

# Impact of Children and Youth Sports Programs on the Development of Golf in the Country

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**Abstract:** *The impact of children's and youth sports programs on the development of golf in the country is a significant area of research since these programs contribute not only to the popularization of sports among the population but also to the development of physical, social, and communication skills among the younger generation. Programs aimed at involving children and adolescents become the fundamental basis for the formation of long - term interest in the sport, ensuring continuity and continuity in the development of golf at the national level. The purpose of this article is to comprehensively study the impact of such programs on the level of involvement of children and adolescents in golf, as well as to assess their contribution to the creation and development of appropriate infrastructure. The methodological approach includes the analysis of statistical data covering the dynamics of the number of participants, as well as changes in infrastructure provision in various regions of the country. Special attention is paid to the analysis of successful foreign methods, such as The First Tee programs in the USA and Future Links in Canada, which have proven their effectiveness in attracting children to golf and forming the necessary sports and social skills. The results of the study demonstrate that targeted programs aimed at working with children and adolescents contribute to a significant increase in golf engagement.*

**Keywords:** children's sports, youth programs, golf, popularization, sports infrastructure.

## 1. Introduction

Golf, as a popular sport on an international level, plays an important role not only as a physical activity but also as a tool for shaping social and cultural identity. Despite the historically established perception of golf as a sport aimed at an adult audience, there has been a growing interest in recent decades in engaging children and adolescents in this sport. The development of golf among young people promotes the formation of valuable physical and social skills, including coordination, concentration, discipline, and the ability to work in a team.

The relevance of this topic is driven by the need to develop a sports culture within society and to popularize less mainstream sports among children and adolescents. Youth golf programs not only increase young people's participation but also contribute to infrastructure development, which in turn promotes the growth of the golf industry at the national level.

The purpose of this article is to examine the impact of these programs on children's and adolescents' involvement in golf, as well as to assess their contribution to the development of golf infrastructure.

## 2. Materials and Methods

The theoretical aspect of the issue was studied based on the works of Barzyk P., Gruber M., Bobrownicki R., Carson H. J., Collins D., Richard J. F., Iancu H. D., Lee L., Evans A., Downen T., Eime R., Harvey J., Charity M., Sorbie G., Sorrentino F., and Martín - García M. M.

Barzyk P. and Gruber M. note that golf is a sport requiring complex motor actions performed with maximum precision to get the ball into designated holes on the course. However, there is a common misconception that this sport is primarily targeted at an adult audience, while in recent years, interest

among younger generations has been growing [1]. Therefore, to objectively assess its popularity, several criteria can be used, such as the number of active players in a country relative to its population, the number of professionals participating in international tournaments, or the television ratings of golf tournaments. For example, comparing player statistics and ratings can give insights into which country golf is most successful.

In the United States, the popularization of golf among children is actively supported by The First Tee, which has implemented a comprehensive educational model. This program goes beyond the technical aspects of the game, emphasizing the development of qualities such as honesty, respect for opponents, and strategic thinking. As a result of these efforts, the number of children playing golf has increased significantly, contributing to the sport's growth at a professional level, as confirmed by statistical data [2]. According to a forecast by Technavio [3], the golf market is expected to grow by USD 715.32 million by 2027. The data below demonstrates the stable development of this sector. In April 2023, the number of rounds played increased by 8% (according to data from the National Golf Foundation, NGF) [3]. The rise in the number of games is attributed to favorable weather conditions in the spring - summer period, as well as in the fall months, especially in the northeastern and midwestern regions of the United States. The figures for 2023 are 3% higher compared to 5% for the same period in 2022. If favorable weather continues in April, monthly growth could reach 40%, particularly in the East North Central regions.

In 2022, North America remained the leader in golf equipment sales (Company for Business Research). Major market leaders, such as TaylorMade Golf and Callaway Golf Company, played a key role in boosting sales in 2022. However, experts predict that between 2022 and 2024, the most dynamically growing market will be in Asia. South Korean company Centroid Investment Partners, which acquired TaylorMade Golf for \$1.7 billion, plans to open additional stores in the Asian region.

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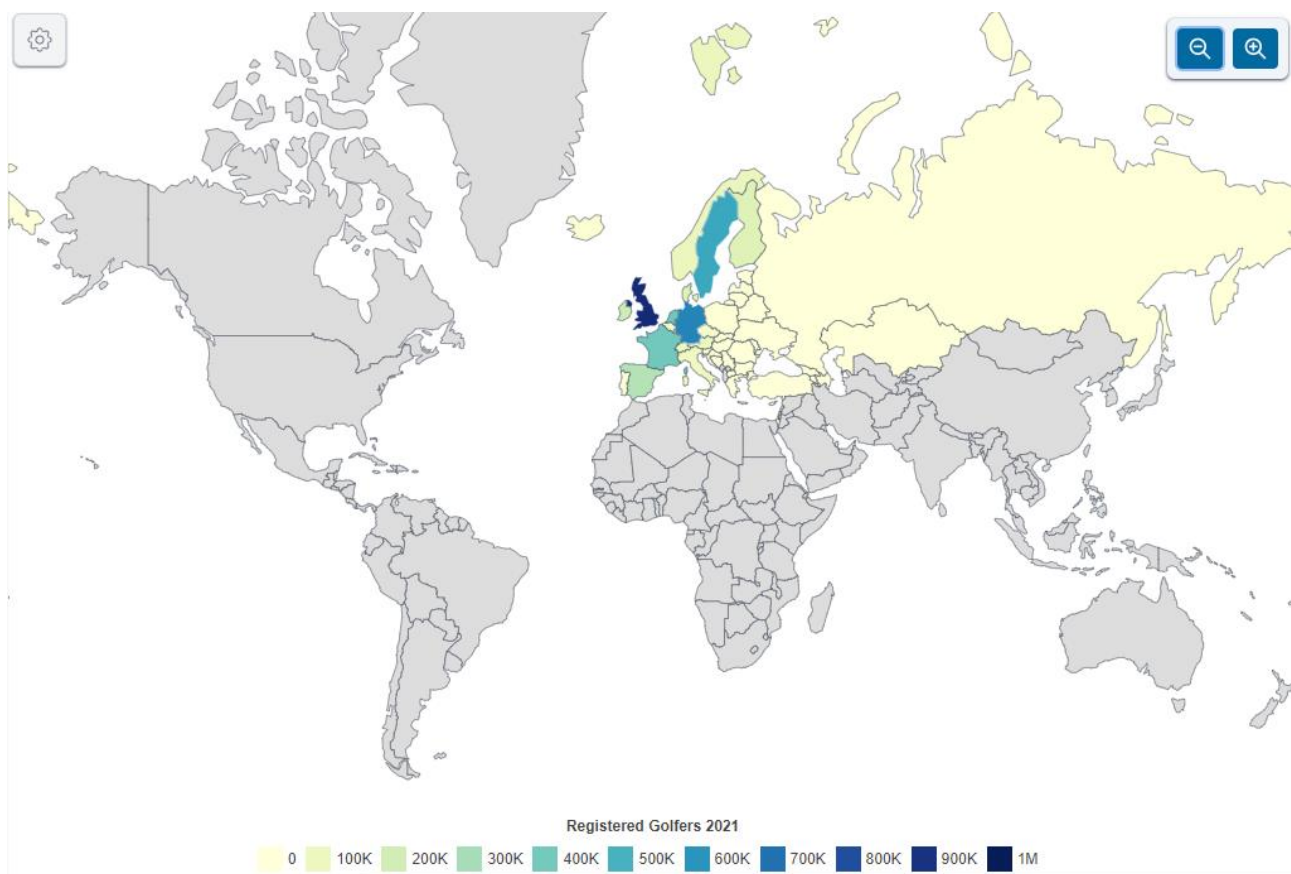
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The United Kingdom, in turn, is associated with the historical roots of golf and is recognized as the birthplace of the sport. Richard J. F. and Iancu H. D. [7] note that the British Junior Golf Association actively supports youth tournaments, creating favorable conditions for attracting new players. The development of infrastructure, the construction of golf courses and training complexes, as well as special subsidized training programs, have helped make golf accessible even in smaller towns. A distinctive feature of the British model is its focus on creating a community of young golfers, where children have the opportunity to participate in competitions from an early age and develop their skills in real conditions, not just on practice ranges. St. Andrews, one of the oldest golf courses, will once again host the British Open Championship in the coming years, reaffirming the significance of this region in the history of golf. Scotland, England, and Ireland,

which are part of the United Kingdom, are actively represented in both the PGA Tour and the European Tour, highlighting the high level of golf development in this region.

In Asian countries, golf is also gaining popularity, particularly among women. South Korea is one of the leading countries represented in the LPGA Tour, thanks to the successes of its female golfers. Japan is also drawing attention to the sport, with athletes like Hideki Matsuyama inspiring a new generation of Japanese golfers to achieve professional success. It can be assumed that shortly, the popularity of golf in Asia will continue to grow, driven by the development of infrastructure and the integration of golf into educational programs [3]. Below, Figure 1 shows a map indicating the countries where golf is most popular.



**Figure 1:** The development of golf in the countries [3]

It is noticeable that Generation Z not only participates more frequently in games but also strives to improve their skills. According to data, 55% of young golfers from this generation improve their performance after unsuccessful attempts [4]. Data from the National Golf Foundation (NGF) indicates that the number of juniors (children and teenagers) has increased by 40% over the past four years, with approximately 3.4 million juniors currently playing on courses across the country. This growth is attributed to the development of accessible programs and improved infrastructure, making golf more appealing and accessible to younger players. Participation in alternative golf formats, such as mini-golf and simulators, also continues to rise, maintaining a steady interest among youth [5].

In Canada, golf ranks as the leading mass sport. In 2023, the number of players reached 6 million, a record figure. Youth programs and initiatives aimed at engaging young players have received significant response. The number of women and BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) players has also increased. A key factor has been the safe organization of events and tournaments, including the RBC Canadian Open, which attracts more youth due to the support of professional golfers and growing spectator interest [6].

In the United Kingdom and Ireland, interest in golf has also seen significant growth. In 2022, the number of players on full-length courses reached 5.6 million, one of the highest levels in the past 30 years. The increase in youth and female participation is supported by programs aimed at popularizing the sport and attracting new participants. The "Golf is Good"

campaign was actively promoted in Wales and showed significant results, increasing the number of rounds played and attracting new young players [7].

Asia is a leading region in golf engagement. In countries of the Asia - Pacific region, such as Japan and South Korea, golf attracts a large number of young players. In 2023, the number of adult players in Japan reached 8.1 million, while in South Korea it was 5.4 million. Local federations are actively working on developing and promoting golf among youth by offering affordable and inclusive programs. In Southeast Asian countries like Vietnam and Thailand, new clubs and courses are emerging, contributing to the increase in young players [8].

Thus, the popularization of golf among children depends on various factors, including the accessibility of sports infrastructure, a systematic approach to training, and fostering interest through participation in competitions and community events. The experiences of different countries demonstrate that golf can become part of the mainstream culture if the learning process is properly organized and children are motivated to engage in sports activities. In turn, the following section will provide a more detailed discussion of the previously mentioned methods.

Next, the focus will be on the ways golf training can be enhanced through the implementation of modern technologies, which can attract an even larger number of young people to the sport. For example, the use of virtual reality (VR) and high - precision simulators offers golfers detailed feedback on their technique and performance. Such devices enable coaches to analyze athletes' movements in real - time, providing valuable data to improve their game.

Distance learning platforms. These services offer a variety of educational video materials, interactive courses, and learning tools suitable for players of all skill levels. Whether a beginner mastering basic skills or a professional seeking to refine technique, there is an appropriate online resource available for everyone.

A significant advancement in golf education has been the creation of specialized academic programs aimed at training professionals in this field. Universities and colleges have started offering courses that cover golf club management, agronomy, and professional golf administration. These programs provide students with in - depth knowledge of the industry, including business management, course maintenance, and the development of sports skills.

Modern training tools have significantly contributed to the improvement of golfers' skills. From swing trainers and putting mats to alignment sticks and measuring devices, this array of equipment helps athletes enhance their performance. These tools offer precise recommendations for working on specific aspects of the game, allowing players to focus on the most critical elements of their technique [8].

### 3. Results and Discussion

This section examines several examples of successful youth programs, their impact on participant numbers, as well as on infrastructure and the development of golf.

"The First Tee" is one of the largest youth golf development programs in the United States. Founded in 1997, it focuses on teaching not only golf techniques but also key life skills such as honesty, sportsmanship, and responsibility. The program targets children aged 7 to 18, offering training on courses specifically designed for young players. The impact of The First Tee program is reflected in Table 1 below.

**Table 1:** The impact of The First Tee program [9].

Category	Indicator
<b>Results and Statistics</b>	
Number of participants	Since the program's inception, the number of children participating has grown to over 2.2 million annually as of 2020.
Improvement in academic performance	More than 90% of participants show improvements in behavior and academic performance due to involvement in sports and moral - ethical education.
Continued engagement	Around 70% of children continue playing golf regularly after completing the program, with many becoming club members.
<b>Impact on infrastructure</b>	
New training courses	More than 1, 000 new golf training courses have opened across the U. S., specifically for the program.
Growth in the number of coaches	The number of certified golf coaches working with children has increased by 25% since the program's launch.

The "First Tee" program has proven highly successful in promoting golf among the youth in the U. S. By teaching children important life skills through sports, it has increased engagement and encouraged ongoing participation. The program has also positively impacted infrastructure expansion, making it a crucial tool for popularizing golf among young people.

The R&A Golf Foundation supports numerous educational and sports programs for children and youth in the United Kingdom, with a special focus on providing access to the sport in schools and creating school - based golf clubs.

Further details on the impact of the R&A Golf Foundation program are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2:** The impact of the R&A Golf Foundation program [10].

Category	Indicator
<b>Results and Statistics</b>	
Number of participants	The number of children participating in school golf programs increased from 50, 000 in 2015 to 120, 000 in 2022.
Physical activity	Schoolchildren involved in golf programs demonstrate higher physical activity levels and improved coordination.
Improvement in sports skills	Interviews with coaches showed enhanced sports skills among students, including increased accuracy in shots and a better understanding of the game.
<b>Impact on infrastructure</b>	

School golf clubs	As a result of the program, more than 200 school golf clubs were created, and new training centers were opened at schools.
Growth in the number of coaches	The number of specialized golf coaches for working with children increased by 15%, supported by R&A subsidies.
Popularization of the sport	Schools actively implementing the program have seen a growing interest in sports among students, contributing to the popularization of golf.

The program has demonstrated that golf can become an integral part of the educational process, improving physical fitness and fostering a love for sports.

The "Future Links" program, supported by Golf Canada and the National Olympic Committee, is aimed at developing golf among children and adolescents. It provides both beginner training and advanced courses for more experienced players [11].

The impact of this program is presented in Table 3.

**Table 3:** The impact of the Future Links program [12].

Category	Indicator
Results and Statistics	
Number of participants	The number of program participants increased from 30,000 in 2010 to 90,000 in 2019.
Interest in golf	In 2020, more than 40% of Future Links participants expressed a desire to continue playing golf regularly in the future.
Improvement in sports skills	Children who started playing golf through Future Links showed significant improvement in their sports skills after 12 - 18 months of regular training.
Impact on infrastructure	
New golf clubs	The program supported the creation of new junior golf clubs in Canada, leading to the opening of more than 300 new courses for beginner players.
Growth in the number of coaches	Golf Canada recorded a 20% increase in the number of qualified junior golf coaches over the past five years.

Analyzing successful programs across different countries, several general conclusions can be drawn regarding how such initiatives contribute to the development of junior golf:

- Increase in participants: Each program demonstrated a significant rise in the number of children involved in golf, particularly in the United States, where large-scale programs like "The First Tee" attracted millions of children.
- Impact on infrastructure: In every country, there has been the creation of new courses, clubs, and training centers, which has improved access to the sport and contributed to its regional development.
- National characteristics: Programs tailored to the specific needs of each country show different focuses—from moral and ethical education in the U. S. to integrating golf into the educational systems of the U. K. and Canada.

In conclusion, the effectiveness of such programs has been proven in practice, and they play a crucial role in promoting golf among young people and developing the sport on a national level.

#### 4. Conclusion

The conducted research confirmed the importance of youth sports programs for the development of golf in the country. The analysis demonstrated that such programs contribute not only to an increase in the number of young participants but also to the improvement of their sports skills and the cultivation of a positive perception of golf as an accessible and engaging sport. It was found that successful programs led to the expansion of golf infrastructure, including the construction of new courses and training centers, which in turn promoted the growing popularity of golf among the population. In conclusion, the support and development of youth sports programs are key factors ensuring the sustainable growth and promotion of golf at the national level.

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