

CORE LESSON 21: DEALING WITH CHALLENGES

Whether it is a sport like golf or life in general, few goals are ever achieved without encountering some challenges along the way. This core lesson introduces PLAYers to STAR—a life skill strategy for dealing with challenges in golf and daily life. STAR stands for Stop, Think, Anticipate and Respond. PLAYers are taught how to apply STAR to challenges they encounter as they work on the steps in their goal ladders.

Although STAR can be utilized in golf a number of ways, it will be introduced in this core activity as a preshot routine for each shot that is played. A preshot routine includes the physical, mental and emotional processes that enable PLAYers to focus in the present and best prepare for the shot at hand. A preshot routine should be used on every shot, no matter how easy or challenging the shot may appear. It does not guarantee successful outcomes; however, when utilizing an effective preshot routine, help provide PLAYers with the best chance for success as they strive to play one shot at a time.

GENERAL LEARNER OBJECTIVES

After completing multiple classes on Core Lesson 21, Birdie-level PLAYers should be able to:

- Define a challenge
- Identify challenges they face
- State the elements of STAR
- Understand how STAR can be used to address golf challenges and challenges away from The First Tee
- Demonstrate their ability to apply STAR to challenging situations when practicing and playing golf
- Experience and understand the importance of preshot and postshot routines, explore different preshot and postshot routines, and develop their preshot and postshot routines when playing golf
- Demonstrate their utilization of STAR as a preshot routine when practicing and playing golf
- Demonstrate their utilization of the 4Rs as a postshot routine (see Par Core Lesson 14) when practicing and playing golf
- Utilize STAR on more than one occasion in a situation away from The First Tee; share with coaches and other PLAYers in follow-up classes on this core lesson
- Demonstrate and exhibit the physical healthy habits of energy, play and safety

LIFE SKILL CATEGORIES ADDRESSED

- Interpersonal skills
- Self-management
- Goal-setting
- Resilience skills

SPECIFIC LIFE SKILL STRATEGY DEVELOPED THROUGH THIS CORE LESSON:

- STAR

SUGGESTED BIRDIE PROGRESSION FOR GOLF SKILL CATEGORIES AND GOLF FUNDAMENTAL

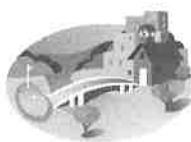


- Routines: preshot and postshot (for putt, chip, pitch, full-swing)

COACHES' SEAMLESS DELIVERY TIPS



EXAMPLE Coaches help PLAYers develop interpersonal skills, self-management, goal-setting and resilience skills by integrating Birdie Core Lesson 21 (Dealing with Challenges) with the golf skill categories—putt, chip, pitch and/or full-swing; and golf fundamental—preshot routine. In this example, coaches create games that require PLAYers to integrate physical, mental and emotional aspects of their preshot routine as they apply STAR to identify and deal with challenges.



Bridge to Golf & Life by asking questions such as: Ask PLAYers to breakdown each element of STAR and describe how they apply it to their preshot routine. *When you Stop, what are you doing? When you Think, what are you thinking about in your preshot routine? How might you use the healthy habit of vision here? When you Anticipate what does that help you do in your preshot routine? How might you use the healthy habit of mind when you Anticipate? Discuss how Respond is like PLAY. What are some challenges PLAYers face while pursuing goals outside of The First Tee? How might you apply STAR to a non-golf situation?*



EXAMPLE Coaches help PLAYers in the development of interpersonal skills, self-management, goal-setting and resilience skills by integrating Par Core Lesson 14 (Staying Cool [4Rs])³ with the golf skill categories—putt, chip, pitch and/or full-swing; and golf fundamental—postshot routine. In this example, coaches create games that require PLAYers to integrate physical, mental and emotional aspects of their postshot routine as they apply STAR to identify and deal with challenges.



Bridge to Golf & Life by asking questions such as: *What type of response do think is most helpful after a shot....super emotional by feeling extra high or really down or emotionally neutral? Respond to the statement: "Your response from one shot is the first element to prepare for your next shot." Ask PLAYers to recite the 4Rs from PAR. When you Replay, what are your thinking about? How are you using your mind to help you? When you Relax, what are you doing? How are you using your breath to help your body? When you get Ready, how might you use the healthy habit of vision? How is Redo like Respond in STAR? What are some challenges PLAYers face while pursuing goals outside of The First Tee? How might you apply the 4Rs to a non-golf situation?*

³ This is an example of how to bridge back to previous levels and core lessons.

LIFE SKILL CORE ACTIVITIES

During the first class on Core Lesson 21, coaches are encouraged to deliver at least one core activity below seamlessly with at least two golf skill categories (putt, chip, pitch and full-swing) and one of The First Tee Nine Golf Fundamentals. (See previously suggested Birdie progression as well as the Golf Skills section of this guide for more information.)

Depending upon time available per class and the total number of classes, coaches may save activities for subsequent classes. Coaches are encouraged to deliver each core activity and, as they gain experience, develop additional activities for their PLAYers.



Go to the members' side of www.thefirsttee.org to find downloadable PDFs from the Birdie Yardage Book.

Life Skill Core Activity 21.1: Face Your Challenges with STAR

PLAYers identify two challenges they may face to achieve their putting goal. PLAYers give examples of how they could use STAR to address these challenges and then apply while playing a putting course.

Life Skill Core Activity 21.2: Practice Using STAR

PLAYers apply STAR to decision-making on the golf course. PLAYers determine how they would play a challenging hole and then apply while playing golf.

Life Skill Core Activity 21.3: Developing a Preshot Routine

PLAYers develop a preshot routine using STAR as the framework.

Life Skill Core Activity 21.4: Challenges to Your Golf Goal

PLAYers identify challenges they face in pursuing their golf goal.

Life Skill Core Activity 21.5: Challenges to Your Goal for Having Fun While Playing Golf

PLAYers discuss challenges they face as they pursue their goal for Having Fun While Playing Golf.

Life Skill Core Activity 21.6: Challenges to Your Goal for Home or School

PLAYers discuss how to apply STAR to a non-golf situation. PLAYers identify challenges they face while pursuing goals outside The First Tee.

CORE LESSON 21 INTRODUCTION: DEALING WITH CHALLENGES

Supplies needed: The First Tee Birdie Yardage Books, pencils, whiteboard or easel chart (optional)

1. Discuss the meaning of challenges in the context of pursuing goals. Refer PLAYers to their Yardage Book to identify challenges. They will learn a challenge is something that makes it harder to reach your goal. On the golf course, bunkers, water hazards and deep rough are challenges that can make it harder to shoot your Personal Par. Some challenges may be:
 - Not practicing what you have been taught about the golf swing
 - Being unsure about how to do something right
 - Wasting time on unimportant things
 - Setting too many goals at the same time
 - Skipping some of the steps in your goal ladder
 - Getting angry or frustrated
2. Some of the toughest challenges are the ones we create. Those challenges may center on making bad decisions or choices. Some decisions are small, like what club to use on a shot or what to wear to school; some are bigger, like what friends to choose. And some are really big, like what kind of job or career you want to have in the future. For example, if your goal is to graduate from high school, getting involved with the wrong crowd, skipping classes, doing drugs or drinking alcohol will make it a lot harder to stay on track toward your goal.

Identifying Challenges

- Ask if PLAYers have achieved a step on their goal ladders.
 - Define and give examples of challenges in golf and in life.
 - Share a story about a challenge you faced. Be sure to share any obstacles or roadblocks—things that may have made it more difficult for you to reach your goal.
 - Ask PLAYers to give examples of challenges they have encountered.
3. Emphasize the need to make good decisions when facing a challenge. Then introduce the STAR method. Have PLAYers turn to the appropriate pages in their Yardage Book to find a description of what the letters in STAR stand for.



S stands for **STOP** and take a deep breath.



T stands for **THINK** of all your choices.



A stands for **ANTICIPATE** what could happen (good or bad) as a result of each.



R stands for **RESPOND** by selecting the best choice of what to do.

4. Explain each of the steps in STAR in more detail. Be sure to give lots of examples and involve PLAYers in the discussion. The scripts suggest scenarios you can use. (Note: If you have a whiteboard or flipchart available, write down the choices and consequences that PLAYers offer in response to the situations cited in the examples.)



STOP: When you face a challenge in life, the first step in deciding how to overcome it is to STOP what you are doing or what you are getting ready to do. This allows you to pause and gives your mind a break. One thing that helps some people is to take a deep breath. *What other things can you do to calm down or relieve pressures?*

Possible answers:

- Count to 10.
- Stretch and relax your muscles.
- Tell yourself to calm down.
- Talk to someone about the situation.
- Think about something else for a moment.



THINK: The next step in good decision-making is to THINK of your choices. For example, you have been saving your money to buy a new computer when a friend urges you to buy a big box of used golf balls from him. He says you can resell the balls to other golfers at the course for a lot more money than you paid for them. Buying the golf balls will use up a big chunk of the money you have saved. You have a number of choices. *What are some of the choices you have in this situation?* Spend a few minutes gathering responses. Encourage PLAYers to think of as many choices as possible.



ANTICIPATE: The third step is to ANTICIPATE the consequences of each choice. Anticipate means to look ahead. A consequence is what happens as a result of the choice you make. So look ahead at what could happen as a result of the choice you make. Consequences can be good or bad, and there can be more than one consequence for each choice. When you anticipate the consequences of each choice, think how the choice will affect your ability to reach your goals. *What about our example of whether or not to buy the golf balls? What are some of the consequences you can anticipate?*

Have PLAYers describe the consequences of the choices that were identified earlier.



RESPOND: After you have identified all your choices and you have anticipated the consequences of each choice, the final step is to RESPOND by picking the best choice. *What makes something the best choice?* Spend a few minutes gathering responses. The best choice is the one that helps you get to your goal. There is no right or wrong choice. What one person considers the best choice may differ from what another person thinks is best. *What do you think is the best choice in the example we've been talking about?*

Spend a few minutes gathering responses.

LIFE SKILL CORE ACTIVITY 21.1: Face Your Challenges With STAR

Supplies needed: The First Tee Birdie Yardage Books, pencils, whiteboard or easel chart (optional), golf clubs, golf balls

1. Ask PLAYers to turn to the appropriate pages in their Yardage Book.
2. Ask them to think of two challenges they have come up against in pursuing their putting goal they developed previously in their Yardage Book. Have them write down the two challenges in the space provided.
3. Encourage PLAYers to think of how they would apply the STAR approach for the challenges they wrote down.
4. Look at the challenges you have listed, and ask yourself these questions:
 - *What are you going to do to stop and relax?*
 - *What are your choices?*
 - *What are the consequences of each choice?*
 - *What is your best choice?*
5. Gather responses and write them on a whiteboard or flipchart placed next to the putting green if you have one.
6. Have PLAYers play a putting course (set up in advance to be quite challenging and adheres to certification guidelines) and apply STAR based upon what they wrote down in their Yardage Book.

LIFE SKILL CORE ACTIVITY 21.2: Practice Using STAR

Supplies needed: None required

1. In this activity, PLAYers practice applying STAR to golf-related situations. Make the point that STAR can be used to make on-the-spot decisions. In these situations, you quickly go through the STAR steps mentally (in contrast to the more in-depth, written analysis they did in Life Skill Core Activity 21.1). Point out that such situations come up all the time during a round of golf.

You can conduct this activity with the full group or break the PLAYers into smaller groups, with a coach and different roleplay situations assigned to each group.

Examples of situations:

- A risk/reward shot from the fairway
 - A shot out of a bunker with a high lip
 - Club selection from various distances and conditions
 - Playing with another PLAYer who is continually cheating
 - Faced with a situation that requires you to call a penalty on yourself, even when no one else is around
2. Set up the situation and ask for volunteers to demonstrate how they would use STAR to address their situation. For example:

Let's say you are faced with this situation and you need to make a decision. You are playing in a tournament and you want to do your best. Your ball is behind some trees. You can chip out to the fairway or try to hit between the trees to the green. *How would you use STAR in this situation?*

LIFE SKILL CORE ACTIVITY 21.3: Developing a Preshot Routine

Supplies needed: Golf clubs, golf balls

Share with PLAYers the value of establishing a preshot pattern of behavior, using STAR to prepare for each golf shot and enhance performance.

1. Explain what a preshot routine is and that most professional and competitive amateur golfers have one. Typical elements you might mention are:
 - Checking the yardage, the lie and the wind
 - Selecting a target
 - Picking a club
 - Taking a practice swing to help see and feel the shot they want to make
 - Walking into the shot from behind the ball
 - Taking a deep breath as they take one last look at the target
 - Starting their swing when their eyes come back to the ball (responding to the target)
2. Go through a preshot routine for the group, talking through each element. Use STAR as the framework.
3. Explain how a preshot routine helps PLAYers to keep their focus in the present rather than the past or the future and can help enhance performance.
4. Have PLAYers turn to the appropriate pages in their Yardage Book and develop a preshot routine using STAR as their guide.
5. Remind them that a preshot routine does not need to be long; it only needs to include what is essential to get their mind clear and their body ready for the shot at hand. Coaches should ask PLAYers why they are doing what they are doing, especially if their preshot routine appears to take too long and/or if they are standing over the golf ball for a long time.
6. Then have them try hitting some balls two different ways:
 - Just hit ball after ball with no preshot routine.
 - Go through a preshot routine prior to hitting each ball.
 - Have a partner write down each step or motion made in the preshot routine. The PLAYER should then add what they were thinking about or focused on while making those physical moves; for example, step behind the ball on the target line to imagine where I want the ball to go and how it will get there (fade or draw).