



T.P.C. – A Great Golf Course, but More Importantly the Mental Keys to Success

**By Todd M. Kays, Ph.D.
Sport Psychologist**

Although most golfers think of TPC at Sawgrass when they see the letters T.P.C., there is another important meaning for them – T is for Target, P is for Plan and C is for Commitment. These three words represent keys to great mental success on the golf course.

P is for PLAN: A golfer must have a plan for each and every hole and shot on the golf course. It is critical for golfers who want to consistently perform their best to know the golf course before playing in a tournament and know the most appropriate shots to hit. I encourage golfers to write brief notes about each hole and keep them with their yardage book during the round. This task enables them to see each hole before teeing off, refresh their memory of the plan for that hole and bring their focus to the immediate moment. Being in the present moment is one of the most important mental states for golfers. Although shot selection may change while on the course, it is always good to have a plan laid out ahead of time.

T is for TARGET: One question that should be in a golfer's mind before hitting the shot is "What's my target?" Again, this question helps golfers zero in on the present moment and eliminate any other irrelevant thoughts. It is also important for golfers to pick out a very specific target. The more specific the target, the better. A golfer is more likely to come close to a specific target, such as a leaf, than a broader target such as "the fairway." A golfer may not hit the leaf exactly, but will be much closer and in the fairway, but a golfer whose target is "the fairway" may miss slightly, but be in the rough or a hazard.

C is for COMMIT: This is the final stage of a solid mental routine. Every golfer must commit to the shot with absolute resolve if he or she wants to have the greatest chance for success. If golfers are not committed to the shot, they must step back before trying to hit the ball or risk a possible mishap. Common reasons for not committing to the shot are lack of confidence in the club, unsure about club selection, fear of making a mistake and/or lack of focus. Golfers must step back until they are absolutely committed. If that means clubbing down and hitting a shorter shot, then they must do so. It is better to hit a lower club with commitment and come up short than it is to hit a longer club without commitment. The result could be painful

Thus, think about T.P.C. in a different way. These three letters could make the difference in your game!

Play Hard, Play Smart and Play Well!