WELL PLAYED INITIATIVE

first tee & MOMENTOUS INSTITUTE
Est. by Salesmanship Club of Dallas

# A Model for Early Intervention in Youth Sports

## Executive Summary

First Tee partnered with Momentous Institute to pilot a program that would equip coaches and leadership with practical mental health tools, helping them better support both their own well-being and the social-emotional and mental health needs of the young athletes they serve.

## The Challenge

First Tee's curriculum gives coaches activities and goals, but no guidance on handling big emotions. Since the pandemic, coaches have seen a sharp rise in challenging behavior, especially in high-need communities, with few tools to reach kids who aren't ready to learn.

## The Opportunity

By equipping coaches to regulate themselves first and meet kids where they are, First Tee could build on its greatest strength, highly trained coaches, and deepen mentorship on and off the course.

## The Solution

Momentous Institute developed and delivered customized training focused on self-awareness, stress management, relationship-building, and strategies for helping youth regulate so they're ready to learn and play.

## The Impact

Coaches gained practical skills in trauma awareness, self-regulation, and de-escalation. They now move beyond technical instruction to build real rapport, using language like "I see you, I hear you" to connect with dysregulated students. These insights strengthened day-to-day practice and helped inspire the broader framework behind the Well-Played Initiative.

> "We're one small part of a child's life. Training that helps us meet kids where they are, so they can enjoy and learn, should be in the hands of every youth organization."
>
> - Katie Harris, First Tee Dallas Director of Programming

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## Organizational Reach

**155**
Number of coaches and staff trained

**44**
Number of First Tee chapters impacted

**15.5K**
Potential number of youth reached through trained coaches

**15**
Total hours of professional, expert-led training delivered to First Tee

## Impact, Sustainability & Scale

**100%**
First Tee coaches and staff who agreed the topic was relevant to their role

**97%**
First Tee participants who would recommend the training to peers

**80%**
First Tee participants who requested additional mental health training



## Coach & Staff Are Better Equipped

Coaches put the training to work right away. Here's what it looks like on the ground:

**Conflict resolution:** A coach separated two students in conflict, asked what was really causing it, and worked with them to find a solution together. Instead of escalating, both rejoined the activity.

**Emotional regulation:** When a participant's frustration boiled over during a round of golf, a coach helped him find the "missing piece of the puzzle," refocus, and keep playing.

**Filling a gap:** First Tee's curriculum centers on activities and goals. This training gives coaches tools to reach kids whose brains aren't yet ready to take in information.

**Meeting real need:** Coaches see the greatest need in Title I schools, among refugee children facing outside trauma, and in 8- to 12-year-olds whose attention spans and peer skills have been shaped by screens and the loss of "third spaces."

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