

Teaching Adult Athletes: Canadian Pros' Approaches

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- Instruction and Coaching

Purpose: Adults are a significant group of clients for golf instructors in North America, yet little research has been conducted in understanding how golf pros work with adults. Many adults play golf as a serious leisure time pursuit and consider coaching resources and instruction as a critical aspect to improve their game. Callary, Rathwell, and Young (2015, 2017, in press) have shown that the context of coaching adults is unique, with specific needs and instructional approaches. Partnering with PGA of Canada, the purpose of this presentation is to examine how golf instructors are catering to their adult clientele.

Methods: 165 golf professionals (143 m, 22 f; mean age = 43.5 years) completed a survey assessing their use of adult-oriented coaching practices. The survey included 38 items from a sport-modified adult learning Instructional Perspectives Inventory (IPI; Lubin, 2013), and 51 items built from qualitative research findings related to Masters athletes and coaches (Callary et al., 2015, 2017).

Results: Golf instructors believed they almost always gave positive feedback ($M = 6.21$ out of 7, $SD = 0.66$), listened to their athletes ($M = 6.16$, $SD = 0.61$), gave individualized instructions ($M = 5.91$, $SD = 0.93$), created practices that were intrinsically motivating ($M = 5.73$, $SD = 0.76$), took steps to efficiently maximize practice time ($M = 5.67$, $SD = 0.74$), explained the rationale for drills ($M = 5.66$, $SD = 0.82$), were professional and relatable ($M = 5.64$, $SD = 0.96$), and shared their accumulated experiences ($M = 5.51$, $SD = 0.92$). Golf instructors believed they often facilitated self-directed learning ($M = 5.24$, $SD = 0.95$), oriented learning to solve problems ($M = 5.49$, $SD = 0.87$), tailored lessons to meet adults' individual needs ($M = 5.39$, $SD = 0.89$), and accommodated adults' busy schedules ($M = 5.35$, $SD = 1.18$). Golf instructors sometimes helped adults with competitions ($M = 4.59$, $SD = 1.04$).

Discussion: These findings provide a profile of the extent that particular adult-oriented teaching principles are in play when golf instructors are working with adults. Golf instructors self-report that they take into account and follow adult learning principles in their sport-coaching approaches.

Practical application: The findings from this survey have implications for coach developers and coach/instructor education programming, identifying important adult-oriented approaches to use when working with adult golfers in order to provide a quality sport learning experience.

- Please consider for either a podium or a poster presentation

References:

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We would like to acknowledge funding from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and Cape Breton University.