



"creating academic and athletic success"

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Defining the Junior Golf Landscape

Gain an understanding about tournament play at the various levels of junior golf.

The junior golf landscape has a variety of levels and success at each environment opens more doors at the collegiate level in golf. To achieve this success, then, it is important that junior golfers and their families understand what these levels are, what the competition will be like at each level, and, most importantly, why one should play at each level. Read along for more insight into the junior golf landscape to best prepare yourself for your future in competitive golf.

Four levels of competition at the junior golf level can be found: local; state/provincial; regional; national.

LOCAL can include high school matches, county or district matches, and inter-club competition. At this level you will notice an event setting which is very much fun-based and helping to introduce young golfers to the game of a lifetime. Junior golfers need to play here for several reasons: first, it is the start of their competitive career; second, it often includes accessible tournaments without long exemption lists than can help jumpstart a junior golf career; third, every player can benefit from any level of competition and this is just as true at this level as it is at the next level!

STATE/PROVINCIAL can include high school tournaments such as States or Provincials which normally include 36 holes. It also includes state and provincial association events like Junior Stroke Play and Junior Match Play Championships. At this level junior golfers will recognize that the events are more organized with rules officials, starters at the first tee, and scoreboards. They will recognize sponsorships on the golf course and a much stronger level of play than at the local level. Junior golfers need to compete at this level to continue building on their previous successes. Much like the local level, all golfers can benefit from playing tournaments at this level!

REGIONAL can include specific junior tours and tour events that are located within a specific geographic region. For example, the Future Champions Golf Tour is a regional tour based in San Diego. It has events throughout the southwestern United States. At this level, junior golfers will find well-run events that are 36 or 54 holes with high ranking points on a national scale such as the Junior Golf Scoreboard or GolfWeek. Events are held during the academic year and mostly in metro areas making travel easier for players and families. Players should compete at this level to play against the best competition in their region and to begin preparing for national tournaments.

NATIONAL can include events organized by a junior organization across all regions. For example, the Maple Leaf Junior Tour in Canada and the American Junior Golf Association in the US are nationally competitive environments. Also included at this level would be the RCGA Junior and the USGA Junior. Players looking to compete at the highest level must play here. They will find the best competition, difficult course set-up similar to college golf events, and college coaches following play very closely. If you want to play college golf at the NCAA Division I level it is important that you compete at the national level and do so successfully. The more success you have here usually means the more opportunities await you to play collegiate golf.

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