

TARUN SARDESAI GOLF ACADEMY

At Zion Hills Golf County, Kolar

INDIA'S 1ST RESIDENTIAL GOLF ACADEMY WITH ACADEMICS FROM CLASS 6 TO 12



The academy is the brainchild of Tarun Sardesai, also the Director of Instruction at the academy. Tarun's vision was to create an eco-system of excellence that gives talented young golfers the best opportunity to hone their skills to compete at the highest levels (Asian Tour, European Tour, PGA), and make a career playing the sport. The academy is a realization of this vision.

The key to success at any academy is a cohesive coaching team with a clear understanding of the academy's philosophy. At TSG the focus is on every coach speaking the same language. Regular knowledge sharing sessions for the coaching staff are conducted to get them informed with the recent and latest developments in the world of golf technique and technology. The academy believes that a strong coaching team will always be able to ensure that the players receive good information that helps them improve faster and be the best that they can be.

The system of coaching developed and practiced at the academy is focused on developing all-round athletes. It gives players a complete understanding of their golf swing and technique, it tracks performance from the intermediate level, expects accountability from players and coaching staff alike, makes

players practice more effectively, lays the foundation of discipline early in their life and educates parents on effectively parenting a sportsman.

The academy works hard to teach and build **COACH INDEPENDENT PLAYERS**. For any student who is coach dependent, the success rate will naturally be very low and progress very slow because the student requires to build confidence in his own ability to process information and do the work given, to analyze progress as per the path laid down. At the academy every student has a 52 week plan for coaching integrated with sports science. Every quarter the practice plans are studied and modified as required based on competition performance and on-course sessions with the coaching team. The goals are then set for the next quarter. These plans are taken into every practice session and students are encouraged to reach out to the coaching team at any given time since every member is on campus.

The 12,000 square foot putting green stands out amongst the rest of the short game facilities and proves that Zion Hills Golf County means business. Being one of the few courses with top quality bent grass greens, keeping them in shape is usually the biggest challenge. Zion Hills Golf County has risen to this challenge and does a great job of it. There



is never a compromise on the maintenance of the facility. Even a small detail like the quality of range balls used is taken care of.

With fantastic grass tees and bent grass greens, this is truly a budding golfers paradise. For a coach who wants to produce high quality golfers, being backed by such a facility makes a world of difference.

Another aspect that makes up the fabric of the

academy is the player meeting. Tarun conducts player meetings at regular intervals to help the players understand the requirements and what it takes to be elite sports persons. The topics discussed may range from dealing with pressure, discipline, practice routines and the importance of humility. Tarun believes that the biggest challenge at the academy is to produce world-class individuals and if he can do that then the golf will just flow. It is through these meetings that he looks to motivate the players to be the best that they can be.

The team of experts on nutrition, club fitting, sports science and psychology also conduct player meetings. These sessions are aimed at arming the students with good knowledge and information about what it takes to keep the mind, body, and the equipment they use, in shape – how to recognize when something is not on the mark, to create awareness about their thoughts and how to control them both on and off the golf course, to give them tools that equip them to deal with contingencies like dehydration, loading up on the right foods in the weeks prior to back-to-back tournaments, what to eat during the round

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and after, dealing with negative thoughts, fear and anxiety etc., training them to recognize changes that they are going through, whether deliberate or otherwise.

Each residential villa accommodates 7 students in 3 air-conditioned bedrooms. The villas are fully equipped with a refrigerator, microwave, water filter, washing machine and clothes drier. Students are encouraged to do their own laundry and make their bed every morning. Apart from this, there is a lounge and recreation room where they can relax by jamming if they are musicians or play a game of table tennis, carom, foosball, chess etc. There is also sufficient quiet space for students to meditate in the mornings, and an infirmary with a full-time nurse to take care when the need arises.

The dining hall is where the staff and students gather for their meals. It is a space built to relax and enjoy a conversation with one's



peers. It is integral to building a sense of community and camaraderie. The menu for the quarter is decided ahead by the nutritionist, and every meal (6 per day) is balanced as per the requirements of the young golfers. The nutritionist does regular surprise checks on the food and audits the kitchen and staff for hygiene and quality, which leaves no room for slack.

Tarun believes that education is integral to developing a student's abilities to think critically. He also always believes, that a student's performance in the classroom is correlated to his performance on the golf



course. Tarun knew early on that to keep his vision alive, it was imperative build a system of education around the requirements of sportsman rather than the other way around.

At TSG the program is designed for young aspiring sportspersons in the age group of 10 to 18 years offering CBSE between 6th-8th grade and NIOS from 9th-12th grade. Here the model is designed to have subject matter experts deliver classes from an exclusive studio in Mysore and on-ground support staff/teachers at the academy for day-to-day supervision of study hours and student progress.

Given that every student has different tournament travel schedules TSG is able to monitor their attendance and learning process very closely. Students can ask for individual sessions to make-up classes, or even ask for a different teacher if they haven't understood a concept explained by a particular faculty

member. Apart from this, their classes are video recorded for them to go back to whenever they need. Not only when they travel but also during the self-study hour daily the students are given worksheets, which they need to complete. The entire syllabus has been digitized and put on the cloud for students to be able to access it wherever they are.

The academy also boasts an indoor training studio with a SAM Putt LAB, the FlightScope X3 and the SAM Balance LAB all of which when combined can take care of the diagnostic needs of all elite level golfers.

A typical day in a student's life at the academy begins with the first session of practice at 6:15 am. The day sees them go through 5 hours of golf over 3 sessions, 2 hours of fitness training and 3 hours of school. The academy does not allow students to keep their mobile phones. They are given their phones from 7-7:30pm only. Tarun has seen many players fall away in their late teens because of excessive use of technology and while many players may not agree with this he firmly believes that the distraction caused by such technology will affect performance. The performance that we are talking about is performance of any task and not just golf. Therefore players who are distracted will not get 100% out of their work day which then lengthens the learning curve.

The system has proven itself over the last few years with Viraj Madappa who joined TSG in June of 2016, in becoming the youngest Indian to win an Asian Tour event when he won the Take Solutions Masters in August 2018. In 2018, the top 5 male golfers in the under-18 category on the South Zone Junior Golf Tour were from the TSG Academy. With Tej Gangavarapu winning 9 out of the 10 tournaments that he took part in. Another notable student from the academy is Aryan Roopa Anand who is currently ranked no. 2 on the national junior order of merit.

With long and short term stay options players can come in for various training programs and not have to worry about their living arrangements. There is no greater luxury for a budding golfer than to be able to walk to the driving range every day. [G2](#)