



## **Mentally Preparing for the State High School Golf Tournament**

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This is the time of year for all high school golfers that means the most. Although summer golf tournaments have taken on more weight when it comes to college recruitment, there is still nothing that quite matches the excitement of the state golf tournament. It is a time of thrills, nervousness, and competition not seen prior. Even though the game of golf is the same whether playing in the state tournament, AJGA event, or just with family and friends, there is a mental shift for many high school golfers. This mental shift can be productive or destructive. As a result, I have put together some tips to keep “in mind” as the state tournament gets under way.

### **Get Plenty of Rest and Nutrition**

Although this tip may not seem like any great insight, it is very important. Golfers tend to spend more mental and emotional energy around the state tournament. This greater expenditure of mental and emotional energy must be restored through proper sleep and nutrition. Remember, if physical energy is low, mental energy will be low as well.

### **It's All Mental At This Point**

Golfers' mechanics are not going to change at this point in the season. It is time to simply maintain your swing, not change it. The success of golfers in the state tournament is determined by the head and heart. Your skill is where it is at right now – it is not going to change dramatically in the next few weeks. The head and heart, however, are what will determine success.

### **Enjoy It!**

Many times the nervousness and pressure to perform overshadows the fun and excitement of this time of year. Golfers have practiced and worked hard all season and this is a time of year to simply enjoy. The hard work is over – enjoy and take it all in. Each day is like a birthday – relax and enjoy the excitement!

### **Keep Focused on the Things Within Your Control**

Because of the extra hype and attention on the state tournament, it is easy to become distracted. Golfers must remember to keep focused on things within their control. Again, it is the same game whether playing in an AJGA event, state tournament, or relaxing with teammates on the course. Keep your focus on these things. It does not matter how many people are watching or who is there, it is not something golfers can control.

### **Put the Ball in the Hole**

Since the state tournament is an elimination event, it is important to remember that the most important goal is to put the ball in the hole in the fewest strokes as possible. The individuals and teams with the fewest strokes are the ones that move forward. Keep this in the forefront of your mind - it is not a time to worry about having a “perfect” driver or 5-iron – it is to focus on getting ball in the hole. End of story.

Play Hard, Play Smart and Play Well!