

The pathway of participation from 9 holes to 18 hole events – Is my child ready for the move?

Parents have a very valuable role to play in the development of their children and the choices they make when looking to participate in a sport. Often when assisting their children in making these decisions regarding their participation, there are many factors to consider. In this article we will explore one of the many questions, most parents ask for golf, when considering the progression of their child from playing 9 holes to participating in 18 hole events.

What do parents and their children need to consider when looking at this option?

- Is the course modified for the juniors?
 - With a shortened course there are generally less shots that will be played. A longer course will however often result in more shots being played and longer distances to walk. This can impact juniors, as they will experience more fatigue, which could lead to lesser concentration and enjoyment.
 - It is a great idea to get your child to play 9 holes off the competition tees (not modified tees) before considering the move to 18 holes. Their participation from these markers can help you determine whether they are ready to make the move or not.
- Is the 9 hole handicap set for a modified course or off the club competition tees?
 - The 9 hole handicap is often created to give juniors an indication on their playing ability over a given timeframe. This handicap can be determined in various ways, but to give you a good indication on their ability and fitness levels, it is recommended they play off the club competition markers.
- Is fitness important to my child's participation and enjoyment of the game?
 - Fitness is very important when thinking about the move to 18 holes. Participants will need to be able to walk further, expect to play over a longer timeframe and be prepared to pull their clubs along the entire round. As a guideline, have your child participate in 18 holes socially and get them to set some scoring goals to track their progress, i.e., can I shoot 100 consistently? Can I pull my golf clubs for the full 18 holes? Can I score correctly? If so, they may be ready to make the move.
 - Weather conditions, i.e., heat can also impact on the participant's ability to concentrate, especially if they are going to be out on the course for a longer period.
- Does my child have a basic understanding for the rules of golf?
 - Participants need to have a basic understanding of the rules of golf, i.e., when to add penalties if in a water hazard, if they lose a ball, hit out of bounds to name a few.

- Scoring correctly and marking the card of their playing partner is important in ensuring captured scores are true and accurate on any given day participating in an event.
- Will my child be comfortable playing golf with older juniors?
 - Players are often grouped according to their handicaps in golf, and not necessarily their age. This is something to consider, as your child could be grouped with juniors older than them. This can be daunting for new participants in 18 holes, especially if the older participants are hitting the ball further than your child.
- Have you had the discussion with your child?
 - It is recommended you have a discussion with your child whether they would like to make the move to playing 18 holes. If they are keen and feel ready to do so and you can tick all the above, then your child is probably ready.

Lastly have a chat with your local PGA Professional or Junior Coordinator at your club about this and see what further advice they could offer you.

Alternatively, you can contact TeeMates via info@teemates.org.au and we'll put you in touch with one of our friendly staff members.