

## Tournament Preparation in Competitive Golf: Does Expert Consensus Reflect Current Practice?

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### Purpose

There has recently been an increased research effort to investigate the psychological and behavioural factors that may contribute to performance in the “off-course” component of competitive golf – the period preceding a tournament and before and after each round. One such study used a Delphi process with feedback from 36 content experts to develop a ranked framework of items (i.e., behaviours) that provide guidelines for education and practice in tournament preparation. However, it is not known whether players actually perform the items from the framework, which could have implications for framework validity. The aim of this study was to determine the extent to which players’ behaviours in tournament preparation reflect those included in the developed framework. A secondary aim was to compare the number of framework items reported by players with observation/interview data from a single tournament.

### Method

Over a four-month period, 18 elite amateur players used a dichotomous “yes/no” checklist – administered via the web-based software Trello – to record their behaviours in tournament preparation. Twelve of the 18 players were also observed/interviewed during an international golf tournament. Descriptive statistics were obtained from player’s self-report checklists and used to determine the mean percentage completion rate for each of the checklist items. Self-report and observation/interview checklists were also compared using statistical testing (i.e., Fisher’s exact test).

### Results

The mean percentage of completion was relatively high for most items, with  $\geq 50\%$  completion reported for 38/51 items from the checklist. In addition, there were no significant differences found between the self-report and observation/interview data.

**Discussion/Practical implications**

These findings provide initial evidence of the validity and field applicability of the newly developed framework for tournament preparation in golf. They also provide methodological support and direction for research which may wish to examine similar constructs via self-report. Comparing the applied completion rates of items in the framework with performance data to determine the relationship between specific items and tournament success represents an obvious direction for future studies in this area.