

FREE GUIDE / NO EMAIL REQUIRED

The D1 & D2 Golf Path Playbook

Age group by age group: what the Texas tours expect, what college coaches read, and how a brand-new golfer or a first-year high school player catches up fast.

How the junior ladder actually works

Junior golf is three things stacked on top of each other: **age divisions** (what you may play), **ranking events** (what counts for exposure) and **verified scoring** (what a coach believes). Most families spend a year confused because they only work on the first one.

- **Local / regional** — STPGA & NTPGA Junior Tour, city junior tours. Cheap, close to home, where you learn to compete.
- **State** — Texas Junior Golf Tour (TJGT) and the Legends Junior Tour. Multi-day events, bigger fields, real ranking points.
- **National** — AJGA (ages 12–19) plus national invitationals. The primary D1 shop window.
- **High school (UIL)** — district, region, state. Great competition; on its own it is not enough recruiting evidence.
- **Youth on Course** — \$5-ish rounds. The cheapest way to build the reps everything else needs.

Local tours build the swing, state tours build the résumé, national tours get the phone call.

Age divisions the tours designate

Age / grade	Where they compete	What the season looks like
8–10	Peewee / short-course divisions, U.S. Kids, PGA Jr. League	9 holes, forward tees. Fun, rules literacy, finishing every hole.
11–12	Junior tour 11–12 division; AJGA eligibility opens at 12	9 to 18 holes. First real card and a posted score.
13–14	STPGA/NTPGA 13–14, TJGT 13–14, Legends Junior Tour	18 holes, walking, own bag. Build a 10–14 event schedule.
15–16	TJGT & Legends championship divisions, AJGA qualifiers, UIL varsity	Build year: 15–20 tournament rounds, first AJGA starts, first coach emails.
17	AJGA open/invitational, TJGT majors, UIL region and state	The decision year. Most D1 and D2 offers are shaped here.
18	AJGA, state majors, national qualifiers	Closing window. D2, NAIA and JUCO stay very live all senior year.

What D1 vs. D2 coaches are actually reading

Coaches skim three numbers before they read a word of your email: scoring average in counting events, the strength of the fields you posted it in, and whether the trend is going down.

	Boys D1	Boys D2	Girls D1	Girls D2
Tournament scoring avg	70–74	74–78	72–76	76–81
Rounds under par / yr	Several	A few	Several	A few
Counting events / yr	14–20	10–16	14–20	10–16
National starts (AJGA)	Expected	Helpful	Expected	Helpful
Yardage played	6,800–7,200	6,600–7,000	5,900–6,300	5,700–6,100

Ranges are planning guidance, not cutoffs. Programs vary widely, and a rising trend beats a flat better average every time.

The progression path, year by year

Ages 8–12 — fall in love, learn to post a score

- Play 9-hole events until finishing 18 is easy.
- Learn the rules basics: penalty relief, marking, keeping a partner's card.
- Track one thing only: total putts.

Ages 13–14 — become a tournament player

- 10–14 events across STPGA/NTPGA and TJGT 13–14.
- Start a full stat log: fairways, greens, putts, up-and-downs, penalties.
- Get a verified handicap; practice from full-length tees.
- Pick a swing coach you'll keep for years and add a fitness base.

Ages 15–16 — build the résumé

- 15–20 counting rounds. State tour events plus two or three AJGA attempts.
- Make varsity and use UIL season as reps, not as your résumé.
- Build a 30-school list: D1 reach, D1 fit, D2 fit, D2 safety.
- Film a short swing video and keep a live stat page.
- Coaches may contact recruits June 15 after sophomore year — video, transcript and stat sheet finished before that date.

Age 17 — the decision year

- Peak schedule: AJGA starts, state majors, a summer of counting events.
- Register with the NCAA Eligibility Center and confirm core-course status.
- Email coaches after every event with the result.
- Unofficial visits now; official visits open August 1 before senior year.
- Narrow to 10–12 targets and ask each coach where you stand.

Age 18 — close it out

- Keep competing: D2, NAIA and JUCO rosters fill through spring.
- Send an updated scoring average monthly; one line, one attachment.
- Confirm aid, roster spot and qualifying format before you sign.

New to golf? Your first 90 days

Weeks	Focus	Success marker
1–3	Grip, setup, 7-iron and putter only. Two range sessions plus one 9-hole walk each week.	Solid contact 6 of 10 balls.
4–6	Add wedges and driver. Learn scoring: strokes, penalties, marking a card.	Complete 9 holes holing every putt.
7–9	Play 9 holes twice a week on a Youth on Course rate. Log putts and penalties.	Break 55 for 9 holes.
10–12	Enter one local junior event in the youngest eligible division.	Sign an official card and post a handicap.

Fast track: 12 months to a college-ready file

- **Months 1–2 — baseline.** Log 5 rounds with full stats. Get a handicap. One lesson, one fitting.
- **Months 3–4 — fix the leak.** Attack the worst stat category; 70% of practice inside 50 yards.
- **Months 5–6 — first tournaments.** Four local junior events. Process, not placing.
- **Months 7–8 — verified scoring.** TJGT / Legends events, 6–10 counting rounds, swing video, one-page résumé.
- **Months 9–10 — get seen.** A college camp or two, one AJGA attempt, weekly emails to a 30-school list.
- **Months 11–12 — convert.** NCAA registration, unofficial visits, monthly scoring-average updates.

Late starters get recruited on trend lines. A player who went 82 to 75 in a year is a far more interesting phone call than a player who has shot 76 since eighth grade.

The one-page coach email that works

- Subject: 2028 grad | Austin, TX | 74.6 avg | TJGT & AJGA
- Line 1: who you are, grad year, GPA / test score.
- Line 2: scoring average, last three results with field size.
- Line 3: why their program — name the course, the coach, the qualifying format.
- Line 4: link to your swing video and stat page. Then stop typing.
- Follow up after every event with the new result. Consistency is the whole strategy.

The app does this part for you

Every step in this guide is admin work, and admin work is what junior golfers quit. Here is what Texas Junior Golf HQ handles so the player only has to play, practice and tap.

The step	The tool
Full stat log on every round	Log hole by hole on your phone, or snap the paper card and let it read itself in. Your coach's statistics chart fills in from the round — you only confirm the cells it can't be sure about.

Practice built from your weakest stat	Your coach's weekly practice objectives sheet on your phone: tap your attempts, and the app compares how you practiced with how you then scored.
Verified scoring coaches believe	Link your tour results page once. Tournament scores import themselves after each event and carry a verified badge.
A schedule built 90 days out	Pick from the real Texas events — TJGT, Legends, STPGA, NTPGA, AJGA stops and UIL — and deadlines, courses and tee times come with them.
Cheap reps close to home	Every Texas Youth on Course course is in the course search, so a \$5 round is two taps away.
Coach and parent visibility	Send your coach a link that needs no login — he sees his own statistics sheet filled out, your rounds and your practice week. Parents can score alongside you, and you decide what they see.
The page you send recruiters	Stats, recent finishes with course and yardage, academics and your swing video on one page that updates itself after every round.
The season checklist itself	Your roadmap tracks the age-by-age steps in this guide and checks them off as your logged rounds and results satisfy them.

Your season checklist

- Handicap active and every round posted.
- Full stat log on every competitive round — fairways, greens, putts, up-and-downs, penalties.
- Schedule built 90 days out with entry deadlines flagged.
- Practice plan built from your weakest stat, refreshed weekly.
- Recruiting list with every coach touch logged and dated.
- Swing video and player résumé updated each semester.
- NCAA Eligibility Center registered by junior year.

Track all of this free at jrgolfplanner.com. Snap a scorecard or your coach's stat sheet and the round, the stats, the coach chart and a first practice plan are built for you.

Eligibility rules, fees and contact dates change. Confirm current details with each tour and with the NCAA Eligibility Center before you plan a season around them.