



## Talking in the 19th Hole

**Driver.** The lower participation and desertion of children and young people in sports is a matter of concern. Many factors come together so that a child or a young woman does not play sports or decides to stop practicing them. It is reasonable that parents want their children to stand out as athletes, in our case as golfers, but ironically, parents (and sometimes uncles and grandparents) are the cause of boys and girls dropping out of golf. They are typical controlling parents, but now they call them intense parents. Let's see the behaviors they have and how they influence their children to end up hating the sport that they are supposed to be passionate about:

- Unrealized parents. Intense parents seek in their children the personal fulfillment that they did not have as athletes. They even confess that they hope their children achieve what they could not achieve. But what if your children do not want to succeed in playing golf? And without their goals, are others? When the child plays golf because the parents want him to be a golfer, and not because he has decided to, he will leave when he grows up and makes his own decisions, which will probably happen before 15.
- They talk as if they are the players. Intense parents are characterized by talking as if they were the player. Typically, they say, "today we play very well." With their expressions, they want to show that it is thanks to them that their son had this or that achievement. It is correct that the player, parents, teachers, and executives are a team, but the player is the player, and the parents are not. Their role is different.
- They take the role of teachers. Intense parents manage to be in their children's private classes and clinics. And they come to take the role of teachers when they do not have the knowledge, experience, and level of play to do so. They even give technical advice to other academy players. We had a father's case, who we called "the assistant" because it seemed that he was part of the academy's staff.
- The baseball managers. When intense parents are a gallery, they become baseball managers. Parents and their children know that advice is against the Rules, but the parent does not mind violating them by setting a bad example for their child. Parents send signals to their son from the gallery in such a way that they look like managers. They indicate which club to use with their signs, which side to aim, where the break is, etc.
- Corporal language. One clue to identifying intense parents is to watch your daughter or son after a shot. When they turn to see their parents' reaction, we know that with their body language, they exert pressure on their daughter or son. A father's gesture from the gallery is as strong as a blow with a belt on the back.

- Physical violence. Some intense parents go to extreme physical violence with pulling, pinching, slapping, hitting with the belt, etc. And they do it privately and publicly. These cases go to the clinical, so the help of professionals on the subject is necessary.
- Anything goes as long as you win. Intense parents cheat as long as their child wins. So we have parents who persuade their children to take off strokes or break the Rules. It is also common for them to notify the Rules judge of alleged breaches of the Rules by other players.
- The emotional blackmail. Intense parents, to achieve their goals blackmail their children. They offer them money, iPhones, trips, clubs, clothes, shoes, etc. as long as they get a good result. Parents think they are motivating them, but the motivation to keep it constant must come from inside. What will happen to that player when there is no stimulus to satisfy him?
- They are fighters. Intense parents, to benefit and defend their children, fight with other parents, argue with the Rules judge, question the executives, argue with the teachers, and even fight with their children. The shows these parents put on are truly regrettable.
- They want to be officers. Intense parents are first on the list to serve as officers of committees at the club, association, or federation level. Once they succeed, it is difficult for them to leave the position. Your main objective is to benefit your children, not so much to benefit the group. Most commonly, they want teachers to give their children special treatment. From these positions, parents make the organization benefit their children with enrollment, travel expenses, teachers, training, awards, recognitions, interviews with the media, etc. Serious problems occur when intense parents clash with other intense parents to achieve these benefits for their children.
- They are protagonists. Intense parents want all the spotlight for their children and, of course, for themselves. So they will do everything possible to get their children featured in magazines, in the press, in the Club media, etc. But be careful if your child is not chosen because they will face whoever made that decision.
- My son is the best. Intense parents do not tolerate their child being "on the bench." They always want him playing and striker. Let's look at some examples from the medium of golf:
  - The academy groups. Parents want their children to be in a group of only good players. If there is a player in the group who, in their opinion, does not have the level of your son, ask them to remove that player. They do not understand that sometimes their son will be one of the good players, but he may be the bad ones in other groups. It's good for intense parents to remember that their children were once beginners, so a little empathy is good.
  - The groups of the Tour. Intense parents do not tolerate their daughter playing in a group where there is a player of what they consider to be lower. They will do their best to get your daughter in the honor group.
  - Representative teams. If there is a team tournament, parents will use their influence to get their child on the team, even if other players are more deserving to be there. They don't care about the team. They are interested in having their child participate.

- Special teachers for your children. Intense parents want an exclusive teacher for their children. They think that that way, their child will progress faster and faster. This is likely to happen, but this format has several disadvantages that must be considered:

- The teacher-student relationship wears out very quickly. The cases in which this relationship has been lasting are counted with one hand.
- The social issue. Golf is social by nature, and private lessons deprive boys and girls of the opportunity to socialize. I met a girl who took private lessons. One day I was close to a group of girls from the academy whom I was teaching. I observed that the girl looked at how we were having fun. The mother realized this and forbade her to look at them.

I also met a boy in her private class. He saw that a group of children from the academy were having fun and asked his teacher if he could spend some time with us. The teacher asked me to receive it, and we did.

Fridays are a social day for all ages, that day, most of the children expect to be or go out with their friends, but they don't because they have to go to their golf class.

It is sad how parents deprive their children of coexistence with other boys and girls to make them the best players.

- The training becomes monotonous and tedious. Since intense parents want their child to be hitting balls like a machine, the private teacher does as her boss asks. If the teacher has a vocation, he will likely give the child games, challenges, and skills, but he will stop doing it over time. Class becomes a boring activity in which the teacher and the student are just waiting for it to finish.
  - The time of the class. Children who have a personal teacher have two hours of class a day, 4-6 days a week, usually. Intense parents think that if they add more water to the tree, it will grow faster. They don't understand that learning golf is a long-term process.
- Intense parents want their children to train as professional players because they don't understand the differences between children's sports and professional sports. I have asked adult players if they have ever trained for two hours, their answer has been no, even in other sports. When a child trains for longer than is appropriate for his age, he will have physical and mental wear and tear that will sooner or later make her give up the golf.
- The class as a burden. It is easy to see when the class became a burden for the teacher and the player, when:

The player: walks with his face down when he reaches for his clubs, does his best not to hit balls, does not pay attention to the teacher's instructions, ignores the teacher, sits down, looks everywhere, tries to see his cell phone, he swings lazily, asks the time frequently, makes excuses for leaving class, etc.

The teacher: he spends it on his cell phone, he no longer plays games and competitions like at the beginning, he does not put drills on him, speaks very loudly to the child, tries to impose punishments, does not get off the cart when they go out to the golf course, he already gave up on improving the child's technique, etc.

- External teachers for your children. Intense parents consider that the teachers in their club are not qualified to teach their children, so they look for external teachers. What better if the teacher is a foreigner because surely he is better than the Mexican ones. If all the parents of a club were intense, there would be no way to attend to their children because of how we get 30 or more teachers so that each child has her own.

In my experience, I have never seen a child who is so advanced that local teachers cannot teach him. The problem is the other way around; we need well-educated students who are willing to learn.

Intense parents take their children to golf camps abroad, because that gives status, other intense parents do it, and because there they will make them champions. With my fingers' fingers, I can count the cases that I have seen that a child has improved remarkably by going to one of these camps.

- First golf, then family. Golf comes first for intense parents, so it doesn't matter that other family members sacrifice for the golfer child. That includes spending less time with the rest of the children, not going on vacation, or returning early because the golfer child has training or tournament.
- Everything is golf. Intense parents do not accept that their children participate in other sports or cultural activities. They see it as a waste of time. I knew a girl who, during her childhood, was only in golf. She was not in swimming, tennis, dance, gymnastics, ballet, piano, painting, etc. Around 200 sports are played in the world; children likely want to play other sports.



I think there are many advantages to having children try different sports and activities. They will have more alternatives to choose from; they will decide what to do in their entertainment time and choose the sport or activity they love. Intense parents do not want their children to try other activities because they have already decided that they are golfers and do not want to risk them

finding a different passion. I think that it is better for parents to have a daughter who is a gymnast by her decision than a daughter who is a golfer by their decision.

It is contradictory that intense parents limit their children from other activities because, on the one hand, they want their child to have a lot of distance and precision in golf. On the other side, they limit the development of their motor skills.

Some parents consider that if their child plays baseball, tennis, paddle tennis, etc. It can affect your swing and your game, which is a baseless myth. In my opinion, a child who plays several sports improves his golf skills. Boys and girls should be multi-sport. Even when they reach the age when it is recommended that they specialize in one sport, it is excellent that they practice another sport as a complementary activity that relaxes them.

- The tournament schedule. Intense parents organize their children's tournament schedule without taking them into account. They don't care if their children want to do another activity or have other commitments. The calendar should include some tournaments abroad because your friends will think your son is very good. It does not matter your child's emotional impact when scored 100 strokes and finishing 30 strokes of the first places.

In my opinion, participating in a tournament is a formative, learning, and fun experience. But due to pressure from parents, teachers, and executives for children to focus on winning, this experience loses its meaning and becomes a heavy burden for children. As if that were not enough, the parents with their behaviors make it a nightmare. The behaviors of parents are reflected in the actions of their children. We can notice them in children's following behaviors: tantrums, crying, arguing, anger, frustrations, throwing clubs, etc. Let's make the following reflection, who likes to go to a place where they will have a bad time, being scolded by their parents?

Parents take their children to tournaments to get "fired up," which is correct, but have you ever wondered if your child likes to compete in tournaments? Can't you play golf without participating in tournaments? Can't you play golf like you play an informal game football or basketball?

We would think intense parents do: frequently play with their children, but the reality is that they are failing at that. Very, very, very few parents play a round of golf with their children.

- Parents scorekeeper. Intense parents keep the players' score in the group, lest their child loses because one of the players takes strokes. This work is unnecessary because children know how to count very well, and their parents' score is not officially valid.

This issue has escalated to a point where parents create WhatsApp groups where they record the different groups' scores in the category. This information is used by parents, according to them, to help their children, as they tell them how the other players are doing. The reality is that this information puts more pressure on the players. Golf is known to be played in the present, focused on execution, and what you can control. The player must avoid thinking about the future result and past shots. So knowing the score of the other players, I don't think it helps, and maybe it will produce the opposite effect.

- Behaviors of professional players. Intense parents want their children to imitate professional players' actions, but there are ages for that. The following behaviors are appropriate for youth ages 15-18, including some mature minors, but are not suitable for children under 12:
  - Make the yardage book. Some teachers and parents prepare the yardage book for the children. Experience has taught me that most young children do not need this resource. The kids save it and don't see it the whole round. This is normal.
  - The statistics. Intense parents want children to keep track of their game statistics, so they know where to improve. That sounds good, but fortunately, children's minds do not work like that, they are imaginative and creative, and their play is natural. Your mind is not square.
  - Train after a round. For most kids, the best moments on tour are their time with their friends after the competition. But intense parents want them to practice the one-yard putt that they missed at the 18th hole. I ask those intense parents, have they ever been to a one-yard putt? Do you know the pressure that is experienced?

We know that there are cases in which intense parents have made their children stand out in golf. This does not mean that their behaviors are correct, what happens is that some boys and girls have a passion for golf and extraordinary talent. Not all children are the same and you have to know how to distinguish between those who enjoy golf and those who do it out of obedience to their parents.

This article intends to help parents better understand their role and optimize their functioning as parents of athletes. Most parents have good intentions, but they fail it for lack of information, and because they are influenced by the behaviors they see in the environment. It is not that parents do not participate. They must get involved and collaborate, assuming their functions so that sport benefits their children, instead of harming them.

Perhaps some remarks are clear and direct, but it is worth doing this for your children's sake and because the teachers in your club will not be able to tell you these truths out of fear.

If parents, teachers, and executives join together, we will help retain the hundreds of children and young people we lose by not doing good teamwork. **FORE.**

Mateo Melgar Ochoa – Golf Pro  
www.handy.golf  
www.youtube.com/jugargolf  
mateomelgar1969@hotmail.com