



Ohio State HCS News

HORTICULTURE & CROP SCIENCE IN VIRTUAL PERSPECTIVE - THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

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Ohio State's Junior Golf Program Scores an Eagle



Morty's Kids participant Elizabeth Blanton practices her chip shot at the Ohio State University Golf Club.

Twelve-year-old **Khoi Tran** never played golf before last summer, when he joined the Morty's Kids program operated by the Morton Foundation. Who knows? He might be the next Tiger Woods.

"They taught me a lot," he said. "It really has improved my golfing." Now, he's one of 19 Morty's Kids involved in a special project between the foundation and students in Ohio State University's Professional Golf Management (PGM) program.

Administered by the Horticulture & Crop Science Department, the interdisciplinary PGM program started in fall 2005 in the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences, with courses also offered through the Fisher College of Business, the College of Education and Human Ecology, and the School of Physical Activity and Educational Services. One of only 19 such programs across the nation, Ohio State is working towards getting accreditation from the Professional Golfers' Association of America. When that happens, the program's students will automatically become members of the PGA when they graduate.



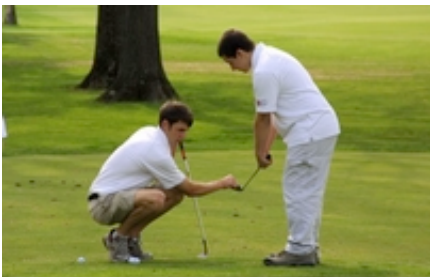
PGM student Rob Grubaugh works with Cory Aitken on his swing during a Morty's Kids session at OSU Golf Club.

"We haven't started recruiting yet, but we already have 60 students enrolled in the major," said **Ray Miller**, professor and director of the PGM program.

The Morton Foundation was formed in 1998 in honor of local banker Bob "Morty" Morton, a well-known avid proponent of the game. Each summer at the Walnut Hill Golf Course, the foundation offers a 10-week, once-a-week program to 250 children ages 7 to 15, providing equipment and instruction from PGA and LPGA professionals. Special emphasis is placed on those

who may not be able to play due to financial circumstances.

The foundation approached the PGM students last fall to discuss collaborating on another program, and members of the PGM club responded with enthusiasm. This spring, 19 Morty's Kids who have participated in the past and are on the same skill level were asked if they would be interested in a special instructional program during spring quarter at Ohio State. The kids, ranging in age from 11 to 14, say they are loving it.



PGM student Mike Murphy teaches Cory Aitken proper swing preparation during a Morty's Kids session at the OSU Golf Club.

"It's fun," said **Elizabeth Blanton**, 12, who had never really golfed until joining Morty's Kids two years ago and is now on the golf team at her middle school.

"I like interacting with all the other people," said **Ryan Reed**, 11.

"I really like using all the stuff they have here at Ohio State," said Tran. For the first three weeks of the spring program, the group met on Tuesday afternoons at Ohio State's new Recreational and Physical Activity Center, which has golf hitting stations and a putting green available. Beginning April 24, they began testing their skills at Ohio State's Golf Club on Tremont Road.

The curriculum for the sessions was designed by PGM club members **Rob Grubaugh** and **Mike Murphy**, the club's outreach committee leaders.



PGM student John Brewer gives Taylor Lanier advice during a Morty's Kids lesson.

"We got the lesson plans together, with three weeks indoors and the rest outside," Murphy said. "We really wanted it to be fun for the kids." Golf pros with the Morton Foundation suggested some adjustments, and Murphy and Grubaugh recruited volunteers from the PGM club to lead the sessions.

"Everyone wanted to do this," Grubaugh said. "We told the guys they had to sign up to schedule at least two sessions, but we've got guys coming

even when they don't have to be here." The result is that the kids involved in the program get much more personalized attention than they could ever hope to get during the larger summer program.

"I know the kids are learning a lot, but I'm getting just as much out of it, if not more," Grubaugh said. In fact, PGA professional **Gil Roosmann**, director of instruction at The Lakes Golf and Country Club, met with students in the club three times before the program started, reviewing some of the basics in instructing junior golfers.

"It's more animated, not as technical, and everyone has fun," Roosmann said. "Teaching kids is a lot different than teaching adults."



Morty's Kids participants Daniel Durthaler, Johnny Byrne, and Jeremy Martin practice chip shots at the OSU Golf Club.

The program has benefits for everyone.

"It's a win-win-win situation," Miller said. "The kids win because of the personalized instruction and the fact that they're able to use the facilities at Ohio State. The PGM students win, because they get experience in golf instruction and get time in toward outreach -- something the PGA expects in a certified program. And the Morton Foundation wins by being able to expand its offerings to kids beyond its normal summer program."

Murphy said the program goes far beyond teaching the rudimentary skills to use on the course. "The main thing is that we're not really just teaching golf, but lessons for life -- courtesy, fairness, character, good morals."

Grubaugh said the PGM Club is also involved in another outreach effort with [ForeHope](#), a local nonprofit organization that helps to rehabilitate people with disabilities through the game of golf. The organization has more than 400 participants, including programs at five area nursing homes. PGM students volunteer at a number of these venues twice a week to assist ForeHope with the program.

For more information about the PGM program at Ohio State, see its Web site at pgm.osu.edu.

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