Coaching Handbook

2021

1. ABOUT US

Mission

To impact the lives of young people from all backgrounds by providing educational programs that build character, instill life-enhancing values and promote healthy choices through the game of golf.

History

In 1997, the LGPA, Masters Tournament, PGA of America, PGA TOUR and USGA formed a partnership with the help of Founding Corporate Partner, Shell Oil, to lead an initiative called The First Tee. This initiative began as a way to bring golf to kids and teens that otherwise would not be exposed to the game and its positive values. Since that time, First Tee has steadily grown into a robust youth service organization, impacting, influencing and inspiring more than 9 million young people.

Our Chapter

First Tee - Greater Seattle was formed in 2001 from a collaborative effort involving the Broadmoor Golf Club Foundation, First Tee, the Board of Municipal Golf of Seattle and the City of Seattle. We became the 106th chapter of First Tee on December 20, 2002. Our legal name is the Seattle Junior Golf Foundation, and we do business as First Tee - Greater Seattle. We are a leader in a network of nearly 200 chapters.

The Life Skills Experience

The Life Skills Experience is carried out at chapters of First Tee and is one of the unique features that separates us from many other junior golf programs. The First Tee Life Skills Experience is used to further enhance and instill the inherent values of the game of golf, and show participants how these values transfer into other aspects of their lives. Students learn about responsibility, courtesy, how to make decisions by thinking about the possible consequences, how to set goals, how to define those goals, the importance of maintaining a positive attitude as well as the importance of showing respect for others.

Volunteers

As a nonprofit organization, First Tee benefits greatly from charitable contributions of all types. One of the most meaningful and valuable forms of gift is a person's time, and so we are grateful for the support of our volunteers in events, fundraising, administrative tasks, outreach, and especially those who work directly with youth. Volunteer coaches have the opportunity to see first-hand what a difference positive mentorship can make in a young person's life through the game of golf. Your role as a volunteer coach will directly support that of the lead coaching staff. These individuals are trained in The First Tee coaching philosophy and bring a variety of special skills to the organization. They are your direct supervisors and support network, which is managed by both the Program Director and the Volunteer Director.

2. POLICIES

Dress Code

Please dress in golf or athletic attire. Slacks, skirt or shorts and a collared shirt are recommended. Please avoid denim, and if possible, sport The First Tee or golf-related logo! *Clothing that advertises beer, tobacco, illegal substances, violence and disrespect, or companies that manufacture or promote materials or goods that is inappropriate for children may not be worn during class.*

Language Policy

While present in First Tee learning environments, coaches and volunteers should always exercise good judgment when it comes to their choice of words, subject matter and dialogue. With the goal of creating a positive, family-friendly atmosphere, we strictly prohibit any foul language, cuss words, or inappropriate conversation. When in doubt, keep it G-rated.

Substance Use Policy

Smoking and drinking alcohol is not an acceptable behavior when in or around a First Tee environment. This means that consumption of these substances on the premises is strictly forbidden, and it is also requested that no trace of them be evident upon your arrival. We thank you for your cooperation in instilling a culture that is congruous with the Nine Healthy Habits and overall wellness.

Child Safety

No coach or volunteer should ever be alone with a solitary student when away from the group activity. Please be mindful that there be another coach, volunteer, parent or adult present at all times when being around a solitary student. For bathroom breaks or individual attention of any kind, please ask for assistance from a member of the staff or other volunteers, or have participants find a "buddy."

Background Checks

We conduct background checks on all adults who interface with children. We appreciate your compliance with this policy in protection of the young people we serve, and if you have an outstanding circumstance we should be aware of, please contact us.

3. PROCEDURES

Lesson Planning

Each week we introduce a new set of life skills, with golf activities as the context. You will have the opportunity to review this material prior to the start of class, most often in a weekly email. The role of staff coaches is to design and implement "purposeful play" activities, using the "games approach," where players can practice and explore lessons as a group. Feel free to provide relevant input and ideas at the appropriate times, which is typically before or after class, or during transition.

Arrival

Please arrive *no later than* 30 minutes prior to the start of your class. Volunteers, please sign in on the class roster or volunteer sign-in sheet so we have a record of your attendance, and then be ready to get involved right away. The time just prior to class is crucial for setup and preparation, so consult a staff coach because your help may be needed with a specific task. If no assignment is given, request a briefing on the lesson plan and then simply make an effort to greet and direct families as they arrive for class.

Typical Class Agenda

Pre-class Preparations:

- Facility space is reserved (practice areas or golf course)
- Equipment and activities are set up
- Logistics discussed and finalized (timing, direction, sequence)
- Coach meeting prior to participant arrivals
- Volunteer coaches arrive and sign in on the class roster

Welcome and Introductions:

- Meeting and greeting, students sign in on the class roster
- Students turn in any homework and obtain necessary equipment/materials
- Final touches made on activities
- Develop student and parent relationships

Activity Delivery:

- Warm-up & icebreaker activities
- Review Core Lesson
- Assign groups and stations, give clear directions

Wrap-up and Conclusion:

- Conclude games for the day, record scores, put away equipment
- Review the day's lesson, discuss the lesson's "bridge to life"
- Hand out any homework
- Ensure all students have safe transportation home

Cancellations

If for any reason you will be unable to attend a scheduled class, please notify the Head Coach with as much notice as possible. We understand that emergencies occur in which communication may be limited, but we ask that you make your best effort. You will be provided with contact information for the Head Coach, and you are welcome to communicate with the Program Director and/or Volunteer Director anytime as well, who will communicate with your coaching team in a timely manner.

Student Misbehavior

If a student is misbehaving, please ask the lead instructor how it should be addressed. Participants should always be communicated with respectfully and with empathy, so seek to understand their situation first. If discipline is necessary, a typical procedure will include: 1) reminder of the Code of Conduct and how it applies, 2) verbal warning, 3) 5 minute "time out," 4) removal from the day's activities and discussion with parent/guardian. Rarely will you need to move beyond step 3, but at that point a Staff Coach should be involved.

Appropriate Terminology

Participants of First Tee are not typically referred to as "kids," but rather: players, juniors, children, participants, students or members. We **do not evaluate performance in terms of good vs. bad**, with regard to shots, players, attitudes, or anything in class for that matter. That form of measure is subjective and often based on your own objectives rather than theirs, and can have deleterious consequences on a young person's confidence.

Always try to "empower" young people. When speaking with our participants, do so at eye level, even if this means kneeling or crouching down. Inquire about their general feelings and overall enjoyment of golf, rather than what you may perceive as "wrong" or flawed in their approach, and especially if they seem discouraged. Good thoughts lead to good shots, and often the focus should be on the *process,* rather than the *outcome*.

For example: "What was your target?" or "How did that shot feel?" or "Remember your best shot so far? What did you do differently on that one?" or "Yes, but great balance!"

4. FIRST TEE COACHING PHILOSOPHY

The First Tee coaching philosophy is built upon four important building blocks. These provide the foundation for our approach toward lesson planning, delivery, and mentorship with young people.

Activity-Based

Doing vs. Telling: use a hands-on approach whenever possible, and never lecture. Keep verbal instructions and monologues to a minimum, and during group discussion, engage everyone in the conversation.

Fun and Seamless: ensure that activities are designed as interactive games, where players spend more time engaged than disengaged, and there is very little waiting in line. Purposeful play allows participants to learn the lesson while swinging a club, running a relay race, or even filling out a scorecard.

Mastery-Driven

Intention Equals Attention: Make sure to model and reinforce the behaviors you want players to learn, and understand that any exception may undermine that message. Whether it be positive thinking or not using an iron on the green, make sure you don't compromise.

Balancing Process and Outcome: We will always be working on both process and outcome, and so it's important to distinguish between and identify the two when working with young players. Often the focus should be shifted away from where the ball ends up and toward what the player is doing well in their technique.

Empower Youth

Youth-centered: Adults are responsible for designing and leading the class, but it is created for a youth audience, so it should be tailored to their age group and interests. More specifically, the players and their needs always come first.

Relationship-focused: The old adage "they don't care what you know until they know that you care" is one of the most important to keep in mind. Get to know the player and their interests first, and then begin to help them with the lesson. You'll both be more apt to learn.

Continuous Learning

Coachable Moments: Golf gives us the opportunity to learn many lessons, but we must acknowledge them to retain their full value. Likewise, moments will arise in class to learn from the game and from each other, and capturing these is a fun and vital coaching skill.

Good-Better-How: We do not measure things in terms of "good" vs. "bad." Rather, we isolate what was *good* about the effort and then follow that with what could have been *better*, and *how* it could have been better. This is useful in any kind of review with players, other coaches and yourself, and the *goods* should always outnumber the *betters*.

5. GENERAL COACHING TECHNIQUES

1. Be a role model

While in the First Tee learning environment, be your best self.

2. Be organized

At times you may be unsure of the lesson plan or how to proceed, but it is important to keep your composure and reinforce players' confidence in your leadership.

3. Exude energy and enthusiasm

Players should get the feeling that you *want* to be there.

4. Be clear and concise

When giving instructions or answering a question, be as articulate and brief as possible.

5. Get on their level

When you are youth-centered, the participants come first. Bend down or get on a knee when you speak with them, and participate in the games. They'll appreciate your youthfulness and respect.

6. Be patient

Golf is challenging, and especially for young people whose physical attributes and motor skills are still in the developmental phase. Additionally, many times players don't share your goals, so understand that they may be motivated by factors that are unbeknownst to you.

7. Be positive

Always focus on what was good about the attempt. There are no "bad" shots.

8. Develop relationships

Get to know everyone, and don't be shy. Reach out and shake hands with coaches, players, parents, and the golf course staff. Let them know who you are, why you're there, and ask how you can help.

9. Be task-oriented

Model the behaviors you'd like to see, and players will follow your lead. Additionally, always maintain a fun, but task-oriented mentality. In other words, keep it lighthearted but focused.

10. Demonstrate

Don't be afraid to grab a club or ball and try the shot yourself! Matching your *attention* to your *intention*, follow the same rules that you have set for the group. They'll either be impressed with your talent or encouraged by the fact that you're not perfect, but either way they will recognize that it must be a fun activity if you're motivated to participate.

2021 Coaching Handbook

Signature of Compliance

"I, _____ (please print your name), have read and understood First Tee - Greater Seattle's Coaching Handbook as approved by the Chapter Staff. I will comply with all policies and look forward to coaching!"

Signed _____

Date _____

first tee
greater seattle