



PGA

Pacific Northwest Section

PLAYER DEVELOPMENT

PGA Professional:	Nico van der Ven
Facility Name:	Jackson Park Golf Course
Phone:	(206) 363-4747
Email:	nvand51@gmail.com
Goals of the program:	The goal of getting the incline trainer is to help golfers of all levels be able to learn about hitting shots of off uneven lies. Jackson Park has many uneven lies throughout the course, even shots landing in the fairway may be difficult to hit. Learning about how to deal with various situations is critical to being able to play this course well.
Program Design:	I created a basic program to help students understand how the four basic uneven lies affect club head manipulation and ball flight. I started with uphill and ball above feet linked together, then with downhill and ball below feet. This helped players easily track their adjustments based on ball flight patterns. This was less about creating a specific program, and was more focused on helping all of our students make the correct adjustments for a part of their game that is typically underserved.
Tracking Results:	I had my students rank the four different lies for them personally one through four, from easiest to hardest. This helped to give them perspective on what they struggle with, and offered some insight into why. As they came back I would ask them to reevaluate their ratings, if they had changed, what had worked, and if not why not.
Results:	I would have my students spend a few separate sessions hitting off of the various lies on the mat. Once I felt they were confident enough to do the real thing, I took them out on the course to several spots I had marked out and had them hit real uneven shots into greens from varying yardages. I had mixed results with this method, but the majority of my students said it was a good learning experience, and kids in particular liked the change from just hitting of flat range mats.
Business Impact:	I cannot speak to actual dollar and cent figures, but almost every student I have had since acquiring this mat has at the very least asked what the trainer is used for. I have also seen driving range patrons who are not taking lessons also using the incline trainer to practice on their own. I have also been told by several men's club members how happy they are that they now have the chance to practice these challenging shots on the range.



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Recommendations:

For other professionals considering trying to implement a program like this, I would offer the advice of making sure you have a spare range mat ready, in case you do not like the one that is offered. I would also recommend targeting it towards junior golfers. Many of my junior students had more fun hitting off of the incline mat than the regular mats. I also noticed more rapid improvement in some of my junior golfers than many of my older students. This may be a result of learning it earlier, but I feel that they also were able to have more fun with the challenge.

