEVELOPING CLUBFACE AND BALL CONTACT



Mastery-driven ideas for creating golf games that must be integrated seamlessly with life skills:



Corresponding open-ended questions coaches can ask to **empower youth**:

- Use an impact bag or similar teaching tool (rug or noodle), that will help PLAYers experience the clubface pointing directly at the target at contact.

- *What does it feel like/sound like when your clubface is pointing at the target at contact?*
- *What does it feel like/sound like when your clubface is point to the left (or right) of the target at contact?*

- Explore the extremes (clubface way open/way closed at contact) and then the in-between (clubface directly at target).

- *What does it look like/feel like/sound like when your clubface is way open/closed at contact?*
- *What does it look like/feel like/sound like when your clubface is pointed at the target at contact?*

- Use activities to increase body and/or club awareness leading to solid contact.

- *What do you do to create more solid contact?*
- *What do you look like, feel like, etc., when you make solid contact? What does it sound like?*

- Experiment with different face angles and impact points to see how the golf ball reacts.

- *How is the flight of the ball affected when you strike the ball with the clubface square/open a little/closed a little/open a lot/closed a lot?*

- Explore the influence of various lies and environment on clubface and ball contact.

- *How do various lies (rough, direct, pine needles, etc.) affect the clubface and ball contact?*
- *What do you do to adjust to various lies to increase the probability of centeredness of contact?*



SEE P. 51 IN THE LIFE SKILLS SECTION OF THIS GUIDE FOR A SEAMLESS DELIVERY TIP PROVIDING AN EXAMPLE OF HOW CLUBFACE AND BALL CONTACT MAY BE PAIRED WITH
CORE LESSON 19: SETTING DIFFERENT TYPES OF GOALS.

Note: This pairing is NOT required; however, it is a suggested starting point for those who are becoming familiar with the seamless delivery of the Life Skills Experience.

THE FIRST TEE GOLF FUNDAMENTAL: SWING RHYTHM

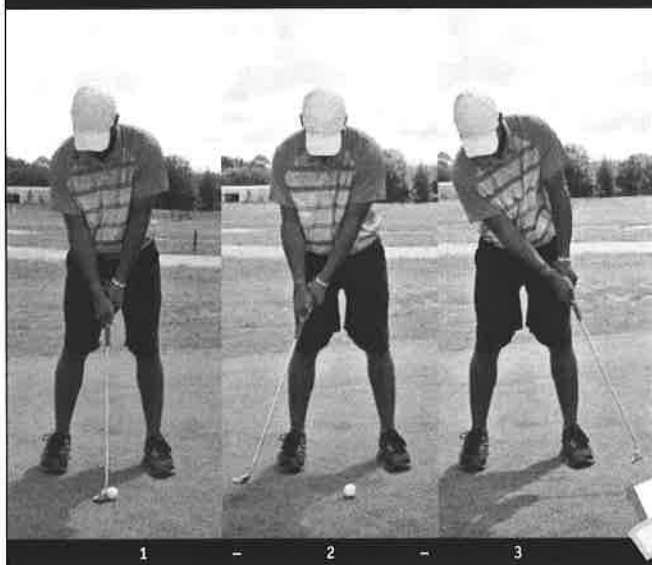


SWING RHYTHM is a visual flow, or internal timing among parts of a swing, that occurs as one continuous swinging motion. Ideally, a PLAYER's swing rhythm has a steady or smooth application of speed without any sudden bursts of effort. Related concepts that influence swing rhythm are: (a) swing tempo and (b) swing sequencing. PLAYERS will explore various methods to develop their swing rhythm.

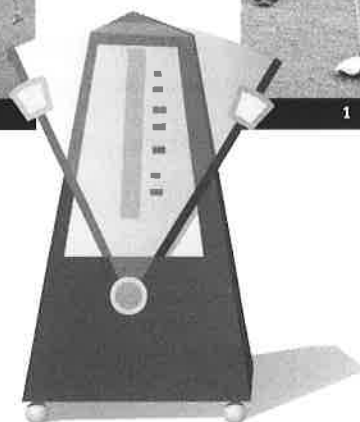
Swing tempo—the overall speed or pace of the putt, chip, pitch or full-swing motions.

- Each PLAYER has a swing tempo unique to him/her.
- The key for each PLAYER is to explore and find his/her natural swing tempo and then practice maintaining his/her swing tempo under variable conditions.
- As a PLAYER becomes more advanced, s/he can experiment with using different, but steady swing tempos that will enable her/him to hit a wider array of shots.



PUTT



FULL-SWING



DEVELOPING SWING RHYTHM

 Mastery-driven ideas for creating golf games that must be integrated seamlessly with life skills:	 Corresponding open-ended questions coaches can ask to empower youth :
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use different sports and Fundamental Movement Skills, such as throwing a ball or swinging a racquet, to connect rhythm to the golf swing. • Complete all motions from both sides of body. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>How is swing rhythm in golf the same or different than throwing a ball, etc.?</i> • <i>How does proper sequencing—stepping into it—help you throw or hit a ball farther?</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporate tempo—swing as slow and as fast as you can and still keep your balance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What are you aware of on your slowest swings? And your fastest swings?</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verbalize phrases (“tic-toc,” or “back-through”) on the backswing and forward swing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>How does the rhythm of your backswing and forward swing compare?</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up games that create effective sequence of motion without instruction (Happy Gilmore—step into shot). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What have you noticed about your body and/or the clubface and ball contact through these games?</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make three to five continuous swings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What are you aware of when you swing continuously?</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Putt to small targets and big targets (every other putt). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What do you notice about your rhythm? Do you notice any changes (putting with a jerky rhythm to the smaller target)?</i>



SEE P. 61 IN THE LIFE SKILLS SECTION OF THIS GUIDE FOR A SEAMLESS DELIVERY TIP PROVIDING AN EXAMPLE OF HOW SWING RHYTHM MAY BE PAIRED WITH CORE LESSON 20: GETTING TO YOUR GOAL.

Note: This pairing is NOT required; however, it is a suggested starting point for those who are becoming familiar with the seamless delivery of the Life Skills Experience.

THE FIRST TEE GOLF FUNDAMENTAL: ROUTINES



A PRESHOT ROUTINE is a repeatable and purposeful process that best prepares PLAYers physically, mentally and emotionally prior to each shot.



A POSTSHOT ROUTINE is a physical, mental and emotional process that helps PLAYers learn and build confidence from the previous shot. PLAYers will explore various methods to develop a preshot and postshot routine.

PRESHOT ROUTINE

PLAYers will build on the routine they have established as part of developing target awareness and getting ready to swing. At this advanced level of the Life Skills Experience, the physical, mental and emotional aspects of the preshot routine should be explored in-depth. Breathing awareness should be incorporated into all preshot (and postshot) routines. Specifically, coaches should help PLAYers continue to develop the mental and emotional aspects of preparing for a shot.

Pace of Play Reminder:

An effective preshot routine can easily take 20 seconds or less!

Mental and emotional aspects—Refer to what PLAYers think and feel prior to a shot.

- Have PLAYers focus on becoming aware of what mental and emotional states help them hit their best shots more consistently as part of the process for developing a preshot routine.
 - **For example:** *What do PLAYers think, feel, see, hear, do, etc. before their best shots? How does this vary between the stronger and weaker areas of their game?*
- Once these states are identified, practicing their preshot routine enables PLAYers to develop their mental and emotional skills similar to how they develop physical skills.



POSTSHOT ROUTINE

Coaches should help PLAYers develop a postshot routine that facilitates (a) staying emotionally neutral to an undesirable process and/or outcome and (b) storing a desirable process and/or outcome in long-term memory.

Emotionally neutral response to an undesirable process and/or outcome—Respond neutrally rather than with strong negative emotions after an undesirable process or outcome.

- When PLAYers can respond neutrally or non-emotionally to the undesirable shot, then it will most likely not be stored and recalled in a future similar situation.
- One way to respond more neutrally is for PLAYers to pretend they are watching someone else (third-person perspective versus first-person experience), and then they can notice and learn from what happens without attaching such strong emotions to the event.
- PLAYers should be encouraged to find something positive about the process or experience, regardless of the outcome.

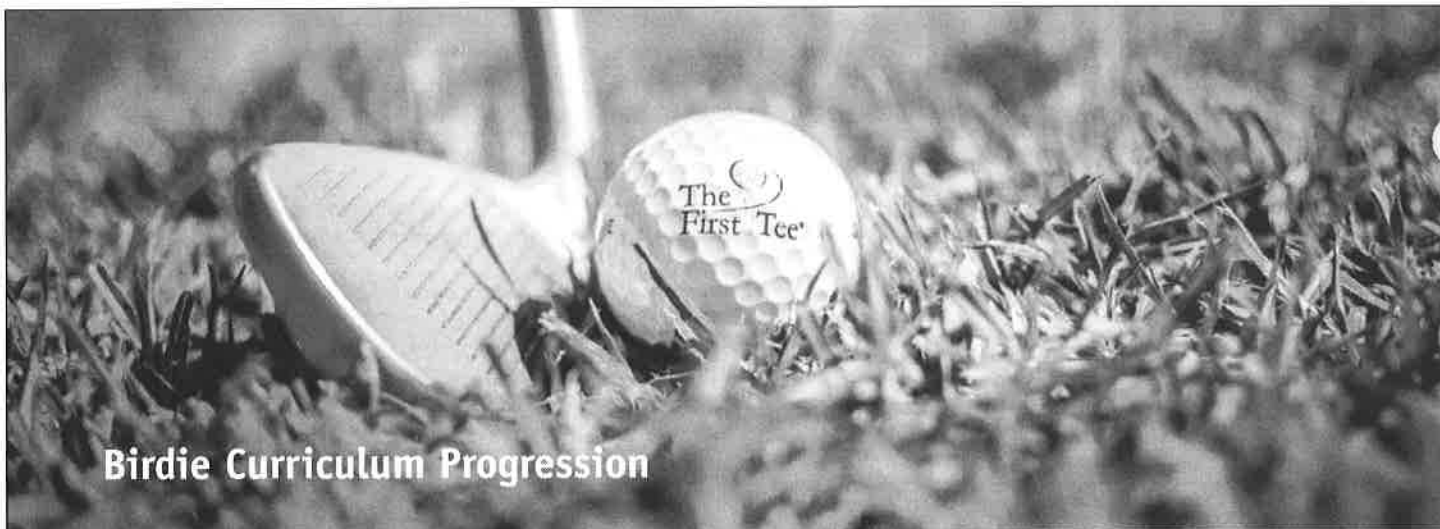
DEVELOPING ROUTINES: PRESHOT AND POSTSHOT

 Mastery-driven ideas for creating golf games that must be integrated seamlessly with life skills:	 Corresponding open-ended questions coaches can ask to empower youth :
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time how long it takes to pick up your bag and walk to next shot (be fast, safe and courteous). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>On average, how long does it take you to walk to your next shot?</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce intermediate target and experience aiming the clubface at an intermediate target. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What is your intermediate target?</i> • <i>How does having an intermediate target help?</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop awareness and purpose for pre- and postshot routines; include mental/emotional components. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What are your routines?</i> • <i>What do you need to modify to improve one or more of them?</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time preshot routine and ensure fast pace of play; only use practice swing if it has purpose. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>How long is your preshot routine?</i> • <i>How consistent (in seconds) is your routine?</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify something you did well after each hole. Record on scorecard. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What is something you did well today (be specific)?</i>



SEE P. 72 IN THE LIFE SKILLS SECTION OF THIS GUIDE FOR A SEAMLESS DELIVERY TIP PROVIDING AN EXAMPLE OF HOW PRESHOT ROUTINES MAY BE PAIRED WITH CORE LESSON 21: DEALING WITH CHALLENGES.

Note: This pairing is NOT required; however, it is a suggested starting point for those who are becoming familiar with the seamless delivery of the Life Skills Experience.



Birdie Curriculum Progression

On the following pages, the Golf Skills curriculum content is presented in a progressive and condensed form for the Birdie level. Specifically, the curriculum progression demonstrates a way for The First Tee Nine Golf Fundamentals at the Birdie level—and corresponding factors of influence (p. 103)—to be chunked into simpler content pieces for participants to explore and learn.

For example, if coaches look at distance-response (see chart on p. 127), they will notice a progression at the Birdie level continues with an emphasis on size or length of motion and club selection for the chip, pitch and full-swing:

The rationale for a general progression of distance-response is when PLAYers are at younger ages, speed (or full force) is easier to develop than when they get older (remember to consider both chronological and developmental ages).

Consequently, it is developmentally-appropriate to encourage PLAYer- and Par-level participants to swing with speed—while changing the size or length of motion—rather than having them adjust the speed of their swing to anything less than full-force.

As PLAYers develop cognitively, they can begin to add club selection as an additional way to modify their distance-response (Par and Birdie levels). As they continue to progress physically, PLAYers can start to change and control force, so variable amount of energy or speed applied to the golf swing is the third and final factor of influence on distance-response (Eagle level).

Coaches should modify the learning environment to accommodate individual differences of young people. In doing so, coaches may choose to use what is listed on the following pages and/or develop learning progressions of their own.

Birdie Level

Objectives

1. PLAYERS develop their method for **distance-response** when playing golf.
2. PLAYERS develop their method for **target awareness** when playing golf.
3. PLAYERS develop their method for **getting ready to swing** when playing golf.
4. PLAYERS explore different methods, as well as develop their own method for having good **body balance** when playing golf.
5. PLAYERS explore different methods, as well as develop their own method for making solid **clubface and ball contact** when playing golf.
6. PLAYERS experience and understand the importance of **swing rhythm**, explore different swing rhythms and develop their swing rhythm when playing golf.
7. PLAYERS experience and understand the importance of **routines: preshot and postshot**, explore different preshot and postshot routines, and develop their preshot and postshot routines when playing golf.

Required: Coaches should create multiple opportunities for Birdie-level participants to experience, understand, explore and develop seven of the Nine Golf Fundamentals: (1) distance-response, (2) target awareness, (3) get ready to swing, (4) body balance, (5) clubface and ball contact, (6) swing rhythm, and (7) routines: preshot and postshot.

Recommended: Coaches are encouraged to cover all Nine Golf Fundamentals with older and/or more skilled Birdie-level participants.

EMPOWER YOUTH



COACH PHILOSOPHY:

What does a relationship that empowers youth look like? Sound like?

Coach:

- ✓ ...asked open-ended questions when appropriate
- ✓ ...allowed others to complete sentences without interruption
- ✓ ...treated PLAYERS as experts on themselves
- ✓ ...created opportunities for self-discovery

Note: Observable behaviors above are taken from *The First Tee Coach Observation Form*.

CREATING OPTIMAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

- **COACHING FOCUS**—Place less emphasis on “what” to do and more emphasis on exploring “how” to do it to accomplish Birdie-level objectives and develop PLAYers’ own methods for distance-response, target awareness, etc. Continue to focus coaching and feedback on external cues over internal cues.
- **PLAYING the GAME**—Continue to provide opportunities for PLAYers to play the course or simulated courses at least 50 percent of class. For PLAYers who set goals to play high school and college golf, emphasis should turn to a mix of purposeful practice and purposeful play. Structure practice to include more variable/random practice (changing clubs, distances, preshot routine before each shot, etc.). As skill development continues to progress, include a variety of skills and shots.
- **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**—Continue to train for speed and also place an emphasis on physical endurance.
- **ENVIRONMENTAL VARIABLES**—Encourage PLAYers to create/choose their own variables as part of their purposeful practice.
- **SPORT CONNECTION**—Continue to connect to other sports that include swing rhythm and preshot and postshot routines.

