

EVALUATION OF THE  
GREATER AUSTIN FIRST TEE  
YOUTH GOLF LIFE SKILLS MENTORING PROGRAM

BETA PROGRAM

*...I swung my club back and hit the ball. It went 200 yards. I looked back at my mom and she was crying. I said, "What's wrong, mom?" Mom replied, "I'm just happy for you." Then tears started coming out of my eyes, because I thought, if only my dad was here. (Classroom assignment, written by a 10 year old participant)*

Compiled by

James F. Petrick, Ph.D.  
Assistant Professor

Peter A. Witt, Ph.D.  
Department Head

Department of Recreation,  
Park and Tourism Sciences  
Texas A&M University  
College Station, TX 77843-2261  
Phone: (409) 845-8806  
FAX: (409) 845-0446  
e-mail: [jpetrick@rpts.tamu.edu](mailto:jpetrick@rpts.tamu.edu)

January, 2000

## Table of Contents

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Introduction .....                             | 1  |
| Program Goals .....                            | 1  |
| Beta Program Design .....                      | 2  |
| Evaluation Design and Procedures .....         | 3  |
| Process Goals Results .....                    | 4  |
| Outcome Goals Results .....                    | 4  |
| Motivations to Participate .....               | 4  |
| Benefits Expected .....                        | 5  |
| Likelihood of Continuance .....                | 5  |
| Participant Satisfaction .....                 | 5  |
| Mentor Satisfaction .....                      | 6  |
| Golfing Skills .....                           | 7  |
| Continued Relationships .....                  | 7  |
| Recommendations .....                          | 7  |
| Final Thoughts .....                           | 8  |
| Appendix A: Objectives And Means .....         | 9  |
| Appendix B: Beta Program .....                 | 12 |
| Appendix C: Proposed Framework .....           | 16 |
| Appendix D: Qualifications of Evaluators ..... | 18 |
| Appendix E: Quotable Quotes .....              | 20 |
| Appendix F: Mentorship Manual .....            | 25 |

*I really liked the program, because I learned a lot about playing golf, and it helped me to keep from getting in trouble after school. (11 year old participant)*

## **Introduction**

Greater Austin First Tee (GAFT) was founded in Fall, 1999 to help expand opportunities for youth to acquire life skills through participation in and learning about the game of golf. GAFT's objectives are to:

1. Improve the game's accessibility, thereby making golf more available to people of all social strata, particularly children.
2. Provide every child, regardless of race and economic background, the opportunity to learn and play golf.
3. Instill the game's inherently positive values, such as honesty, integrity, sportsmanship and self-discipline.
4. Teach children that dedication, sound values and education are keys to success.
5. Develop in participants greater self-esteem, civic responsibility and confidence to broaden their goals in life.
6. Develop a teaching curriculum that makes learning golf fun.

GAFT's vision includes creating a nationally recognized center program development, pilot testing and research concerning youth life skills programming. It is also anticipated that GAFT will participate with other life skills centers and national programs to create a network which will share best practices, leverage funding, and broadly distribute successful programs.

## **Program Goals**

In November, 1999, GAFT launched its efforts by initiating its first youth golf program (designated as the beta program). The process goals for the program, as stated by the program evaluators, were:

- to recruit mentors and youth participants for the beta program;
- to incorporate mentor training and a life skills component into the program.;
- to offer a quality program for participants; and
- to obtain site for the beta program, and a permanent site for future programs.

The outcome goals for the beta program were:

- to understand participant and mentor motivations for participation in the program.;
- to assess participants' and mentors' expected benefits from participation.
- to estimate participants future intentions for participation in the game of golf;
- to evaluate participants and mentors satisfaction with the program.;
- to increase participants' golf skills to the point of being capable of successfully completing a round of golf; and
- to have mentors continue contact with participants once the beta program is completed.

Long range goals for the GAFT program were:

- to develop a format for future First Tee Programs;
- to determine the feasibility of incorporating a mentoring component into the National First Tee Programs; and
- to obtain a permanent site for future First Tee Programs.

Specific means that the research team identified for accomplishing each of the objectives are listed in Appendix A, along with specific means used to evaluate the program.

### **Beta Program Design**

The beta program met every Monday and Thursday from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. (with the exception of Thanksgiving week) from November 1st to December 9th, 1999. The program was considered to be a trial run of potential methods and procedures to be utilized in future, more extensive programs.

The six week program was coordinated by Jennifer MacCurrach, Class 'A' PGA member, and Executive Director of GAFT. It was hoped that the beta program would be eight weeks long, but due to time constraints, it was reduced to a six weeks. Assisting Jennifer were 2 Class 'A' Golf Professionals from Golfsmith, and 12 volunteer mentors. See Appendix B for in-depth description of the program.

Twenty-seven youth (n=27), ranging in age from 7 to 13, participated in the program. The majority were African-American and male (n=21). Participants were affiliated with the Ministry of Challenge, a youth outreach program in Austin, Texas. In order to participate in the program, youth were required to attend school during the day of

the program.

The majority of the program was conducted at the Golfsmith facilities in Austin. On two occasions, participants and their mentors had access to Morris Williams Golf Course.

Behavior management was a consistent problem during the program. During the third week, a point system was implemented to reward participants who followed rules and exhibited appropriate behavior. This appeared to make a big difference in the program and facilitated better attention and more appropriate behavior by participants.

Mentoring, teachable moments and the game of golf were utilized to help achieve program goals. Mentoring was defined as “a one to one caring, supportive relationship between a mentor and a mentee that is based on trust. This relationship focuses on the needs of the mentored individuals and encourages them to develop to their fullest potential based on their own vision for the future.”

Teachable moments are unscheduled opportunities for the mentors to draw correlations of the task at hand, to the development of Life Skills. Mentors were encouraged to search for these moments, and were given a list of potential Life Skills to develop. A teachable moments approach to learning life skills was chosen instead of a curriculum approach because organizers believed that spontaneity would breed a better understanding, and more pertinent application of the lessons learned.

To enhance the likelihood of teachable moments, the mentors and youth jointly

participated in the game of golf. Golf offers numerous opportunities to incorporate life skill learning opportunities, including the lessons of trust, respect, integrity and consistency. The underlying theory was that lessons learned on the golf course with a mentor would carry-over into other domains of life (i.e. school, community, family, work, etc.). The framework adopted for the beta program is shown in Appendix B.

Prior to initiating the program, mentors were provided with training to help them to understand the goals and objectives of the program, principles of youth development, and techniques for mentoring. The training session was conducted for one hour, and had 9 of the 12 mentors in attendance. Mentors were given a manual which was designed specifically for the GAFT beta program (see Appendix E). When possible, mentors were paired on a one to one basis with the youth, but were generally paired with two and sometimes three participants. Follow-up meetings with the mentors were not conducted in the beta program.

### **Evaluation Design and Procedures**

GAFT contracted with Drs. James Petrick, and Peter Witt, from the Department of Recreation, Park and Tourism Sciences at Texas A&M University to develop the mentoring guide and evaluate the program. (For information about the involvement of the department in other youth program activities and credentials of the investigators, see Appendix C).

Different questionnaires were distributed to mentors (n=9) and participants (n=15) prior to the first meeting of the program. Both questionnaires measured demographics,

golfing history, motivation to golf, and expected benefits from participating in the program. The mentors questionnaire was self-administered, while the participants completed their surveys in interview form, on a one-to-one basis with a mentor.

At the completion of the six week program, participants were given a post-program questionnaire. The instrument was read aloud to the participants (n=15). The questionnaire measured demographics, attribute satisfaction (happiness), favorite and least favorite program aspects, continuance/discontinuance, and overall program satisfaction.

Mentors were also given a post-program questionnaire. The instrument was sent to all mentors via e-mail; it was returned by seven of the 12 mentors. The questionnaire was open-ended and asked for feedback on; respect earned, most and least fond moments, mentoring lessons learned, improvements needed, mentoring manual effectiveness, recommendations and overall satisfaction.

In order to gain a more thorough understanding of program processes and outcomes, participants, mentors, parents and golf pro's were interviewed. A set of questions to guide the interviews was developed for each group. Resultant themes from the interviews can be found in Appendix D.

Finally, one of the two evaluators (Petrick) added several of the program sessions to observe program process and outcomes.

## Process Goals Results

Recruiting 12 mentors and 27 participants met the initial goal of the program. On average, participants attended 7.7 times, while mentors averaged 7.8 of the 12 program sessions.

While temporary sites (Golfsmith and William Morris G.C.) were used for the initial program, a permanent site is still needed. Facility negotiations are underway with the city of Austin to gain such a site. It is hoped to secure a firm site commitment during the first quarter of 2000.

## Outcome Goals Results

### *Motivations to Participate*

Participants were most likely motivated to participate to:

- have fun;
- develop golf skills;
- learn a new activity;
- get exercise; and
- do something that won't get them in trouble.

Mentors were most likely motivated to participate to:

- give back to society/community;
- show others how wonderful the game of golf is;
- give back to the game, what it has given them;
- break barriers;
- assess First Tee's future needs; and
- help my son and others with their lives, and
- because they love kids.

### *Benefits Expected*

Specific benefits youth expected to receive by participating in the program were to:

- be a better golfer;
- have fun;
- get along better with others;
- gain friendship;
- learn the rules of golf;
- learn how not to be mad all the time; and
- be proud of myself.

Benefits the mentors expected to receive by participating in the program included to:

- help others develop golf skills;
- know one has made a difference in the lives of others;
- become more patient;
- help today's youth;
- gain insight into how kids can be successful;
- derive pleasure in teaching others; and
- know/have a relationship with kids

### *Likelihood of Continuance*

At the completion of the program, 15 of the participants were asked how likely it was that they would participate in golf in the future. The majority (n=8) indicated they would definitely continue, 3 indicated they probably would, 3 stated they "may," while 1 indicated he probably would not continue.

### *Participant Satisfaction*

Of the 15 participants responding to the post program survey, 12 rated the program as "great," 1 as "very good," and 2 as "good."

The rank order of program elements participants were most happy with, starting with the most positive, were:

1. being given points as a reward for completing tasks;
2. practicing golf at Golfsmith;
2. being taught golf by golf professionals;
4. The mentors that helped youth learn about golf;
4. playing golf on the golf course;
4. the transportation to and from the First Tee Program;
7. learning about possible jobs related to golf;
8. the friends I met while participating in the program;
9. the snacks and food provided; and
10. the things I learned from program other than golf.

When asked about the favorite thing they did while participating in the program, almost every participant mentioned hitting the ball. The participants least favorite things included: missing the ball, having people watch, and when others don't wait their turn and putting.

### *Mentor Satisfaction*

The six mentors had a mean satisfaction rating of 7 for their "overall experience as a mentor," on a scale from 1 "very dissatisfied" to 10 "very satisfied." Fond moments that the mentors experienced were mostly related to the positive interactions they had with the mentees and the joy of watching the mentees learn about golf. Specific comments included:

- watching my mentee cleanup moments after thanking him for listening;
- seeing (my mentee) smile when I walked through his scores;

- when I could tell the kids were having fun;
- experiencing the interaction and support between the twins;
- watching the faces light up when they achieved something for the first time; and
- watching the kids high five when they all hit the green.

Some of the least fond moments experienced by the mentors mainly included issues having to do with behavior management. Comments included:

- having to pull (one of the youth) down from the wall;
- when they would not listen, and not do what I said;
- having to break up fights in the parking lot after the session;
- playing with a boy not ready to play or not interested in paying attention; and
- the fights.

When asked how the mentoring experience could be improved for future mentors, the mentors stated the need for:

- more consistent alignment of mentors and mentees;
- more activity, less talk;
- greater use of goal setting and feedback;
- consistent attendance by mentors;
- fewer kids per mentor;
- crash course in dealing with out of control kids is needed;
- better understanding of program and each day's objective;
- bi-weekly mentor meeting and discussion; and
- review initial orientation after 2 weeks.

### *Golfing Skills*

The six week program was designed to develop participants' golfing skills to the point of their being capable of successfully completing a round of golf. While many of the youth were able to play at William Morris Golf Course during the two scheduled golf outings, it was found that better preparation for the actual "golfing experience" was necessary.

From observation, and interviews with mentors and participants, it appeared that the youth were not adequately prepared for:

- necessary golf course etiquette (i.e. patience, being quiet, not moving while others were hitting);
- the physical challenges of the game (i.e. having to walk and carry a bag); and
- proper etiquette around the clubhouse, prior to playing, and after playing (i.e. how to sign-in, be quiet, no fighting).

*"I can't believe how hard this is. I'm exhausted, will you carry my bag for me?"*  
(10 year old participant after playing 1 hole)

### *Continued Relationships*

It was hoped that some of the mentors would continue relationships with the youth involved in the program after its completion. Interviews with the mentors suggest that this could happen; further tracking will be necessary to see if it actually does.

## **Recommendations**

Based on information gathered during the evaluation process the following recommendations are offered:

Rules and Regulations are vital to success of the program. Parents, mentors and

participants stressed the need and desire for structured rules. The observance that the participants had short attention spans amplifies the importance of rules and regulations.

*"Introducing the score cards was a huge bonus. All the kids have straightened up and they listen more. They are now better kids."* (Mentor)

*"I like learning the rules, because they help you get better and to listen more."* (11 year old participant)

1. There is a need to stress the importance of golf principles beyond just hitting the ball (the kids enjoy hitting, but lack discipline related to overall concept of the swing). Principles need to be better utilized as teachable moments.

*"I don't like to (putt) because you can't hit it in the air".* (9 year old participant)

*"It's difficult to teach them the fundamentals when all they want to do is whack the ball."* (Golf Pro)

2. The program needs to be longer than six weeks. A six week program is not long enough to help create long-lasting changes in the participants.

*"We had a nice program, but the first six weeks doesn't seem to be long enough to really stick."* (Mentor)

*"It (mentoring) is harder than I thought, and it takes a lot longer to develop a meaningful relationship to change behavior than six weeks. I like quick fixes, which this program can't do in the time we have."*

3. Formal mentor training needs to continue throughout the program. After orientation is completed, group meetings with the mentors and a trainer should be held on a consistent basis.

*“The mentoring manual is complete. I think we should deliver it over several sessions as we gain experience, rather than all at once.” (Mentor)*

*“Bi-weekly mentor group meeting and discussion is a must. Review initial orientation after two weeks.” (Mentor)*

4. Positive coaching seems to be a very important aspect of mentoring. Mentors are thought of as “good” if they spend time encouraging their mentees.

*“I especially like (my mentor). He tell’s me when I’m doing a good job and watched me when I hit.” (10 year old participant)*

*“I like (particular mentor) best. He always watches me hit the ball and he’s always like ‘good job’ and stuff.” (10 year old participant).*

5. A one-to-one mentoring relationship is preferred. Having more than one mentee per mentor dilutes the effectiveness of the relationship.

*“It is a lot harder to mentor more than one kid as each one requires different attention levels. I found one child could take directions and only wanted you to watch them hit the ball where others need a lot more personal attention.” (Mentor)*

*“We really didn’t have enough continuity of contact with specific mentees for a relationship to form.” (Mentor)*

### **Final Thoughts**

GAFT met its goal of offering a mentored golf program.. Twenty-seven youth were exposed to the game and 12 adults were exposed to the joys and difficulties of mentoring. Lessons learned from this experience will be incorporated into the design of future GAFT youth golf programs.

*“Dream big...Never give up your dreams” (Earl Woods)*

## **Appendix A: Objectives And Means**

**First Tee of Greater Austin, Youth Golf Mentoring Program  
Program Objectives and Means Program Will Use to Achieve Objectives (as of 10/14/99)**

| Objective   | Means for Achieving Objective   | Means for Measuring Objective   |
|---|---|---|
| <b>Process Goals for Beta Program</b>   |   |   |
| Recruit 9 mentors and 27 participants for the beta project  | a) develop and distribute (local golf courses) flyer asking for volunteers<br>b) solicit mentors through Austin first tee board contacts<br>c) Seek intact groups of participants through existing contacts | Number of mentors and participants recruited. Participation of mentors and participants throughout the program. |
| Obtain a current site for 1 <sup>st</sup> Teen beta program and permanent site for future 1 <sup>st</sup> Tee Programs                      | a) meet with and get contract for beta program<br>b) meet with appropriate city officials and create agreement for future site use  | Procurement of sites  |
| <b>Outcome Goals for Beta Program</b>   |   |   |
| Understand participant and mentor motivations for participating in the program and participants' future intentions of participation in golf | a) conduct pre and post program surveys for participants and mentors  | Survey  |
| Participants and mentors will express satisfaction with the beta program  | a) conduct surveys and in-depth interviews with participants, parents, mentors and professionals  | X questions dealing with program satisfaction   |
| Participants will increase their golfing skills to the point of being capable of successfully completing a round of golf                    | a) provide a 6 week, 12 meeting golf program with professional instruction<br>b) mentors will provide positive reinforcement during instruction to promote learning, confidence and self-esteem             | Skills testing<br>Participation and scores during tournament Play   |

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <p>Mentors will continue contact with participants once initial program is completed</p>                          | <p>a) promote goal of future contact with mentors at initial training session and in communications during and after the program<br/>b) conduct 4 and 8 week follow-up survey of mentors and participants to determine level and degree of contact<br/>c) provide reduced fees at local courses for proteges that complete the program and play w/ their mentor</p> | <p>Future contact statistics</p>  |
| <p><b>Longer Term Goals</b></p>   |   |   |
| <p>Develop format for future 1<sup>st</sup> Tee Programs</p>  | <p>a) assess attributes of beta project and alter program altered<br/>b) examine evaluation outcomes to identify what works and what needs modification</p>   | <p>Finalized program format to be used in future programs</p>                           |
| <p>Determine feasibility of incorporating a mentoring component into the National 1<sup>st</sup> Tee Programs</p> | <p>a) share results of Austin 1<sup>st</sup> tee program beta and future programs with other 1<sup>st</sup> tee sites and national office</p>   | <p>Number of 1<sup>st</sup> Tee sites choosing to incorporate a mentoring component</p> |
| <p>Obtain a permanent site for future 1<sup>st</sup> Tee Programs</p>   | <p>a) meet with appropriate city officials and create agreement for future site use</p>   | <p>Procurement of sites</p>   |

## **Appendix B: Beta Program**

## Golf Programming:

Prior to every session players will be required to register (check in) before they can participate. Registration shall be set up in the same spot each week (with the same form - youths name in alpha order) and we try to use the same person to man the registration table each session.

**Day 1: Mon., Nov. 1:** Professionals will stay at the same station. Youth & Mentors will rotate.

3:30 pm-4:15 pm Registration. Snack. Youth/Mentor Introduction. We will randomly hand out the completed "fun form" and have each youth and mentor read the bio's of another youth or mentor. Director of instruction will explain the program format.

4:15 pm-5:00 pm The Youth will be divided into three groups (random division)

Driving Range: Group A

Putting Green: Group B

Tour of the Golfsmith facility: Group C

**Driving Range:** safety & etiquette, explanation of equipment, fundamentals of the swing to include the grip, aim and stance, include replacing divots (sanding tee box).

**Putting Green:** safety & etiquette, different types of putters and how personal preference plays more of a role than physical characteristics, rules of the putting green, include repairing spike and ball marks.

**Tour of the Golfsmith facility:** safety, job descriptions, length of work shift, emphasis team work, walk through the entire process of a customer ordering a piece of merchandise. From taking the order to getting it out the door.

*Mentors remember this is wk #1, encourage questions and interaction.*

5:00 pm-5:54 pm Driving Range: Group C

Putting Green: Group A

Tour of Golfsmith facility: Group B

5:45 pm-6:00 pm Closing remarks. Q&A. Handout mentor contact list. Student departure.

**Day 2: Thurs., Nov. 4:** Professionals will stay at the same stations. Youth and mentors will rotate.

4:00 pm-4:14 pm Registration. Snack. Ministry of Challenge Message.

4:15 pm-4:45 pm Break out into group and discuss golf, equipment and how it is played.

4:45 pm-5:30 pm Chipping: Group A (Practice Green)

\*Driving Range: Group C (start to work on full swing)

Pitching: Group B (Driving Range)

5:30 pm-6:00 pm Closing Remarks, Q&A, student departure

**Day 3: Mon., Nov. 8:** Professionals will stay at the same stations. Youth and mentor will rotate.

4:00 pm-4:15 pm Registration. Snack. Ministry of Challenge Message.

4:15 pm-5:45 pm Chipping & Sand: Group B

Driving Range & Pitching: Group A

5:45 pm-6:00 pm Closing Remarks, Q&A, student departure

**Day 4: Thurs., Nov. 11:** Professionals will stay at the same stations. Youth and mentors will rotate.

- 4:00 pm-4:15 pm Registration. Snack. Ministry of Challenge Message
- 4:15 pm-5:00 pm Sand Shot: Group A  
Driving Range: Group B
- 5:00 pm-5:45 pm Mentor/Player Team Putting Contest
- 5:45 pm-6:00 pm Closing Remarks, Q&A, student departure

**Day 5: Mon., Nov. 15:** Professional will stay at the same stations. Youth and mentors will rotate.

- 4:00 pm-4:15 pm Registration. Snack. Ministry of Challenge Message
- 4:15 pm-5:45 pm Rotation of Practicing Skills (w/Mentors) w/Rules and Etiquette  
Questions assigned to each station Mentors and Players will answer together and return answer sheet to an Instructor: Putting, Chipping, Pitching, Sand, Woods, Irons, Rules and Etiquette.
- 5:45 pm-6:00 pm Closing Remarks, Q&A, student departure

**Day 6: Thurs., Nov. 18:** Each Professional will be assigned to a group for the day.

- 4:00 pm-4:15 pm Registration. Snack. Ministry of Challenge Message.
- 4:15 pm-5:00 pm Individual Club fitting (measurements of height, grip size & physique)
- 5:00 pm-5:45 pm Making their own club. \*If we have time we may have a 3, 6 or 9 hole putting contest.
- 5:45 pm-6:00 pm Closing Remarks, Q&A, student departure

**Day 7: Mon., Nov. 22:** Skill testing. Each Professional will man a station.

- 4:00 pm-4:15 pm Registration. Snack. Ministry of Challenge Message
- 4:15 pm-4:45 pm Putting: Group A  
Irons: Group B  
Pitching: Open/Practice with Mentors
- 4:45 pm-5:15 pm Putting: Open/Practice with Mentors  
Irons: Group A  
Pitching: Group B
- 5:15 pm-5:45 pm Putting: Group B  
Irons: Open/Practice with Mentors  
Pitching: Group A
- 5:45 pm-6:00 pm Closing Remarks, Q&A, student departure

**Day 8: Tues. Nov. 23:** Registration. Snack. Ministry of Challenge Message. Practice Day. Breakout session for youth to work on whatever skill they want too. USGA Video on Rules and etiquette. (Attendance may be effected by Thanksgiving Holiday). This way absentees will not miss anything new.

**Day 9: Mon., Nov. 29:** Continue Skill Testing. After a player has been tested he/she may move to the Open station and practice with their mentor.

4:00 pm-4:15 pm Registration. Snack. Ministry of Challenge Message

4:15 pm-4:45 pm Woods: Group A

Chipping: Group B

Sand: Open/Practice with Mentors

4:45 pm-5:15 pm Woods: Open/Practice with Mentors

Chipping: Group A

Sand: Group B

5:15 pm-5:45 pm Woods: Group B

Chipping: Open/Practice with Mentors

Sand: Group A

5:45 pm-6:00 pm Closing Remarks, Q&A, student departure

**Day 10: Thurs., Dec. 2:** Play at Morris Williams G.C., Mentors and Students only.

3:30 pm School Pick-up

3:50 pm Ministry of Challenge Message

4:00 pm Tee Times. Format: Scramble. Play until dusk. (Each player will get a snack to take along for the round).

5:30 pm-6:00 pm Discuss the round. Student departure.

**Day 11: Mon., Dec. 6:** Play at Morris Williams G.C. Mentors and Students only.

3:30 pm School Pick-up

3:50 pm Ministry of Challenge Message

4:00 pm Tee Times. Format: Scramble. Play until dusk. (Each player will get a snack to take along for the round).

5:30 pm-6:00 pm Discuss the round. Student departure.

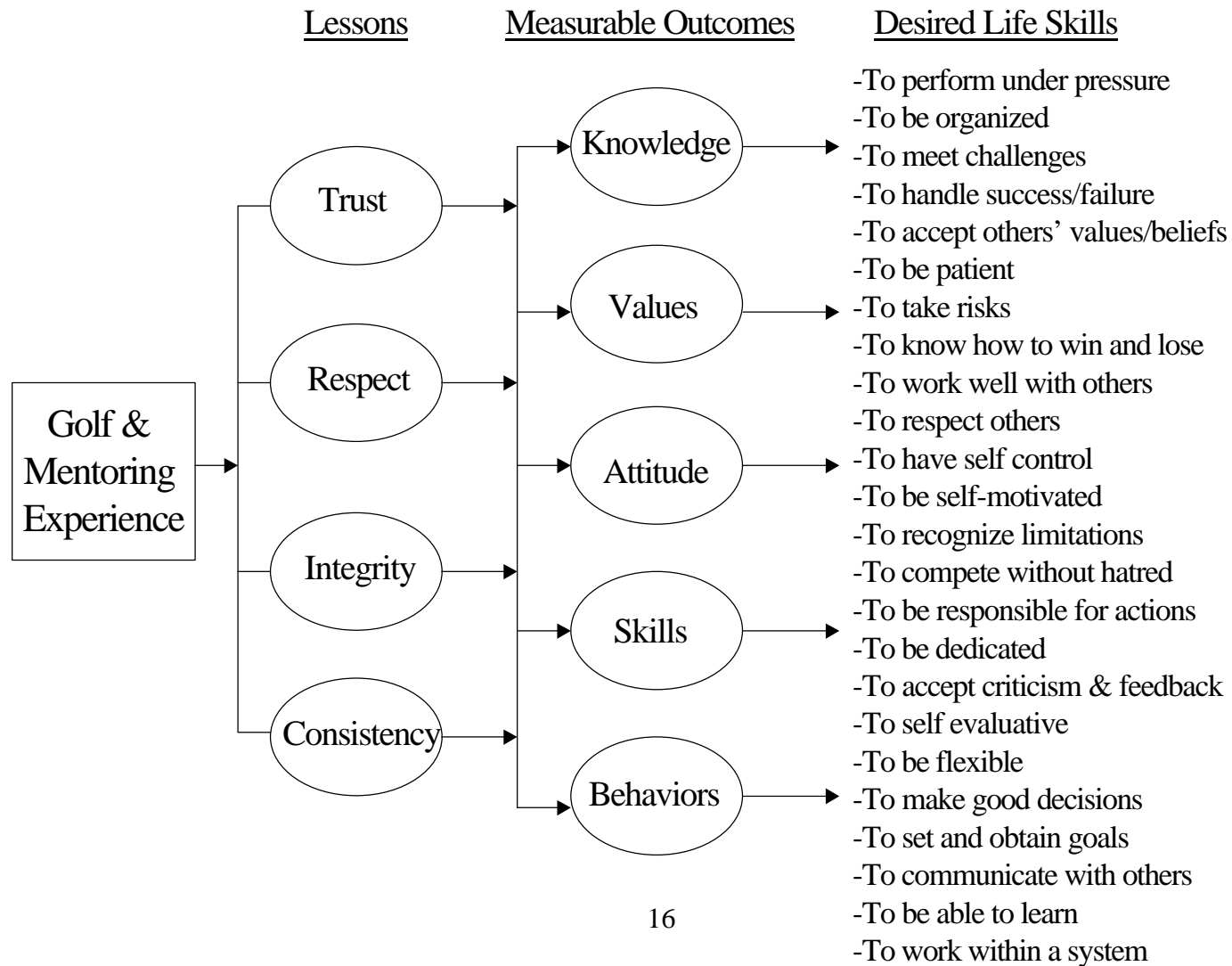
**Day 12: Thurs., Dec. 9:** Parents and Friends Golf Day.

4:00 pm-5:00 pm The group will be assembled on the driving range for a demonstration by "Bogey the Clown" (Ron Miller, Director of Golf at Yaupon G.C.)

4:30 pm-5:45 pm A cookout dinner will be served.

5:45 pm Student recognition. Players will receive bronze medals for the skills that the level was achieved. (All players will receive a bronze medal for sportsmanship, only a few achieved a second medal). Student departure.

## **Appendix C: Proposed Framework**



## Appendix D: Qualifications of Evaluators

**Dr. James F. Petrick** is an Assistant Professor, Department of Recreation, Park and Tourism Sciences. Dr. Petrick's research focuses on examining the effects that leisure activity has on participants. A majority of his research has focused on golfer behavior. He has been contracted to complete golfer behavior research by; Cleveland Metro-Parks in Cleveland, Ohio; The Creel Corporation in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina and by MCI - the Heritage of Golf, Hilton Head, South Carolina. Other leisure behavior research projects include, youth baseball, cruise ship travelers, retirees and nature tourists. Dr. Petrick teaches classes in Recreation Administration, Tourism Marketing, and Research Methods and also specialized in mentor training.

Dr. Petrick has been awarded the Excellence in Research Award by the Resort and Commercial Recreation Association (1997), the Holland America Line Scholarship by the American Society of Travel Agents, and was honored as a national scholar athlete in the sport of golf. He is currently an Associate Editor for the *Journal of Park and Recreation Administration*. Prior to obtaining his Ph.D., Dr. Petrick worked as a Cruise Director for Norwegian Cruise Line, and a Golf Instructor for Royal Viking Cruise Line.

**Dr. Peter A. Witt**, Professor and Head, Department of Recreation, Park and Tourism Sciences, joined the faculty at Texas A&M in July 1993. Besides departmental administration, Dr. Witt's major interests are in the area of evaluating outcomes of recreation programs being offered by recreation and park departments for at-risk youth. Dr. Witt is also involved in efforts to identify best practices and characteristics of successful programs in the recreation and parks field. Much of this work is based on models of risk, resiliency and protective factors. Dr. Witt is the coordinator of the National Consortium on Recreation and Youth Development, a joint effort of eight universities, 12 cities and the National Recreation and Park Association, who jointly are seeking to improve available information about the impact and value of park and recreation services for at-risk youth.

Dr. Witt has written or edited five books and authored more than 75 articles on the social psychological aspects of leisure involvement and recreation services for a variety of different user groups. He is the editor of the *Journal of Park and Recreation Administration*, former editor of the *Journal of Leisure Research*. In 1999, he received the Distinguished Professional Award from the National Recreation and Park Association. He has also received the Theodore and Franklin Roosevelt Award for Excellence in Recreation Research from NPRA (1988), and the Distinguished Colleague Award from the Society of Park and Recreation Educators (1992). He is an elected member of the Academy of Leisure Sciences (1986; President 1992-93) and the American Academy of Park and Recreation Administration (1994; Board Member 1998-2000).

**Identifying Best Practices and Key Features that Determine Success  
of Recreation Programs for Youth**  
*an initiative of the*  
*Department of Recreation, Park and Tourism Sciences, Texas A&M University*

Identifying intervention actions that will reduce youth violence, gang membership, substance abuse, school dropouts, and teen pregnancy has become an important national priority. While some of these actions are recognized as being the prerogative or responsibility of families and schools, interventions are also needed during those times when youth are not subject to the direct influence of family or school (i.e., after-school, evenings, and summer periods). Organized recreation programs offered by a variety of youth serving agencies, including park and recreation departments, are increasingly recognized as excellent settings through which youth may learn social and personal skills to deal with conflict situations, and how to acquire the protective factors they need to be resilient despite difficult home and community environments.

Over the past six years, the Department of Recreation, Park and Tourism Sciences (RPTS) has implemented a major initiative to identify best practices in the provision of prevention and intervention programs sponsored by local park and recreation departments (PARDs). In addition, the department has emerged as the national leader in developing evaluation tools and undertaking research that measures the impact of PARD sponsored programs for at-risk youth.

In 1995, a national conference was organized by the Department and co-sponsored by the American Academy of Park and Recreation Administration, the National Park and Recreation Association (NRPA), and the Fort Worth Department of Parks and Community Services (host city). This invitational conference was open only to those who were identified as being leaders in the area of at-risk youth recreation programming. Over 130 delegates from 32 states and several foreign countries were in attendance. Case studies presented at the conference were subsequently developed into a book (*Recreation Programs that Work for At-Risk Youth*) to serve as a primary resource for 11 regional conferences that evolved out of the national conference and were held throughout the United States and Canada in 1996. In 1997, the RPTS Department, with co-sponsorship from NRPA and Fort Worth, launched an annual school (*National Prevention Through Recreation Services School*), which is recognized as the preeminent training opportunity for professionals in the park and recreation field working in this area. Enrollment for the school is limited to 150 participants to facilitate interaction.

Efforts to evaluate the impact of park and recreation programs began in 1993 with grant support from the National Recreation Foundation and NRPA. As part of this effort, the Department has organized a consortium of researchers and graduate students from seven universities (Clemson, Georgia, Illinois, North Carolina State, Penn State, San Francisco State, and Texas A&M). Utilizing matching funds from the cooperating universities, local communities, and various foundations, evaluation studies of recreation programs for at-risk youth are in progress in 13 United States cities. Their contexts include after-school, weekend, and summer programs; roving leader projects, art programs, youth sport programs, and teen centers. (See <http://www.rpts.tamu.edu/witt/consort.htm>). One of the primary tools used in most of these studies to measure impacts is the Protective Factors Scale which was developed by RPTS faculty and graduate students.

The Department has also become a central resource for practitioners from all over the United States who are seeking information about how to best serve at-risk youth. RPTS faculty typically do 20 presentations or workshops a year to disseminate findings to professional audiences. Published study results have been widely quoted by local communities and by national associations as justification for expanding recreation services for at-risk youth. In Texas, studies have been undertaken in Austin, Corpus Christi, Dallas, Fort Worth, and Houston; and a new initiative has just been launched in San Antonio. In Austin, study results have been used to convince the city council to continue provision of over \$1.4 million for at-risk youth recreation programs.

Funding from the recently endowed *Elda K. Bradberry Chair in At-Risk Youth Programming* will facilitate a significant expansion of activities. As the first major endowed chair in a park and recreation department in the United States, visibility for RPTS documentation, training, and evaluation efforts will be increased; additional funding for graduate students will be available; and new initiatives to help reduce youth risk behaviors will be possible.

For further information about the RPTS initiative, contact, Dr. Peter A. Witt, Professor and Head, Department of Recreation, Park and Tourism Sciences, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77843-2261. Phone: 409-845-7324. FAX: 409-845-0446. E-mail: [pwitt@rpts.tamu.edu](mailto:pwitt@rpts.tamu.edu).

**Appendix E: Quotable Quotes**

### **Positive Alternatives for Involvement**

*“The program keeps them occupied, you know, time-wise, so they stay out of trouble” (Parent)*

*“I just thank the Lord that (he) has something positive to do after school” (Parent)*

### **Program is Fun**

*“It’s a really good program. More kids should do it because we have a lot of fun and you don’t even have to pay anything for it.” (10 year old participant)*

*“When he first got out here he wasn’t too sure, but now he loves it...He learned about having fun, and a lot about discipline, so I think it was very good for him.” (Parent)*

*“I think most importantly it’s about the kids having fun, but it’s also a learning experience for them too...I would recommend it to anyone who would want their kids to take this.” (Parent)*

*“The more they learn about golf, the more excited they seem to get about it.” (Golf Pro)*

### **Basking in the Glory of Success**

*“One of the kids while we were chipping, couldn’t get it and couldn’t get it and then chipped it in. His face was a glow. It was a very special moment.” (Mentor)*

*“First Tee gives kids a chance to learn golf and have fun, but the big deal is that they see that they can succeed in achieving goals and in behaving in a way that respects others.” (Mentor)*

*“Golf is all he talks about now. He doesn’t even want to come into the house at night. He wants to practice.” (Parent)*

*“They had never played golf before, so I know they had a good time, because they love it now. They always came home excited.” (Parent)*

*“I want to be just like Tiger Woods when I grow up.” (9 year old participant)*

### **Hitting the Ball**

*“It’s fun. We get to hit balls and see how far I can hit them” (10 year old participant).*

*“I like hitting it far and being able to swing hard.” (9 year old participant)*

*“I tell them (friends at school) it’s fun. We get to hit balls really hard and eat snacks.” (9 year old participant)*

*“It’s so cool to hit the ball far.” (9 year old participant)*

*“I don’t like to (putt) because you can’t hit it in the air”. (9 year old participant)*

*“I think the full-swing (is the most difficult to teach) because they just want to swing as hard as they can instead of breaking the swing down to its fundamentals which takes a lot of patience. Grip, stance, posture, ball position have nothing to do with swinging the club.” (Golf Pro)*

*“It’s difficult to teach them the fundamentals when all they want to do is whack the ball.” (Golf Pro)*

### **Role and Importance of Mentors**

*“They (the mentors) help me with my golf game by watching me and telling me what to do.” (9 year old participant)*

*“I especially like (my mentor). He tell’s me when I’m doing a good job and watched me when I hit.” (10 year old participant)*

*“They (the mentors) are cool and let us do a lot of fun stuff.” (11 year old participant)*

*“They (the mentors) help me to put the ball in the hole and they make it easier.” (9 year old participant)*

*“I like (particular mentor) best. He always watches me hit the ball and he’s always like ‘good job’ and stuff.” (10 year old participant).*

*“It is a lot harder to mentor more than one kid as each one requires different attention levels. I found one child could take directions and only wanted you to watch them hit the ball where others need a lot more personal attention.” (Mentor)*

### **What Mentors Learned About Kids and Themselves**

*“I have an 11 year old daughter and a 9 year old son, and it (the mentoring manual) was kind of a summary of everything I’ve learned from them over the past 11 years. I wish I would have had it before I had them.” (Mentor)*

*“We get a lot more than we give. These are great kids, they are fun. It’s fun to watch these kids learn so quickly.” (Mentor)*

*“I really expected a lot of problems and difficulties and I’ve seen none of them. These are good kids. They are wonderful kids, who just want to learn.” (Mentor)*

*“From a social perspective, I think it’s good to see how others view the game. Watching these kids as they explore and think about it, it gives you an idea of what they think of golf.” (Mentor)*

*“In terms of their boundaries, these kids are no different than more privileged kids.” (Mentor)*

### **Group vs. Individual Attention**

*“They (mentees) responded to our involvement and caring very well. Some had a difficult time with our authority and use of rules...but they were the minority in numbers, but took the majority of our time.” (Mentor)*

*“The thing we struggled most with this group (in comparison to other groups) was getting their attention span to be focused so that we could actually teach them.” (Golf Pro)*

*“Having these kids in group lessons, it is really difficult to gain a connection with the kids. It’s much easier at an individual level, with group lessons.” (Golf Pro)*

### **Creating In Depth Relationships**

*“We really didn’t have enough continuity of contact with specific mentees for a relationship to form.” (Mentor)*

*“We had a nice program, but the first 6 weeks doesn’t seem to be long enough to really stick.” (Mentor)*

*“It (mentoring) is harder than I thought, and it takes a lot longer to develop a meaningful relationship to change behavior than 6 weeks. I like quick fixes, which this program can’t do in the time we have.” (Mentor)*

### **Structure and Rules**

*"...this is going to be a lot more fun now because it's easier to get points." (10 year old participant)*

*"Introducing the score cards was a huge bonus. All the kids have straightened up and they listen more. They are now better kids." (Mentor)*

*"I like learning the rules, because they help you get better and to listen more." (11 year old participant)*

*"Whenever I go golfing we've got to listen in order to get better. You shouldn't talk when others are hitting so you don't disturb them." (11 year old participant)*

*"Without them (rules) if someone got into a fight, nobody would do nothing to stop it." (9 year old participant)*

*"I think they are learning something every time we come here. They are learning about golf, but they are learning more; they are learning about how to act, and how to conduct themselves." (Mentor)*

*"Yes (I gained the mentees respect), because over a period of time they got to know me and if they got out of line a little I would give them a warning about missing a turn or something along the lines of that." (Mentor)*

*"I don't know (if I made a difference), and that's frustrating. I think that by being around adults that are different from their normal role models, they experienced something positive, but the immediate effect is unclear." (Mentor)*

*"Sometimes you have to pull (the mentees) up by the shirt to get their attention, but they are eager to learn." (Mentor)*

*"I was not used to dealing with behaviors that were uncontrolled, wild, and showed little respect for adults. It created a safety problem at times." (Mentor)*

## **Family Relationships**

*"I taught (my mother) how to swing it, how to hold and how to balance it so you hit it right, how to dig up the dirt and how to go over the dirt." (10 year old participant)*

*"I learned how to play better and now I can play my dad and beat him." (10 year old participant)*

*"I think it is wonderful he has the opportunity (to play golf), because I've never been able to." (Parent)*

### **Individual vs. Team Sport**

*“...it’s and individual game, so fun, cause like, you’re like in a team playing football and you’re the only one doing good and the rest are doing bad and it affects you too and you’re not doing good; but in golf you don’t have anybody else to work with so it’s better so you can be an individual.” (10 year old participant)*

*“I like golf because when you play golf, you play alone, so you don’t have to worry about other people doing bad.” (10 year old participant)*

*“ I got nervous when everybody watched me.” (10 year old participant)*

### **Beyond Golf, Learning Life Skills**

*“The First Tee program gives kids of all walks of life the opportunity to learn a game that builds character, respect and good values to carry with them the rest of their lives.” (Mentor)*

*“I would encourage others to get their kids involved because it really helped them.” (Parent)*

*“The involvement with the mentors helped the kids a lot. They always came home and told me about the things that they learned and did, and they normally don’t do that.” (Parent)*

*“I think the most important thing they are learning is how to respect others, and be more polite in general. They are learning how to be patient, to take turns while others hit. I think the etiquette related to golf makes them learn more about being polite.” (Golf Pro)*

*“I think what I enjoyed most was watching how golf can really turn these kids lives around. I can really see how golf could change these kids lives around. That made me feel real good.” (Golf Pro)*

*“When one of the kids realized that I needed to make a putt in order to help us out, he realized the need for teamwork and started to root for the team as a whole. That was neat, he was running along on his own prior to that, and from that moment forward we started to bond.” (Mentor)*

*“I think that when they go home that there is more to life than they thought there was.” (Mentor)*

## **Appendix F: Mentorship Manual**

# **Orientation Manual for Mentors: Greater Austin First Tee Program**

James Petrick and Peter Witt  
Department of Recreation, Park and Tourism Sciences  
Texas A&M University  
College Station, TX 77843-2261

Phone: (409) 845-7324  
E-mail: [jpetrick@rpts.tamu.edu](mailto:jpetrick@rpts.tamu.edu)

Draft, October 30, 1999

## Introduction

*“Mentoring is a one-to-one caring, supportive relationship or partnership between a mentor and a mentee that is based on trust. This relationship focuses on the needs of the mentored individuals and encourages them to develop to their fullest potential based on their own vision for the future.”<sup>1</sup>*

Welcome to the challenging and rewarding world of mentoring youth. Your *challenge* is to provide your mentee with an atmosphere that optimizes the development of competence and life skills. Your *reward* will be knowing that you are participating in a process that is giving a young person a better chance of successfully traversing the difficult transition from childhood to adulthood.

The game of golf, and your own personal experiences, will be utilized as a tool to achieve this success. Throughout the program, you will be called upon to assist youth in developing Trust, Respect, Integrity, Consistency and Self-esteem (TRICS).<sup>2</sup> The TRICS principles embody a set of life skills which will be useful to youth in the growing up process.

---

*Trust* is an assured reliance on the character, ability, strength, or truth of someone or something.

*Respect* is considering another as worthy of high regard.

*Integrity* involves adherence to a code of moral values.

*Consistency* is the adherence to the same principles or practice (“practice what you preach”).

*Self-esteem* is what we believe about ourselves.

---

Learning golf is also a goal of the program. However, learning golf is not measured by just the immediate physical accomplishments on the golf course; it is important that youth learn golf in a way that has the potential to make golf something they can enjoy doing while they are young and want to continue into their adulthood.

## Overview of Mentoring

Mentoring conducted under the Greater Austin First Tee Program will consist of:

- ◆ a formal relationship between the mentor and the mentee
- ◆ an established pattern for contacts
- ◆ recommended parameters for the meetings and/or activities
- ◆ a commitment to a time frame for interaction between mentor and mentee
- ◆ an ongoing structured training program
- ◆ monitored and supported by experienced professionals
- ◆ a consistent assessment and evaluation effort.<sup>3</sup>

## Role of Mentors

As a mentor you will be expected to be an exemplary role model to the program participants (mentees). Your actions and communications will have a great influence on the success of the communication between you and your mentee. Vital to the relationship between you and your mentee is that you be a nonjudgmental friend, a good listener and an advocate. Other qualities of a successful mentor include:

- ◆ personal commitment
- ◆ consistency
- ◆ accessibility
- ◆ flexibility and openness
- ◆ sense of humor
- ◆ persistence
- ◆ respect for youth
- ◆ willingness to listen
- ◆ kindness and patience
- ◆ ability to accept different points of view<sup>4</sup>

## Benefits for Mentors

In a recent survey, it was found that four out of five mentors stated that they felt like a better person, had increased patience, gained friendships, felt they were effective, and learned new skills.<sup>5</sup> Other notable benefits reported by mentors in numerous other programs include:

- ◆ supported a cause
- ◆ made a difference
- ◆ felt better about self
- ◆ made new friends
- ◆ learned about other cultures
- ◆ repaid a debt
- ◆ accepted a new challenge
- ◆ learned new skills and how to teach them<sup>6</sup>

## Guidelines for Mentors

In order to assist you in developing a trusting and beneficial relationship with your mentee, the following principles should be considered:

- ◆ keep communications confidential
- ◆ make promises only to the mentee
- ◆ keep all the promises to the mentee
- ◆ insist the mentee keep his/her promises to you
- ◆ emphasize your responsibility is to the mentee, not to the family
- ◆ maintain regular communication by any means
- ◆ seek assistance if the relationship is not compatible or must end for any reason<sup>7</sup>

## Obligations of Mentors

While you may have the best intentions to be the greatest role model possible, many times your personal commitments may interfere. Therefore, the following should remind you of some of the most basic mentor obligations:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| ◆ always be accessible                           | ◆ be reliable  |
| ◆ follow through on commitments                  | ◆ support the relationship                             |
| ◆ demonstrate trustworthiness                    | ◆ seek added information about the mentee <sup>8</sup> |
| ◆ promote the overall mentor program with others |  |

*The Mentoring Handbook*, prepared by the Kalamazoo Area Academic Achievement Program identifies an excellent list of Mentoring Dos and Don'ts. The list can serve as a wonderful guide to increase the power of your mentoring experience.<sup>9</sup>

| <b>Dos</b>  | <b>Don'ts</b>  |
|---|--|
| Do appreciate growth  | Don't think you are going to change the world overnight                                  |
| Do praise the mentee when deserved                            | Don't judge the mentee or his/her family   |
| Do ask questions and obtain information                       | Don't forget that confidence is built on trust   |
| Do share with the student and do communicate                  | Don't forget communication means listening too.  |
| Do remember to be punctual                                    | Don't be late and disappoint a mentee that is counting on you                            |
| Do remember to be a good role model                           | Don't exhibit poor language or dress inappropriately                                     |
| Do follow the rules of the First Tee Program                  | Don't allow mentees to talk you into things that you know are against the rules          |
| Do show attention and concern while being a friend            | Don't be a parent  |
| Do show that you recognize your mentee's values and lifestyle | Don't try to inflict your beliefs or values on a mentee; rather, demonstrate your values |
| Do strive for mutual respect                                  | Don't settle for rudeness or foul language   |
| Do be honest  | Don't think a mentee can't spot insincerity  |

## What Mentors are Not

Being a mentor can be a confusing role for both the mentor and the mentees. Therefore, the following may help to reduce misconceptions caused by role conflict.

A mentor is **not**:

- ◆ a parent
- ◆ a professional counselor
- ◆ a social worker
- ◆ a legal guardian
- ◆ a probation officer
- ◆ a playmate
- ◆ a financier
- ◆ a priest or a minister
- ◆ a law enforcement officer<sup>10</sup>

According to most experts in the field of mentoring, a mentor **should not**:

- ◆ break promises
- ◆ talk down to the mentee
- ◆ be inconsistent
- ◆ expect too much
- ◆ cause friction
- ◆ condone negative behavior
- ◆ force a mentee into anything
- ◆ become a crutch
- ◆ expect too little
- ◆ break confidentiality<sup>11</sup>

## Mentoring and Positive Support

In a recent survey by the UCLA Sports Laboratory, it was found that the number one reason youth continue to participate in sports activities is positive coach/mentor support. Thus, positive support will be critical to developing TRICS. You know you have created a positive atmosphere of support when you can affirm that you undertake the following behaviors when working with your mentee:<sup>12</sup>

- ▶ I praise my mentee just for participating.
- ▶ I look for positives, and make a big deal out of them.
- ▶ I stay calm when my mentee makes mistakes, helping him/her to learn from mistakes.
- ▶ I have reasonable and realistic expectations.
- ▶ I treat my mentee with respect, avoiding put-downs, sarcasm, and ridicule.
- ▶ I remind my mentee not to get down.
- ▶ I remember not to take myself too seriously when interacting with my mentee.
- ▶ I maintain a “Fun is #1” attitude, with lots of laughter and sense of humor.
- ▶ I emphasize teamwork and help my mentee think “we” instead of “me.”
- ▶ I relate to my mentee as an equal in every way
- ▶ I am a role model of good sportsmanship:
  - (a) Success without gloating or cheating.
  - (b) Failure without complaining.
  - (c) Treating others with fairness, generosity and courtesy.

**I praise my mentee just for participating:** It is very important to put participation in the proper perspective. Being a youth today is difficult enough, without adults adding external pressure while doing something which is supposed to be fun and enjoyable. Even when your mentee is having a bad day, at least he/she is participating and not dropping out. We sometimes need to remind ourselves to praise our mentee, not only when they achieve, but also when they are giving effort.

**I look for positives, and make a big deal out of them:** One of the best ways to develop your mentee's *self-esteem* is to have them hear about themselves from others, especially you. A healthy relationship has a 4 to 1 ratio of positives to negatives. Specific positive reinforcement is recommended. "Nice try" and "good shot" are too vague. Your mentee will need specific praise so he/she can visualize and remember it, for example:

"Great job keeping your head still."

"I like the way you kept your left arm straight through impact."

Since kids respond and remember action, the bigger the commotion made when your mentee succeeds, the better. A good motto is: "Praise in public and criticize in private."

**I stay calm when my mentee makes mistakes, helping him/her learn from mistakes:** When your mentee makes a mistake, one of two things may occur:

- (1) the youngster can learn from their mistake and try to improve the next time; or
- (2) the youngster can become consumed with the fear of making another mistake.

Since humans tend to have more animation in reactions to negative behavior, it will take extra effort to remain calm when mistakes occur. By staying calm yourself, your mentee will avoid being on the defensive, and have a better opportunity to learn from his/her mistake. Modeling this behavior will go a long way in helping to develop a *trusting* and *respectful* relationship with your mentee.

**I have reasonable and realistic expectations:** One of the largest blows to youth's *self-esteem* is when adults set unrealistic expectations. Since youth have varying degrees of dedication to practicing and mastering skills, it is essential, as a mentor, to adjust your expectations accordingly. A good mentor realizes that if your mentee is unable to meet your expectations, the activity of golf will no longer be fun. By setting realistic expectations, your mentee will be more likely to be successful, and avoid having the experience be a blow to their *self-esteem*.

**I treat my mentee with respect, avoiding put-downs, sarcasm, and ridicule:** In order to teach *respect*, you must give it. In order to receive *respect*, you must give it. *Respect* will be earned only if you are able to convey to your mentee that no matter what happens, you will be

there for them. While it is obvious that put-downs, sarcasm and ridicule are unacceptable, remember that even subtle gestures of a negative form, may be misinterpreted by your mentee. *Respect* is a two-way street. The only way your mentee will *respect* you, is if you sincerely show him/her that you *respect* them.

**I remind my mentee not to get down:** Making mistakes in the game of golf, as in life, is inevitable. It is our reactions to mistakes that are crucial. Hanging one's head after a missed putt may lead to a three or a four putt. Hanging one's head in life may lead to repeated failure, leading to bouts of depression. A steady reminder from a mentor to keep an even keel and "go get 'em next time" can go a long way in developing *consistency*.

**I remember not to take myself too seriously when interacting with my mentee:** While successfully learning golf skills, it is more important to help your mentee learn skills related to life. By downplaying the importance of "serious coaching" and accentuating a lighthearted relationship, your mentee is less apt to incur frustration, and enjoy time spent with you and on the golf course. A teachable moment exists every time that a mistake is made by your mentee. Let him/her know that you share human qualities and that everyone makes mistakes. You are much more likely to gain *trust and respect*, if you are unafraid of revealing your imperfections.

**I maintain a "Fun is #1" attitude, with lots of laughter and sense of humor:** The number one reason why youngsters participate in sports and activities is to have fun. A good mentor will learn what's fun for their mentee by stepping into their shoes and seeing the world from their point of view. To be effective, you must realize that humor, laughter and fun are essential components of continuance and enjoyment for participants. While a blue print on how to provide fun does not exist, if you are able to be yourself, be relaxed in your presentation, and not take situations too seriously, fun is bound to occur.

**I emphasize teamwork and help my mentee think "we" instead of "me.":** A vital component of *self-esteem* is developing a sense of belonging. Human beings are social animals, and need to feel as though they belong to a group. Even though much of the game of golf is individualistic, it is important for your mentee to realize that learning and participating is a team effort. When speaking with your mentee, utilize the words "we" and "us" whenever possible (i.e., replace sayings like "when I do this" with statements like "when we do this"). By making the process a team effort, the challenges will seem less daunting, and the rewards will be more fun to share.

**I relate to my mentee as an equal in every way:** In order to earn respect from your mentee, he/she will need to know that you perceive them as your equal. An excellent manner with which to portray this is by engaging your full attention during personal communication. This includes: (a) using your mentee's name whenever talking with them, (b) looking directly at them whenever possible, and (c) avoiding personal questions until appropriate, while making an effort to learn

about their interests, family, etc. Your relationship will become much more rewarding once your mentee understands that you, in no way, perceive them as inferior to yourself.

**I am a role model of good sportsmanship:** As a role model of good sportsmanship, you must emphasize the following in words and in actions: (a) success without gloating or cheating, (b) failure without complaining, and (c) treating others with fairness, generosity and courtesy. These traits must be stressed and lived by both the mentor and the mentee. By constantly setting an example of good sportsmanship, you will provide *consistency* within your relationship, and help your mentee with the development of *integrity* (i.e., “practice what you preach”).

Unique to the game of golf, is a self-monitored rule system. Teach your mentee the importance and reasons for following the rules and etiquette of the game of golf. Let him/her know that *integrity* is never more powerful than when it is put into action.

### Communication Skills

At the heart of the mentoring relationship is the ability to have effective communications. Crucial to the relationship is that the mentor be an active listener. Active listening requires more than just keeping quiet while your mentee speaks, it requires that you:

- ◆ be silent
- ◆ concentrate on the speaker’s voice and body language
- ◆ eliminate personal, physical and psychological barriers
- ◆ acknowledge listening with responses for body motion
- ◆ seek more information when necessary
- ◆ exercise emotional control
- ◆ refrain from making extreme statements
- ◆ maintain soft eye contact listen without giving approval or offering solutions
- ◆ ensure that you understand what is said or felt
- ◆ respond in your own natural way
- ◆ encourage dialogue if you need more information
- ◆ look for other clues such as tone of voice, facial expression, or gestures
- ◆ jointly agree on main points of message
- ◆ listen for ideas and feelings, not just the facts<sup>13</sup>

## Giving Feedback

Providing your mentee with immediate feedback regarding their actions will promote growth within your mentee. Your feedback should: a) correct mistakes by gently instructing, b) provide encouragement for mentees attempts to solve problems, c) praise progress, and d) create an expectation from the mentee for immediate feedback. Whether your feedback is negative or positive, your message should include these ideas:<sup>14</sup>

- ◆ *Be immediate* - Catch them doing something right, right away.
- ◆ *Be sincere* - If you are unable to be sincere, say nothing.
- ◆ *Be specific* - Concentrate on specific actions, not on generalities.
- ◆ *Show the benefit* - Let your mentee know the potential results of their actions.
- ◆ *State your personal reaction* - Let your mentee know how you really feel.
- ◆ *Ask if you can help* - Don't assume that your mentee always wants help.
- ◆ *Praise in public* - Correct in private

## Helpful Communication Reminders

It's important that you remember that adults and youth vary in their methods of communication. The following tips should assist you in interaction with your mentee.<sup>15</sup>

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| ◆ young people are typically shy with adults      | ◆ do not use slang/street language         |
| ◆ find your common ground early on                | ◆ avoid put-downs or name calling          |
| ◆ initiate discussion if necessary                | ◆ avoid comparisons to self or others      |
| ◆ don't make quick judgments on discussion topics | ◆ avoid advising on issues                 |
| ◆ use your own adult language                     | ◆ avoid interruptions                      |
|   | ◆ encourage reflection and self-evaluation |

## Best and Least Effective Practices

An analysis of mentor programs across the nation found traits that seemed to separate effective mentors and less effective mentors.<sup>16</sup> Effective mentors were found to:

- ◆ involve youth in deciding how to spend time together
- ◆ commit to being consistent and dependable
- ◆ maintain a steady presence in the youth's life
- ◆ take responsibility to keep the relationship alive
- ◆ attend to the youth's need for "fun"
- ◆ recognize the relationship may be one-sided at the start

- ◆ respect the youth's viewpoint
- ◆ seek and utilize the assistance of program staff.

Less effective mentors tended to:

- ◆ try to transform the youth by setting goals and tasks too early
- ◆ be authoritative instead of democratic in their interactions
- ◆ emphasize behavior changes more than development of mutual trust
- ◆ have difficulty regularly attending regular meetings
- ◆ attempt to instill values different from those in the mentee's home
- ◆ ignore the advice of program staff about responses to difficult issues.

### **Guidelines for Difficult Situations**

Regardless of how good a mentor is, difficult situations are bound to arise. While situations will vary, a few guidelines have been suggested that apply in almost all cases.<sup>17</sup>

- ◆ Immediately face the problem. Don't wait for an "opportune" moment. If a problem exists in your mentee's actions, it is better to deal with it early (in private), before it gets bigger
- ◆ Decide what you want to accomplish in dealing with a situation before dealing with it. Decide if you want your mentee to only be aware of the situation, or if you want to change the behavior. Knowing your purpose will help you to stay focused.
- ◆ Separate the behavior from the person. Speak positively about your mentee, but objectively about the behavior (i.e. "I like your enthusiasm, but when you do \_\_\_\_\_, it puts me in an awkward position.>").
- ◆ Stay serious, but supportive. So as not to confuse your mentee, save humor for lighter times.
- ◆ Consider relating something personal about yourself during the discussion with your mentee. Let them know that you have been in similar situations, and how you have handled them. Self-disclosure will make you seem special to the youth, and will sound less like a lecture
- ◆ After the confrontation is over, reinforce your mentee by saying something positive about them. Remind them that the issue was about their behavior, not their personality (i.e. you still like them, it's just the behavior you don't like).

### Endnotes

1. California Mentor Resource Center (1996). *Organizing an employer mentor recruitment program for government agencies*. Sacramento, CA: Author.
2. TRICS was developed by Reco Bembry, Coordinator of Teen Programs, Citywide Division, Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation, Washington.
3. Smink, J. (1999). *A training guide for mentors*. National Dropout Prevention Center, Clemson: SC.
4. *Ibid*
5. McLearn, K., Colasanto, D., & Schoen, C. (1998). Mentoring makes a difference, findings from, *The Commonwealth Fund 1998 Survey of Adults Mentoring Young People*.
6. *Ibid*.
7. *Ibid*
8. *Ibid*
9. Kalamazoo Area Academic Achievement Program (KAAAP). (no date). *Mentoring handbook*. Kalamazoo, MI: Author
10. Smith, M.W. (1997). *The two of us: A handbook for mentors*. Baltimore, MD: The Abell Foundation, Inc.
11. *Ibid*
12. List was adapted from Dr. Darrell Burnett's, the "Positive Coaching: A Behavior Checklist for Youth Sports Coaches" from the August, 1997 issue of the National Youth Sports Coaches Association. For more information see his website: [www.ddcompany.com/funagain](http://www.ddcompany.com/funagain)
13. *Op Cit*, Smink.
14. Wilbur, J. (1989, summer). Three keys to a structured mentoring system. *Mentoring International*, 3 (3), 32-36.
15. *Ibid*
16. Sipe, C.L. (1996). *Mentoring: A synthesis of P/PV'S research: 1988-1995*. Philadelphia, PA: Public/Private Ventures.
17. Faddis, B., Ruzicka, P., Berard, B., & Huppertz, N. (1988). *Ideabook for mentors. Hand in hand: Mentoring young women. Book 2*. Portland, OR: Northwest Regional Educational Lab.