

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 impact the distance a ball travels, including the:

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

Participants at the PLAYer level will experience and understand the importance of altering the distance the ball travels with an emphasis on size or length of motion—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 to putt, chip or pitch the ball 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 and big swing = big shot.
- Using the chip motion as an example, the following pictures show a smaller chip motion (little shot) and a larger chip motion (big shot) to hit the same club different distances.



LITTLE SHOT



BIG SHOT

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?*



THE FIRST TEE GOLF FUNDAMENTAL: TARGET AWARENESS

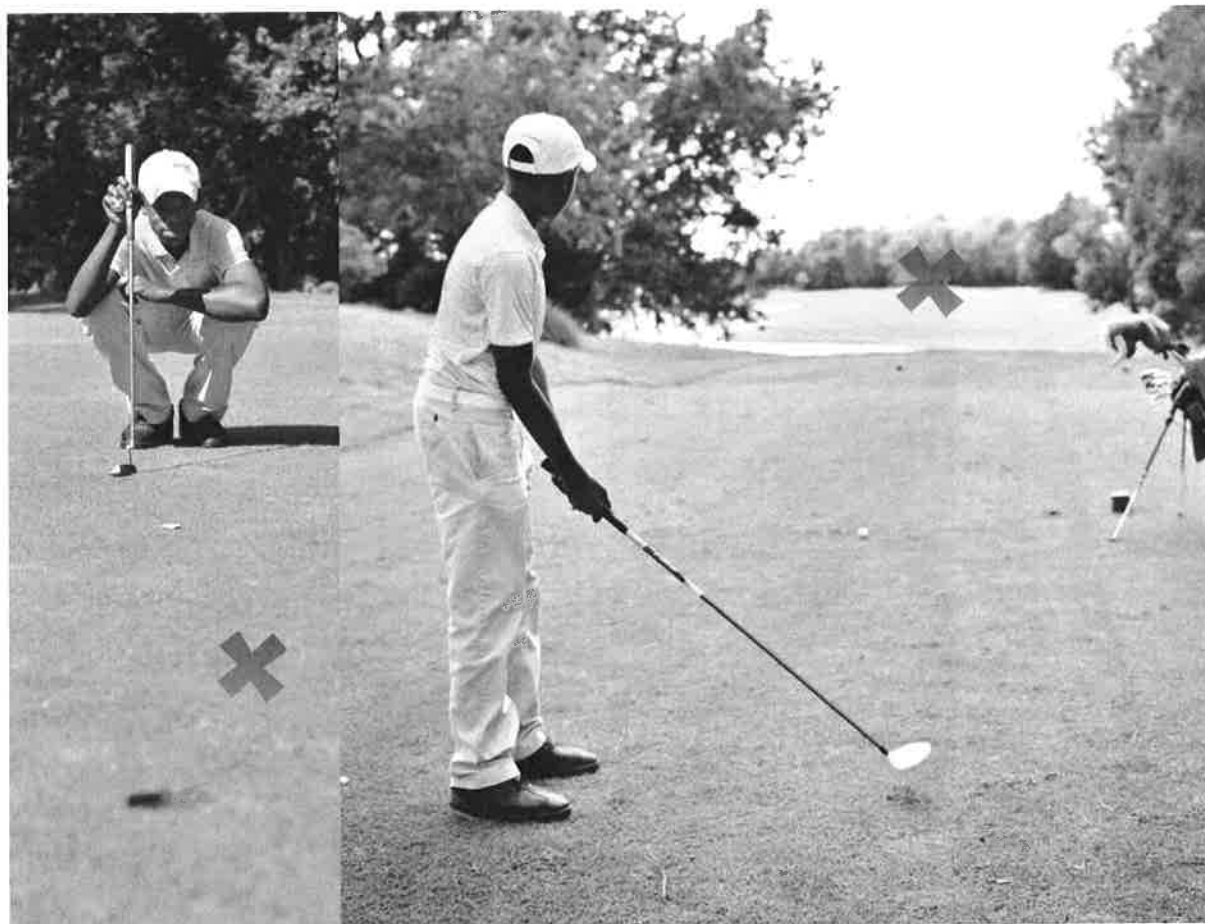


TARGET AWARENESS involves:

- a. target selection,
- b. distance to the target, and
- c. 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 experience and understand the importance of becoming more aware of their target in order to get the golf ball in the hole. At the PLAYER level, the primary focus is on target selection.

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.



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 others 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 vs. 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?*



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:

- a. hold,
- b. set-up, and
- c. aim and alignment.

PLAYers will experience and understand the importance of holding the golf club, setting-up their body to the ball, and aiming and aligning their body and clubface to a target.

Hold—Also 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 influences 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.
- 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.
 - Experience various holds for different clubs; for example, a cross-handed hold for putting.

Commonalities among holds for skilled PLAYers typically include having the:

- Hands touch one another, and
- Club more in the fingers than in the palms.

A FEW WAYS TO HOLD A CLUB*



10-FINGER



OVERLAP



OVERLAP



INTERLOCK

DID YOU KNOW? 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.

A FEW WAYS TO HOLD A PUTTER*



10-FINGER



INTERLOCK



REVERSE OVERLAP



LEFT HAND LOW

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

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).

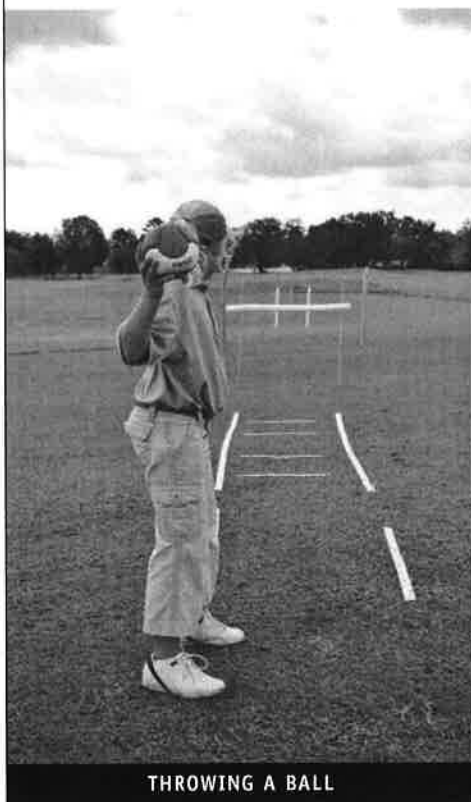
Variations in the stance, body posture and ball position can be unique based on the golf skill being performed as well as the individual, so PLAYERS should be encouraged to explore a variety of set-ups.

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:

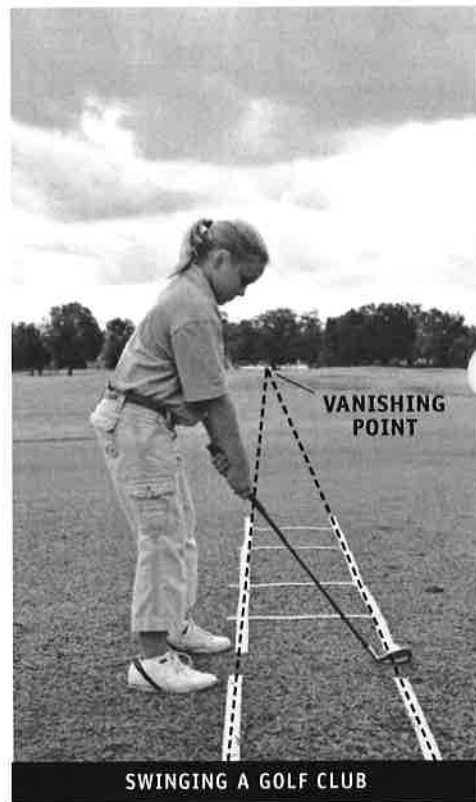
- Clubface is designed to point or aim toward the desired target, and
- Body is aligned approximately parallel to the intended target line.
 - Imagine a railroad track with the target line being the far side of the track and the PLAYER's body line being along the near side of the track.



THROWING A BALL



SWINGING A TENNIS RACKET



SWINGING A GOLF CLUB

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**:

- Explore different ways to hold the club, as well as amount of pressure when holding the club.

- *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?*
- *How do you hold the club on shots you like?*

- Explore different ways to set-up to the ball (stand tall, bend way over, somewhere in the middle).

- *What happens when you set-up to the ball _____ (standing tall, etc.)?*
- *How do you set-up to the ball on shots you like?*

- Explore different widths of stance (really wide, really narrow, etc.).

- *What happens when you take a stance that is _____ (really wide, etc.)?*
- *How wide or narrow do you set-up to the ball on the shots you like?*



NOTES