



# PGA

Pacific Northwest Section

## Downriver GC – Best Practices Starting a Junior Golf Academy Utilizing Operation 36

David Fern, PGA

### **Details of program:**

Downriver Junior Golf Academy is a 9-month program that runs from the start of the season to the end of the golf season here in Spokane, WA. We are utilizing the Operation 36 Framework.

[Operation 36](#) is organized by a network of golf professionals who have designed a 10-year junior golf development program for other PGA Golf Professionals to use. I have utilized a lot of their concepts over the last several years at Downriver GC and this program has the design, curriculum, App, and programming that puts it all together for me. Operation 36 is already growing in the Pacific Northwest. I truly believe that it will significantly increase the number of junior golfers playing at facilities that use it, and it will increase family play as well. It is a program where coaches, juniors, and parents all work together to develop a youngster into a better golfer and person.

As parents and juniors experience and hear about the Downriver Junior Golf Academy, interest and excitement is growing. The program goal is to get junior golfers to shoot par or better for 9 holes. There are 6 levels of play, and all juniors start on Level 1 with a hole length of 25 yards. If they shoot 36 or better, they move on to Level 2 where each hole is 50 yards, then Level 3 where all holes are 100 yards. Eventually, in order to pass the Level 6, a golfer must shoot par or better from his/her respective tee box. In order to pass each level, a golfer also must pass 12 objectives or assignments.

The structure for the class is to get families to commit to either 1, 2, or 3 days a week. Minimum commitment is one Academy class per week. The suggested commitment is 2 days a week, where a junior participates in one Academy class per week and a 9-hole “Op36” match where they try to shoot par or better from their respective tee. A 3 day per week commitment includes Academy Classes, Op36 Matches, and Supervised Practice by the PGA Pro. All progress and curriculum is tracked and shared in the Op36 App, which is custom-designed for Downriver GC. Kids love the technology aspect and it involves parents as well. Parents are encouraged to caddie for their juniors in Op36 matches. There are rewards and for passing objectives at the “Downriver Skill Point Store” such as hats, gloves, candy, golf clubs, balls etc.

### **Next steps:**

I have run the program this winter at an indoor facility, with some of our junior golfers from Downriver GC. The excitement is growing! I am looking forward to how it plays out in 2017.