

## CORE LESSON 10: EXPLORING THE GAME

The PLAYer level established the groundwork for participants of The First Tee to become lifelong PLAYers of the game. Through purposeful play, PLAYers were provided experiences on the golf course or a simulated course to learn life skills and golf skills, The First Tee Code of Conduct, an appreciation for the game of golf, its etiquette and the Rules of Golf.



As participants transition from PLAYer to Par, coaches should keep in mind that learning occurs over time and concepts presented at the PLAYer level need to be explored more in-depth. Consequently, Par builds on the PLAYer level and reinforces previously learned life skills and golf skills in a more comprehensive manner. To facilitate learning, coaches should continue to provide PLAYers with opportunities to engage in purposeful play and games to drive their progression from “curiosity to commitment” and will motivate PLAYers to explore the skills and values central to The First Tee Life Skills Experience.

At the Par level, participants are introduced to the mental side of playing golf while learning skills that will help them on and off the golf course. In addition to developing interpersonal skills, a main focus of the Par level is to assist PLAYers in acquiring several self-management strategies which will help them manage their thoughts, emotions and behaviors in order to perform at their best on and off the golf course. The focus of the Par core lessons is on internal self-management. This type of awareness helps provide the underpinnings for the external self-management (such as decision-making) and goal-setting skills that PLAYers will acquire as they advance through The Life Skills Experience levels.

Core Lesson 10 provides the bridge from PLAYer to Par and offers opportunities for participants to explore what is fun about playing golf and learn to explore the game through non-golf activities. Exploring the game builds on the PLAYer-level experiences of playing the game and leads to subsequent Par-level experiences—using the three tips for having fun and personal par—which provide specific strategies for increasing enjoyment and confidence in golf and life.

The progression of core activities in Core Lesson 10 encourages PLAYers to use the self-management strategy referred to as GAME. GAME is an acronym for: **G**o play, **A**nd explore, **M**y interests, and then **E**njoy what’s fun for me.

## GENERAL LEARNER OBJECTIVES

After completing multiple classes on Core Lesson 10, Par-level PLAYers should be able to:

- Exhibit behaviors reflective of the Nine Core Values and Code of Conduct through interactions with other PLAYers and coaches in golf-related settings.
- Understand (Par 3), demonstrate (Par 4) and exhibit (Par 5) life skills and related strategies to help them on and off the golf course.
- Understand (Par 3), demonstrate (Par 4) and exhibit (Par 5) the GAME strategy to explore their interests related to golf and then explain what is most fun for them about playing the game.
- Explore different methods for distance-response when playing golf.
- Utilize the GAME strategy to explore their interests related to activities outside of golf and then explain what is most fun about those activities.
- Understand (Par 3), demonstrate (Par 4) and exhibit (Par 5) the physical healthy habits of energy, play and safety.

## LIFE SKILL CATEGORY ADDRESSED

- Self-management

## SPECIFIC LIFE SKILL STRATEGY DEVELOPED THROUGH THIS CORE LESSON—GAME

Go play - And explore - My interests - Enjoy what's fun for me

## SUGGESTED PAR PROGRESSION FOR GOLF SKILL CATEGORIES AND GOLF FUNDAMENTAL



- Distance-response (for putt, chip, pitch, full-swing)

### COACHES' SEAMLESS DELIVERY TIP



**EXAMPLE** Coaches assist PLAYers in the development of self-management by integrating Par Core Lesson 10 (Explore the Game) with the golf skill categories—putt, chip, pitch and/or full-swing; and golf fundamental—distance-response. This integration is accomplished when coaches create games that help PLAYers understand the importance of exploring what they find fun about golf, while at the same time developing distance-response when they are putting, chipping, pitching and/or making a full-swing. When PLAYers develop self-awareness of what they personally enjoy about the game, it will help them sustain their interest and motivation to play the game.



**Bridge to Golf & Life by asking questions such as:** *How can exploring your golf game help you improve as a PLAYer? What is a new hobby or activity away from golf that you are interested in exploring? What do you think you may enjoy about this potential new hobby or activity?* Challenge PLAYers to try a new activity before the next class and be prepared to share their experience.

## **LIFE SKILL CORE ACTIVITIES**

During each class on Core Lesson 10, coaches should 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 suggested Par progression as well as Golf Skills section of this guide for more information.)

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

### **Life Skill Core Activity 10.1: The GAME Adventure**

PLAYers use the GAME strategy to discover what is fun for them as they play a simulated golf course that includes a variety of targets with different sports equipment.

### **Life Skill Core Activity 10.2: The First Tee of \_\_\_\_\_ Scavenger Hunt**

PLAYers engage in a scavenger hunt that focuses on areas of the course they may hit while playing golf and all related terms/vocabulary they have learned being at the golf course.

### **Life Skill Core Activity 10.3: Fun Factor List**

PLAYers explore possibilities for what already makes golf fun for them and create a fun factor list.

### **Life Skill Core Activity 10.4: Getting Outside My Comfort Zone**

PLAYers explore possibilities for what else might make golf fun for them.

### **Life Skill Core Activity 10.5: Life and Golf Skills Exploration On the Course**

PLAYers explore their current skills in certain areas and determine fun ways to improve their game.

### **Life Skill Core Activity 10.6: Exploring My Game Off the Golf Course**

PLAYers explore the possibility of something they have never tried but would like to explore off the course (home, school, recreation or other).

## GETTING STARTED AT THE PAR LEVEL

**Supplies needed:** The First Tee Par Yardage Books, pencils, an actual golf yardage book

The purpose of this activity is to welcome PLAYers to the Par level and to set the course for upcoming experiences. Begin this session using the steps below:

1. Welcome everyone to the Par level.
2. Introduce yourself and the staff who will be working with you.
3. State the following information:
  - When and where you will meet
  - Facility information (check-in place, restrooms, etc.)
4. Pass out The First Tee Par Yardage Books. Explain how PLAYers will use the Yardage Book in the Par level.
5. Have PLAYers turn to the inside front cover of the Yardage Book, where they will find The First Tee Code of Conduct. Remind them this information is the same Code of Conduct that they learned about at the PLAYer level. Coaches may ask one of the PLAYers to read the first behavior listed in the Code of Conduct; then, have PLAYers take turns reading until each behavior has been read aloud.

Remind PLAYers that the Code of Conduct still applies at the Par level and even though they will be learning new things, they should always keep the Code of Conduct at the forefront of their mind, just like it's in the front of their Yardage Book. Ask them to sign their Yardage Book if they commit to following the Code of Conduct.

6. Have PLAYers look at the initial page in their Yardage Books and fill out this page.
7. Once they have completed their PLAYer profile, briefly review the life skills and golf skills, as well as some of the specific life skills and strategies to be learned and explored on the subsequent Yardage Book pages.
8. Share with the group a brief story about how you got into golf, how you learned the game, why you enjoy it and how what you have learned through golf has helped you in life—things that they too will learn about at The First Tee.
9. Encourage PLAYers to ask any questions they have about the Par level. As time allows, coaches can ask PLAYers open-ended questions to draw out what they remember learning about golf and life at the PLAYer level.



## LIFE SKILL CORE ACTIVITY 10.1: The Game Adventure

**Supplies needed:** Golf balls, SNAG® balls, tee, various golf clubs, empty garbage cans, soccer goal, football goal post, hoops, basketball hoop

The purpose of this activity is for PLAYers to use the GAME strategy to get the most out of this activity and to explore what is fun for them in games that they play, as well as their everyday life activities.

- G — Go play**—Today, they are going to play the target game adventure!
- A — And explore**—Today, PLAYers will explore what is it that they do or experience that helps them get the ball in the hole.
- M — My interests**—Today, PLAYers consider what is interesting to them about the process of getting the ball in the hole.
- E — Enjoy what's fun for me**—Today, PLAYers can walk away from class knowing more about what is fun for them, and they can choose to do it again next time whether they are playing golf or other games and activities.

1. Set up a variety of stations with each station representing an area of the golf course. Create a visible teeing ground, fairway and green.
2. Place the actual endpoint somewhere on the green, just like there is a cup on the green on each hole of the golf course.
3. Each station will have a different size ball to hit through a target or hoop. Examples of targets include a tipped over garbage can, hula hoop lying on ground, football goal post (child-size), basketball hoop (child-size), soccer goal (child-size) and so forth.
4. Ask PLAYers to pair up (groups of three or four are acceptable if the numbers and space require it) and then assign each pair to a hole for a shotgun start.
5. Have PLAYers play each hole, remembering the purpose is to get the ball to the target.
6. Depending upon time, coaches could do a mini wrap-up after PLAYers go around the course. Ask PLAYers what they enjoyed and use open-ended questions to help them explore what they did to get the ball to the target, as well as what they did to adjust to targets that were set up at different distances.
7. After the mini wrap-up, PLAYers could explore the course again, but with the added component of keeping score on a scorecard (just like playing golf).