

Anyone Can Coach

If you would like to turn a blind person with a set of golf clubs into a blind golfer, just add a coach. That's right, the "coach", sometimes referred to as a guide is the other half of the ultimate team sport called blind and vision impaired golf. Together they team to master the shots that bring gratification and enjoyment from the game of golf.

Who can become a coach and what kind of training is necessary? One coach responds to the question by saying, "Anyone with a driver's license can become a coach so that the team can get to a golf facility." Some knowledge of golf is helpful but not imperative. If you are willing to learn to gauge distances, place a club head behind a ball, and encourage a blind golfer to develop his abilities, then you can be the key to a blind golfer's game.

Golfers who are coaches are often heard commenting that their own game benefits from coaching a blind golfer. Because coaches want to insure that a good shot is produced with a good swing they pay close attention to correct alignment, solid setups over the ball and realistic course management. Coaches learn to "take advantage of the golfer's disadvantage!" That's right, there is no need to know every time about a difficult tree to negotiate or water and sand hazards to carry. Why are some blind golfer's great putters? Because they know exactly how far a putt is by stepping it off with their coach guiding them to the pin while at the same time gauging the slope. Then all that is left is a good read of the green from the coach, a straight stroke from the blind golfer who has the benefit of no visual distractions and the team sinks the putt.

The role of a coach can be filled by anyone; from a PGA professional golfer to a person who does not even play the game. The level of assistance provided by a coach may vary by the sight loss of the golfer. The one constant, however, is the need for more coaches. By acting as the eyes for someone who is blind or vision impaired the coach gives that person an opportunity to participate and enjoy the game while he, the coach, receives the satisfaction of giving and making a real difference.