

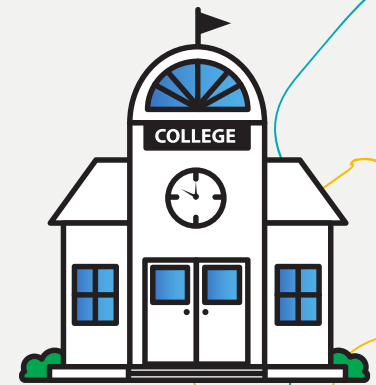
# Life of a College Golfer

Junior golfers often wonder about the next step – college golf. Knowing about the daily life of a collegiate student-athlete can help junior golfers stay motivated and focused on reaching that level themselves. Darren Pang, Columbia (D1) freshman joins us to share his campus experience.

**When did you arrive on campus and what did you do before the fall season began?**

“I arrived on campus late August for student orientation, which most schools will have before everyone else starts, so freshmen can get assimilated onto the campus. Before our fall season began there wasn’t that much time for golf, just a week or so for orientation and a week or so for practice before our first event. A lot of it is just the process of moving in, settling in, and getting a feel for campus.

It was nerve-wracking at times. Your parents drop you off in your room, you move in, and they go “see ya!” It’s important to remember that literally every other freshman is going through that exact same feeling and everyone feels like you’re in a new area. That’s one of the perks of being on the golf team, because it’s a support system of people to talk to.”



**What does a tournament week look like for you?**

Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

“Tuesday and Thursday mornings we’ll have a team workout at 7 o’clock. Then we’ll go to our classes. Tuesdays & Thursdays are qualifying so we’re playing 18 to 27 holes each of those days. Monday and Wednesday are usually just practice. Friday we leave early in the morning and drive to the course, and then play the 18 holes of the practice round on Friday afternoon. Saturday and Sunday are 36 to 54 holes of competitive golf, and then driving back Sunday night or Monday morning. It’s definitely really busy. You never feel like you have time to sit down or relax. You’re either studying, golfing, or traveling. There’s so much traveling and practice that has to be done for each event so every day is oriented toward something.”

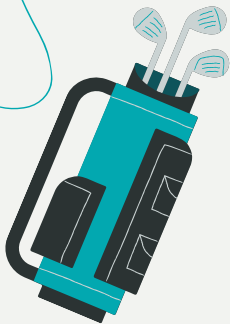
### What is the biggest difference between high school and college in general?

“Independence. For most college students it’s their first time living away from any parents or guardians. There’s a lot of added responsibility ... taking care of yourself, managing your time well. It’s very different from living with parents and guardians.”



### What is the biggest difference between junior golf and college golf?

“College golf at times feels almost like a completely different sport. In junior golf you have all that time in the weeks leading up to an event to prepare for it and work on the stuff you have to work on, while in college golf you have school on your mind so it’s hard to prepare the way you normally would in junior golf. Sometimes before an event you’re not getting enough sleep or you’re not putting as much time into practice because of schoolwork and midterms. The preparation standpoint with college golf is not as perfect as you’d like it to be.”



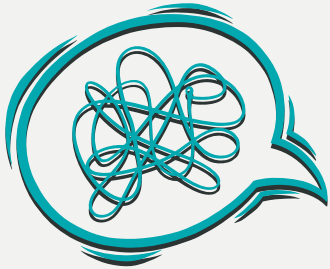
### What can junior golfers do right now to prepare for college golf?

“Just getting better at the idea of independence is going to be very helpful. Being able to have that responsibility and discipline to make the right decisions for how to spend your time. Making the time to go out and hit balls for 30 minutes or do schoolwork. Solidifying those habits will make a huge difference when you get to college. When you get to college you don’t have time to learn those skills.

Sometimes you’ll get home from practice at 7:30 or 8 o’clock and you have to decide whether to go out with friends or get some homework done. Over the course of a few weeks or a couple months it’ll add up. Learning how to do the small things right takes time to learn, so being able to learn that in high school is definitely a big advantage.”



What is something you learned in the first 2.5 months that you never would have expected?



“It’s just a lot harder than I thought it was going to be. A lot of the time when people talk about athletes and college it’s very glorified. Everyone talks about how awesome it is to play on a team, college golf, things like that. But there’s a lot of small things that make it difficult at times. It’s a bit of a culture shock with how busy the schedules are.”

What is the best part of being on a college golf team?

“100% the players and coaching staff are the best part, by far. One of the biggest factors that is sometimes overlooked when looking at schools is seeing the guys on the team, who the coaches are, and the environment. Those guys are going to be your support system, your friends, and the guys you spend most of your time with when you’re in season. So they need to be the kind of guys you enjoy spending time around. You make a lot of meaningful relationships with them and it’s a special bond.”



What else should juniors know about college and college golf?



“Understanding that college golf will be an amazing 4 or 5 years of your life but at the same time it’ll feel not so fun at times because you’re balancing so much and it can get tiring. It’s important to acknowledge that the struggle will be there but at the same time it’s important to appreciate it because it’s such a privilege to play collegiate golf. It’s important to acknowledge the ups and the downs before you start playing.”

-Brad Marek & Joe Accordino, with thanks to Darren Pang

For more on the college recruiting process, visit [athloscollegecoaching.com](http://athloscollegecoaching.com) or email Joe at [athlosjoe@gmail.com](mailto:athlosjoe@gmail.com).