

TECHNIQUE
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FUN



Perfectionism—a cancer for the mental game?

This month we are going to discuss perfectionism, and perfectionist attitudes. This is a huge issue for elite golfers, and more and more in my work I see this as a **major distinguishing point** between **success and failure**.

Do you during, or after a round of golf feel;

- Frustrated
- Disappointed
- Angry
- De-motivated
- Going around in circles with your game?

Perfectionism in golf is a two edged sword. On the positive side, perfectionists tend to have traits such as;

- Committed, hard workers
- Ambitious
- Strive for excellence

On the negative side;

- High expectations (**demands** that they place upon themselves)
- **Self critical**
- **Judgmental** – always comparing their performance against **their perception** of “perfect”
- **Confidence consistently undermined** because not “reaching” perfection level

Perfectionists tend to possess “**all or nothing thinking**”. They place a judgment on their performance as either good or bad with **no grey area** in between. In thinking this way, they maintain high, often unreasonable expectations about their performance in which they price in perfection and make it hard to **feel satisfied** with their performance. This will then consequently lead to emotions like frustration, anger and disappointment.

Placing **high expectations** is an example of why perfectionism can undermine performance. Some golfers’ set their expectations so high that they **set themselves up for failure**. And over the long term, what do you think this does for confidence??!

Many perfectionist golfers’ struggle with **fear of failure**. Fear of failure causes many golfers’ to become anxious, tight, and worry about making mistakes. Fear of failure causes a loss of composure when under stress in competition because you become so anxious about results or outcomes and not failing.

Other disadvantages of perfectionism include:

- Over-motivation leading to over-training – a feeling of that they are never training “hard enough”
- **Draining of self belief over time** as confidence consistently undermined
- Caring too much about what others think
- A **lack of trust** due to being stuck in the **training mindset**, and not being able to switch to a “**playing mentality**” in competition

Many golfers, and most perfectionists, do not understand the difference between high expectations and high ambition. High ambition is excellent, high expectations is bad. But there is only a subtle but important difference between the two— expectations being a demand, and ambitions being a desire.

So how can we change or learn to manage perfectionism?

Some of the ways you can learn to manage perfectionist attitudes are;

1. Strive for perfection in practice, but accept on the course that you are human and that you can't be perfect, and after all, “golf is a game of mistakes”, and managing those mistakes
2. Identify the **expectations (demands)** that **you**, or others, place upon **yourself**

Success formula

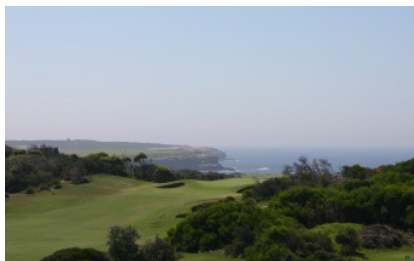


Let's make it clear—perfectionism will ruin your game and career, without good management. Golf is a game, and a game of imperfect shots.

Send us an email and enroll on our distance learning program today and start learning how you can make perfectionism work for you and not against you.

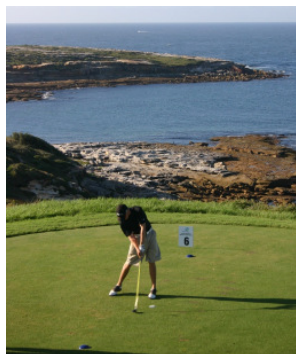
2007 Australian Amateur Championship

Of the 10 students who attended our Winter Program in Australia, three were eligible to compete in the Australian Amateur Championship. This championship is regarded as one of the premier amateur tournaments in the world, and the field reflected this fact with players representing a total of 13 nations from all over the world, including the England elite team. Former champions and former competitors of the Australian Amateur include Michael Campbell, Geoff Ogilvy, Adam Scott, Aaron Baddeley to name but a few.



New South Wales GC

This year's championship was played at the world renowned New South Wales GC, currently ranked in the world's top 50 and undoubtedly one of the best courses in the world. The course was designed by Dr Alistair MacKenzie, of Cypress Point and Augusta fame, and certainly the course is similar to Cypress Point in that there are a number of breathtaking coastline holes, and also some links style inland holes carved from the native bush. The course is located in the Botany Bay national Park and is very exposed to the Pacific Ocean, and this course is the ultimate test for any golfer—wind, undulating very fast greens, narrow driving holes, pot bunkering, thick rough bordering the fairways and greens.



Oliver Gilmartin teeing off the 6th hole

Student Oliver Gilmartin, from Switzerland, shot 74-74 the first two days to make the cut on the mark. Oliver felt that this was his best achievement so far in men's golf, as he has never played in a tournament of such stature until now. Just a little over 18 months ago Oliver was off 5 h'cap, and he has shown remarkable dedication and commitment to developing his skills in all areas of the game, and his results have got progressively better and better, culminating in the fact that he is almost off scratch h'cap now. Oliver struggled on the excessively fast windswept greens at the weekend and finished on 306 (74-74-80-78) for the tournament.



Nikke teeing off the 1st tee

Student Nikke Tyry, from Finland, demonstrated his excellent fighting skills with a 1st round 76, but found the alien links conditions difficult in the 2nd round and missed the cut. But Nikke was one of the youngest competitors in the tournament at 17 years old, and has great potential and I'm sure it will prove valuable experience for the future.



Student Jokke Altonen, also from Finland, fired 76-70 the first two days to make the cut by two shots. Jokke has worked hard on his game over the last 3 months here in Australia and it was just reward for his excellent commitment. Jokke then fired a best round of his life 68 in the third round to move up the field into 23rd place. This was a wonderful round on an extremely demanding course, proof being that a player of the quality of England's Ben Parker could only manage 77 during the same round.



Jokke teeing off the 16th with World No 1 Amateur Jamie Moull looking on

Jokke was paired with Jamie Moull, currently ranked No 1 amateur in the world, for the final round. Unfortunately Jokke got off to a bad start and signed for a 77 (76-70-68-77) which dropped him down into 40th place. Jokke should be very proud of some of the excellent golf he played under very difficult conditions in a top tournament, and his experience on the last day will help him in the future when next time he plays himself into such a position.