



Play Collegiate Golf

"creating academic and athletic success"

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Preparing Appropriately for a Golf Tournament

Creating a Tournament Game Plan for Each Event is Integral to On-course Success

Remember the old saying - "Golf is 10% physical and 90% mental" - and use it as the means to greater on-course success this season! As you develop your 2010 golf schedule, begin to think about preparing for each tournament, the effort this will take, and what your goals are for the year. There are three "stages" of tournament golf: pre-tournament preparation; the tournament experience; and post-round / post-tournament review. As you realize, tournament scores are a major aspect of what coaches are looking at week in and week out. Therefore, make sure that your tournament schedule allows for enough time to prepare appropriately both physically and mentally for upcoming competitive rounds in an effort to create the optimal environment for success.

Pre-Tournament Preparation

Tournament golf is a challenging physical endeavor and as you phase into college golf it will become even more challenging. Most junior tournaments are 18 holes per day. At the college level you will often play 36 holes in one day, walking and carrying a heavy bag laden with towels, an umbrella, balls, rain gear, and various other items. If you are serious about college golf, prepare now! Work on your physical conditioning to develop your stamina and ensure you get enough rest prior to and during the tournament. Poor physical conditioning often results in tiring quicker during the round which may, possibly, result in making poor decisions that often create poor scores.

Also important for pre-tournament preparation is practicing correctly for upcoming competitions. Spend most of your practice time leading up to tournaments on your short game and putting. These areas will be lifesavers during tournament rounds and if coaches are watching they will pay close attention to how you construct a good score each hole if not hitting it your best. Mentally, knowing that chipping and putting are strengths of the game will help you keep a good round going and feeling confident over that three footer is as important as feeling confident swinging your driver! Other pre-tournament preparations include:

- Playing a practice round prior to the tournament and making notes in a yardage guide about the golf course;
- Creating a game plan for each hole including what you will hit off the tee and where you will aim (i.e. pick out a specific spot not just "I will hit it in the fairway") and writing this plan down in the yardage guide so that your focus each hole is on the shot at hand, not what you should hit or where to hit it off the tee or into the green (*this is the number one problem I see at junior events; pre-planning is a must if you want to maximize your tournament experience*);
- Scheduling tournaments so that there is downtime between events (*this is the next biggest problem I see; too many events in a row does not allow players to recharge and focus on each event which may result in poor performances seen by coaches*).

Tournament Experience

Get to the golf course early each day so that you don't feel rushed on the range and have ample opportunity to warm up appropriately. Start with hitting wedges and work through your bag up through to the driver. With each club, go through your pre-shot routine and try to visualize a shot from the practice round. This will get your mental side warmed up and ready to make great decisions on the course. Move to the short game facility and take time to hit some bunker shots (to test the sand consistency) and chip shots (to figure out how your chips will react on the greens).

Finish up on the practice green by putting 15 footers to a spot on the green or towards the green's edge trying to get the ball to stop at the collar. This is done to gauge the green speed and produce feel for the player without the negative presence of missing putts. Complete your putting routine by making several three, four, and five foot putts. See the ball go in the hole with a confident stroke as this will help you take a positive frame of mind to the first tee.

During the event itself, be patient and attack flags only when there is a good opportunity for a positive result. This should all be laid out in your game plan that you created during your practice round. Follow that game plan! Most tournament set-ups will have some easy pin placements, some more difficult locations, and some very hard holes. Your game plan should note where the danger zones are on the course as well as where you may be able to make some birdies. Be aware of green light, yellow light, and red light situations on the golf course and proceed appropriately, but stick to your game plan. Also, don't get down on yourself too much. Realize that every player in the event has to play the same course, under the same conditions, on the same day!

Post-Round and Post-Tournament Review

Take the time to review your round as soon after you have signed your scorecard as possible. Think through where you were successful in following your game plan, where you made mistakes, and how these successes and mistakes will help you in the next round whether it be the next day or next month. It can be hard to review a round that did not go as well in comparison to a round that you enjoyed, but there is always something to be learned from a perceived failure (and even in a bad round there will be some good shots to focus upon). When reviewing a round, focus on four areas:

- Driving accuracy (how many fairways did you hit from the tee?);
- Greens hit in regulation (how many GIRs?; did you hit some greens with hard to hit clubs such as long irons or miss some with easier to strike short irons?);
- Putting (how many putts did you have?);
- Up and down percentage.

Some Additional Thoughts For Parents...

Help your child succeed and have fun on the golf course during tournaments with the following thoughts:

- Work with your junior to organize an appropriate tournament schedule that includes time off between events to re-energize and prepare for the next event. Perhaps 12 - 15 events per year is a good target.
- Model appropriate behavior on the golf course, minding how you react to your player's shots, good or bad.
- Give good feedback such as "You did an excellent job performing your pre-shot routine" and other observable behaviors.
- Ask them if they had fun and gave it 100% effort all the time!

Good luck!

Dr. Fleming

Dr. Bruce Fleming is the founder of Play Collegiate Golf, created to mentor young women and men interested in continuing their competitive golf careers at institutions that support their academic, athletic, and personal goals.

For more information please visit playcollegiategolf.com

Establish a Routine Time to Study for Each Class

**College
Survival
Tip**



For every hour you spend in class, plan on spending about two hours outside of class. Weekly academic schedules may require more (tests, papers, reading) or less, but two hours is a normal time frame to work from when you organize your daily studying. When you organize your study time, a good tip is to try to do the same work, at the same time of day on a regular basis. This will help you get into an academic routine!