

# The Rituals and Routines of Expert Coaches

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I reviewed an article on the rituals and routines of expert golf instructors. The actions these golf instructors do during their practice can help bowling coaches be a more effective coach. The coaches in the study had the following characteristics: (1) 10 years of experience in instruction; (2) certified by the LPGA; (3) formally recognized as a quality instructor; (4) players success.

## Review of Research on Rituals and Routines Used by Expert Instructors

The following article provides coached with a guideline on effectively teaching bowlers. In addition, it can be used by bowlers in their own practice process. Baker, K., Schempp, P.G., Hardin, B. & Clark, B. (1998). The Routines and Rituals of Expert Golf Instruction. Studied Ladies Professional Golf Association (LPGA) golf instructors who met the following criteria: 10 or more years of teaching experience; possessed current LPGA certification; formally recognized for the quality of their instruction (local, regional or national level); and their students' record of golfing success (local, regional or national levels).

A videotape analysis of their instruction revealed consistencies among the 11 coaches in the study.

### Lesson Opening

Each coach initiated the lesson with a short conversation. In each case, the coach asked for the following information: experience in sports other than golf; previous exposure to golf; and any injury or physical limitation.

This allowed the coach to learn about the experience and physical abilities of the student. Most importantly, this set the stage for the instructor to align metaphors and discussion around the athletes prior experience.

### Goal Setting

Immediately following the opening discussion and questions, the coach made it clear about the purpose of the lesson. This sets clear expectations and makes the lesson intent transparent. And, many of the coaches asked the students to verbalize the goals (e.g., What are your goals in golf? What would you like to accomplish in the lesson today?)

### Verbal Instruction

### Use of Metaphors

Several of the expert golf instructors used metaphors and visualization to supplement and enhance instruction. Whenever possible, the coach would make references to the sports most familiar with the student (learned from the lesson opening).

### Feedback

The coaches provided immediate and positive feedback when students performed the skills being taught. Seldom were errors identified or corrected. Attention and focus of instruction was on skills performed correctly. When a correction was suggested, the coach would pose a question: (1) If you needed to make an adjustment, do you know what it would be?; (2) What was your assessment of that?

### Nonverbal Instruction

### Physical Manipulation

Instructors placed students in correct position to help them achieve a feeling for correct execution.

### Demonstrations

Coaches used demonstration rarely and selectively. Demonstration was always used to supplement verbal instruction.

### Pacing

These expert coaches regulated the lesson closely. Several techniques were used to regulate the pace of the lesson. At the beginning of the lesson, the coach asked all of the questions. First and foremost, the instructor determined when to

move-on to the next part of the lesson. This established the coach in control of the learning environment.

### Lesson Closure

Each instructor made an effort to end on a positive note when the student executed with success. The purpose was to leave with a memory of a successful shot. All of the instructors ended the lesson by providing a brief review of the lesson in which all major points were summarized for the student. The lesson goals were restated. The important components of the lesson reviewed. And, for future reference, the student was given what s/he should work-on in practice. Then, the student was asked to summarize the experience. "Tell me what you got out of your lesson today" or "What will you remember that you can practice?" was asked by the coach.