



Coaching Focus: Adults vs Children

Written by Rachel Hetherington

In my short time coaching this great game of golf, I have noticed a number of differences between coaching juniors and coaching adults. The game provides a large spectrum of abilities and character of golfers playing the game.

Whether an adult or child, it's important to adapt your teaching style to accommodate the students learning style. Adults vary, some needing to follow the "Keep It Simple Stupid" mantra, while others are intense, needing a deep understanding of the particular mechanics they are working on. Children on the other hand, just want to have fun, and at the end of the day, don't all golfers want to have fun?

The best feedback I can receive after coaching juniors are the smiles they have on their faces as they run through games or finish on the team accruing the most points after an activity. Seeing them jump in the air as they get oh-so-close to making a hole in one playing Frisbee golf or the cheeky grin that arrives when designing the next round of holes for their teammates to play generally means you're on the right track! I enjoy the sense of ownership that bubbles from their personalities when they are asked to coach a member of their team and the look of joy when they hit a good shot and sneak a peek to see if their parents are watching.

Learn from other sports in your area. Ask the students what they like about those sports, and incorporate those fun aspects into golf practice. Golf for young students cannot be about hitting ball after ball after ball. It needs to be fun, colourful and simple. Golf for young students needs to have attainable challenges, and sometimes those challenges are best done without a golf club or a golf ball. How about a 6 hole Frisbee championship around a chipping green? A lawn bowling championship around a putting green? A small tennis championship, followed by a straight driving competition? All of these activities incorporate the movements, touch and course management required for golf, yet have colour and fun to entertain the kids for hours and hours.

Rachel Hetherington is regarded as one of the most successful female golf professionals Australia has produced. Achieving two wins on the Ladies European Tour and eight on the LPGA, Rachel is now using her experience to develop the next generation of golfers. Rachel owns and runs the [Rachel Hetherington Golf Range](#) in NSW with her husband, and former Test Cricketer, Greg Ritchie. Junior golf development is one of Rachel's passions and this was evident when her MYGolf Centre was awarded "Centre of the Month" in August this year. To read more about the great work Rachel is doing with juniors, [click here](#).

