

The Need for Junior Golf programs

There is a need for more and better junior golf programs. If your junior programs are small in number, and the juniors are poorly skilled and uninformed concerning the rules and amenities of the game, then you might start looking around to find out why. The following ten questions may help you find some answers:

How does your junior program stack up?

1. Does your golf course have a regular junior day or morning that is scheduled each week during the summer months?
2. Do your juniors have an organization with a statement of purpose?
3. Is there a schedule of events or season program for the juniors that is posted or printed?
4. Are lessons or clinics offered on a regular basis for junior players?
5. Is there a substantial weekly junior turnout at your course?
6. Is there an area, a room, or a bulletin board set aside specifically for juniors?
7. Is there an active junior golf committee at your golf course which is representative of the adults, the directors or owners, the golf course staff and the junior players?
8. Are your juniors required or given an opportunity to take tests in skills and on rules and etiquette to achieve certain privileges at the course?
9. Does your junior program produce players who participate in club events, inter-clubs, city, provincial and national events?
10. Does your golf course hold an annual junior championship for its own players?

How does your program rate? If you had to answer "NO" to more than a few questions, your program probably needs help. If you have no program, you needn't feel that it requires a sophisticated feasibility study to determine a need. You'll find that by simply providing a youngster with the opportunity, securing for them good leadership, and by giving them a little recognition, you will be overwhelmed with success even where no one knew a need existed!

Three Essential Steps

There are three steps that need to be taken in the process of planning a new program or improving an old one before any action commences.

They are:

1. Determine the program's objectives.
2. Secure some resources.
3. Set your priorities.

The Objectives

In the organization of a junior golf program, it is important to understand what you are trying to accomplish. An early step in this plan should be to formulate a statement of objectives indicating the goals. These written objectives should reflect the belief that there is more to a junior golf program than "letting the kids play the course". The following objectives are sample statements of a type of an approach to junior golf that would recognize the program as having a powerful educational potential.

A young golfer should be:

1. Taught some of the game's history and traditions: its rules, expected etiquette and potential values.

2. Provided with well organized and conducted competitive experiences in which winning assumes a sensible perspective.
3. Given a program that encourages the broadening of friendships and social skills.
4. Exposed to some of the positive values that golfing situations can provide: e.g. honesty, courage, courtesy, fairness, empathy, responsibility and appreciation.
5. Afforded the opportunity to grow close to and to learn from capable and responsible adults.
6. Playing for the sake of playing and not always an award, a title, or a rating. Young golfers should be having fun!

The Resources

Is there a single secret to developing a successful junior golf program? Yes, there is. There is a "key ingredient" without which the job cannot get done. The key, is a nucleus of dedicated people. The need for people who care enough about kids to spend time with them is great! Maybe, at first, the need will be for only one or two, however, this will increase as the program expands. Besides the professionally trained staff there are volunteer people around. The job though, is to find them. If you have this magic ingredient – good people – you have the best of the possible beginnings.

The Priorities

There is another step after having enlisted those dedicated types, that step is the placement of priorities.

A decision must be made as to what is to be done first. The program will face a high risk of failure if too much is tried too soon. List the tasks in order of their importance and work on them one at a time.

Some obvious logical priorities for getting a junior golf program underway are:

1. Getting dedicated people to help.
2. Creating an atmosphere where the management or directors will encourage junior golf activity.
3. Finding equipment to be available to youngsters who have none.
4. Establishing a program of events: clinics, matches, tournaments, lessons and meetings.