

**NATIONAL PLAYER
DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM**

Training

Effective Practice Strategies and Drills
For Competitive Golfers



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Effective Practice Strategies and Drills For Competitive Golfers

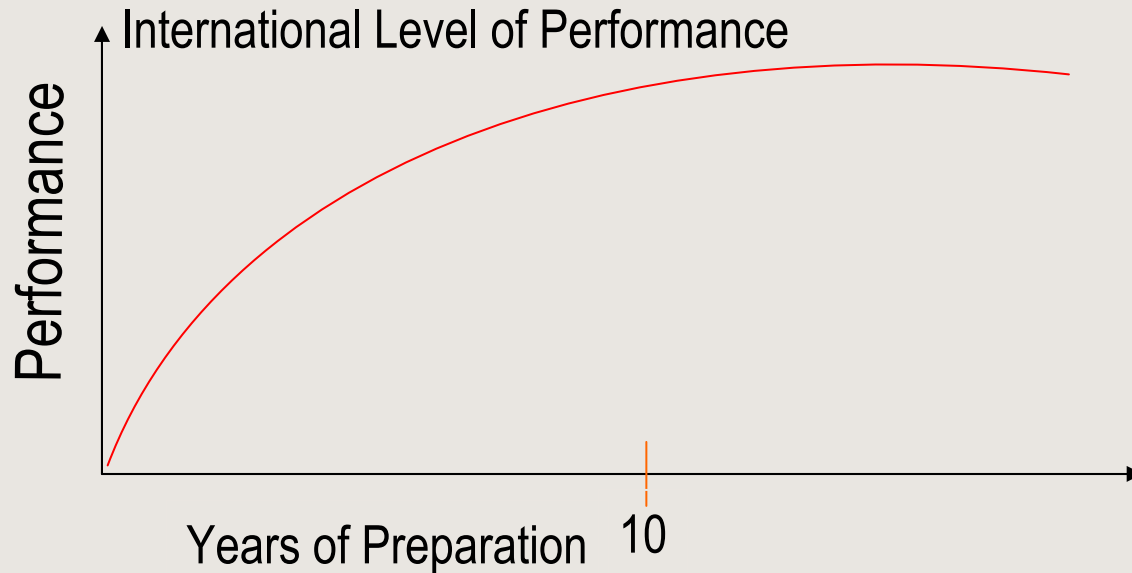
TEN YEAR RULE

- The central research finding is that no one becomes a world class expert without 10 years (10,000 hours) or more of intense attention and practice in the domain of their expertise
 - Dr. A. Ericsson, *“The Road to Excellence”*
- In golf, the research shows that 10 years is a minimum and the actual time as measured by when a player wins a major on the PGA Tour is 20 years and the LPGA 15 years
- Individuals develop expertise via **“deliberate practice”**



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TEN YEAR RULE / DELIBERATE PRACTICE



Courtesy – “The Road to Excellence”



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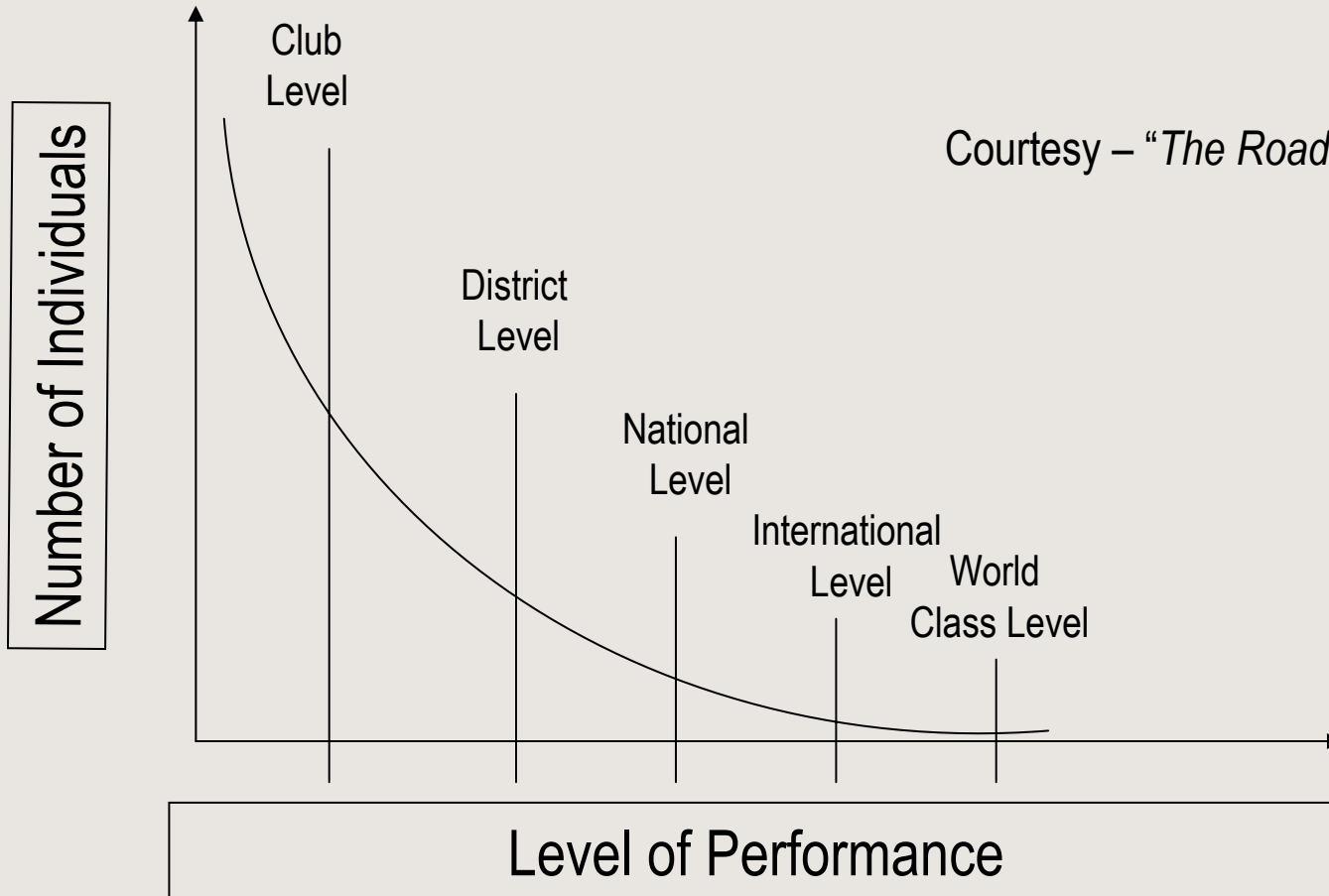
WHAT IS DELIBERATE PRACTICE?

- To be engaged with full concentration in activities specifically designed to improve performance
- 4 to 5 hours per day
- Hard work at the start does not enable one to coast into future success
- It is not easy finding the appropriate balance between the strain of deliberate practice and rest / recovery / social activities



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THE ROAD TO BECOMING A WORLD CLASS PLAYER



Courtesy – “The Road to Excellence”



Effective Practice Strategies and Drills For Competitive Golfers

TRADITIONAL vs. TRANSFER TRAINING

- Research compiled by Dr. Bob Christina, University of Georgia
- Presented at the 2002 World Scientific Congress in St. Andrews, Scotland



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TRADITIONAL TRAINING – Failing to Optimize Performance

- Often referred to as “Scraping and Hitting”
- Is not deliberate practice
- Does not encourage players to learn to perform golf skills in a playing context
- Encourages players to depend on their coaches
- Does not encourage practice of pre-shot routine
- Golf skills are taught and practiced in ways and under conditions that are largely different than those during play
- Does not simulate competitive pressure involved in play
- Hit balls repeatedly the same distance with the same club
- Stroke putts repeatedly from the same distance



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TRADITIONAL TRAINING – Failing to Optimize Performance

- Hit all shots from good lies
- Makes it relatively easy to perform on the practice range
- Promotes a false sense of confidence
- Is not generally focused on reacting to targets

Important Note: Traditional training is still a valuable component in the overall training of an individual especially during technical changes when large numbers of repetitions are required



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TRANSFER TRAINING

- Often referred to as “Simulated training”
- Encourages the learning of golf skills in a playing context
- Encourages players to think as they should when they play
- Encourages players to analyze and correct their own performance
- Less frequent feedback, instruction and coaching
- Encourages players to practice as they must play
- Hit balls successively with different clubs to simulate play
- Hit balls different distances with the same club to simulate play
- Practice pre-shot routine / mental routine when hitting shots and putts



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TRANSFER TRAINING

- Golf skills are taught and practiced in ways and under simulated playing conditions
- Resulting effect is that shots are more difficult to perform on the practice range than they are during traditional training
- This training tends to promote a realistic sense of confidence



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HOW SHOULD YOU PRACTICE?

- Your practice should be fun
- Arrive at your practice session with a specific plan and performance goal
- “Play” fun practice games such as “worst ball scramble” on the course, Par 18 UP and Down, 54 Shot Challenge
- Train on the course whenever possible. There is no better place to practice or simulate conditions than actually being on the course
- You should measure performance and create “pressure” as much as possible. For example, commit yourself to practicing green side sand shots until you hole five shots, or practice putting with one ball on the practice green with a friend for a friendly wager
- Focus your energy on your strengths – keep them strong and build them to an even higher level



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HOW SHOULD YOU PRACTICE?

- Identify opportunities for improvement (weaknesses) and be committed to improving each of these skills over time until they become strengths
- Practice your short game twice as much as your long game. Use a short game test to monitor performance
- Practice “playing” golf on the practice range. Follow your routine, react to the target and imagine how the shot would turn out on the course
- Make your training as realistic and as simulated to golf as possible
- Keep a written journal of your practice activities to monitor performance



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EFFECTIVE DRILLS AND PRACTICE STRATEGIES

The following is information on PGA Tour performance standards that Dr. Rick Jensen (www.pgaperformancecenter.com) shared with the RCGA. The information can be used as part of practice drills outlined below.

Pitch shots – when practicing a pitch shot within 15 yards off the green with 15 yards of green to work with, the PGA average median distance is 4 feet.

Pitch and lob shots (scattered pattern) in some rough, some in clean lies from the edge of the green up to 50 yards – PGA average median distance is 6 feet

Chipping – from 5 yards off the green, hitting to 3 different pins that are all located 15 yards on to the green and alternating targets – PGA average median distance is 2 feet



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EFFECTIVE DRILLS AND PRACTICE STRATEGIES

Putting – Distance Control – 18 feet is the average birdie putt for PGA Tour pros. From 18 feet count how many of your putts end up either in the hole, no less than 4 inches past the hole and no more than 28 inches past the hole. Score a point for every ball that is holed or finishes in the “safe” zone – 4 to 28 inches past the hole. PGA Tour performance – 3 or 4 putts holed with all of the remaining putts finishing in the “safe” zone. The above drill is also effective on 15 and 21 foot putts.

Putting – Short Putts – Place 4 tees on each side of a hole at 3 feet away. Place an additional 4 tees directly behind them a 4 feet and 4 more at five feet. Start at the 3 footers, make 3 in a row from each station in order to remove it and move to the next station. Measure the number of misses. The PGA Tour average is between 0 – 3.



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EFFECTIVE DRILLS AND PRACTICE STRATEGIES

Sand shots – when hitting from a greenside bunker (not a “perched” lie) the PGA Tour median average is 6 feet

Note re median average - In order to determine the “median” ball when hitting 15 shots, eliminate the seven best shots (closest to the target) and the seven worst shots (furthest). The ball remaining is the “median” ball – half are better and half are worse.

(While statistics are not available from the LPGA for median averages it is estimated that numbers are very similar and can be used effectively as part of the practice drills)



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SUMMARY

- Resist the desire to “rake and hit”
- Use traditional training for technical swing changes
- Use transfer training to optimize your playing performance
- Keep a journal to monitor performance
- Train under the guidance of a certified CPGA coach

“Practice does not make perfect. Perfect practice makes perfect.”



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OTHER RESOURCES

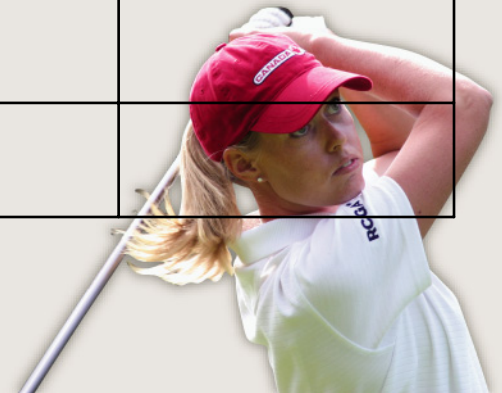
- “A Dozen Helpful Tips for Maximizing Practice”
- “Uncommon Golf Short Game Test”
- “54-Shot Challenge / Swedish Golf Federation”
- “Par 18 Short Game Challenge / Swedish Golf Federation”

(All available as downloads from the RCGA website)



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Date	Drill	# of shots	Hole outs	Median distance
		15		
		15		
		15		
		15		
		15		
		15		
		15		



Practice Session Worksheet

List goals here:		Explain your strategy for achieving each goal	
1		1	
2		2	
3		3	
4		4	
5		5	

