



# FORECOLLEGE GOLF

Guiding Players Forward

## *Tournament Scheduling in Junior Golf*

For many players and families, tournament scheduling can be one of the most daunting, confusing, and overwhelming tasks to navigate. Junior golf is unique compared to college or pro golf because players have the autonomy to schedule their own events, travel individually (without a team or a caddy) and experience new challenges and learning opportunities around every corner.

With this article, our aim is to guide families, like yours, toward making the right considerations and ultimately the right decisions, on how to approach setting up your tournament schedule.

At ForeCollegeGolf, we ask our players to understand that tournament scheduling is much more than just signing up for events, tournament scheduling is inherently cyclical.

### The 4 Stages of Tournament Scheduling:

1. Plan - look ahead & take ownership
2. Prepare - ready your skillset for tournaments
3. Execute – perform & be excellent
4. Evaluate - reflect on past performance

Now, let's break down each stage...

or

Watch ForeCollegeGolf 14min [VIDEO HERE](#)

### ***Planning Stage***

- Start early! I see too many juniors who sign up late or hesitate leading up to an event because of the weather, course setup, playing partners, or just their overall readiness. If you commit to an event, commit early, and commit 100%.
  - Most AJGA and other larger national events require you to sign up 4-6 weeks in advance, some invitationals even earlier. As a rule, players should update their upcoming tournament schedules every 3mo (quarterly) and plan which events they might apply for 6 months in advance.
- Find your Balance – every schedule should include “Hard, Medium, and Easy” events to supplement the player and their development. Most juniors should aim to play a balanced schedule of 10-15 ranked events per year, not including qualifiers or HS golf.



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This is dependent on location, weather, and player preference/history. It's very typical that a Freshman or Sophomore plays more often but plays more local whereas, upperclassmen in their Junior or Senior years typically play less often but travel more and play near where they want to be recruited.

- Hard events – your “Majors”, these are events where there are many players at or above your skill level. If you win people will say, “Who is that guy?”
- Medium events – your “Challenges”, these are events where there are a mix of players above/below your skill level. If you win, people will say, “I'm not surprised he won, he's been here before”
- Easy events – your “Confidence builders”, these are events where you may be the best player in the field. If you win people will say, “He should have won, I'm not surprised”.
- Note: Players should prioritize a balanced schedule with a proper “challenge point” to allow for periodic developmental growth. At the elite level, there may be instances where events overlap, and players will need to “double book” their schedules because some events, like elite invitationals, do not guarantee entry.
- “Climb the developmental ladder” – “don't skip rungs of the ladder”. Meaning, if you haven't had a Top5 at the local level yet, don't set a goal to Top5 at your next regional event, OR if you've recently won a regional event, don't set an expectation to win your next national event, be honest with yourself & set expectations accordingly. Continuous growth and development is king.
- Play where you want to be recruited – For example, if you want to play college golf in the Southeast, play tournaments in Florida, Georgia, and South Carolina.
- Cold-Weather Exception – If you're in a cold weather climate, give yourself 1 month after your home course reopens before you play in tournament competition. Also, don't play tournaments in December or January; the weather is statistically poor, and NCAA D1 College Coaches can't recruit off-campus during December\*. Use this time to build and develop your swing, get club fitted, and make major changes. (\*2018 NCAA bylaw revision)

### ***Preparation Stage –***

- Keep your schedule visible! – as the saying goes, “ink it, don't just think it”, or in other words, put your schedule somewhere you can see it on a regular basis like your bedroom mirror or the refrigerator in your kitchen.
- Prepare like a PRO - Remember, your schedule should determine how you practice and how you practice determines how you ultimately perform!



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- When periodizing practice, make sure to differentiate between technical, skill and performance practice days and be cognizant of when you need to work on certain aspects of your game.
- Course Prep - utilize tools like Google Maps/Earth, Blue Golf or other apps to map out courses, targets, club selections, and strategy beforehand.
- Play AT LEAST one practice round - and no, it's not a cardinal sin to keep score in practice rounds, but keep an honest perspective, nothing counts until your 1st Tee shot.
- Keep a "Growth-Mindset" – continue growing and adding to your developmental skillset each and every day. If you continue adding layers to your armor, it's only going to get stronger and stronger over time to the point where it becomes impenetrable.

### ***Execution Stage – "Go, Be Excellent!"***

- Be YOU- Play to your Strengths, know your game plan, and stay true to your identity. Be confident & take pride in who you are & all the hard work you've put in.
- "Play" freely – do your best to minimize expectations, outside distractions, and negative emotions.
- Be decisive & stay aggressive - The best players in the world have conviction in their decisions & make aggressive swings to small, conservative targets.

### ***Evaluation Stage -***

- Evaluate your past performance(s) –vocalize and take ownership of the good and the bad. I always ask my players 3 questions...
  - What did you do well?
  - What could you have done better?
  - What will you do differently next time?
- Track your Stats – many players make the mistake of keeping bad stats (fwrys, GIR, putts) or not keeping stats at all. Utilize a "strokes-gained" stats app, like UpGame or ShotbyShot, or DECADE, to input your stats after each round. If you stay disciplined, once you have a 20-30 round sample size this data can be used to analyze your strengths and weaknesses, which can be helpful to plan practice and strategize on-course.
- Ask necessary Q's
  - How will I schedule differently going forward?
  - Was the level of events appropriate compared to my skill level?
  - Did I play too often or not enough?
  - Did I give myself enough time for rest/recovery?
  - Were there any events that I couldn't handle or where I was overly stressed?



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- Did I see any recognizable patterns in my game? Did these match my stats?
- Going forward, is my focus to play for experience or exposure?

Now that you've gone through the tournament scheduling cycle, you should be able to assess and modify your approach from event to event.

Best of luck in your upcoming events,

Mike  
ForeCollegeGolf, Founder

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