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This summer, it's tee on the greens for kids

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(HTTPS://TIMESOFINDIA.INDIATIMES.COM/TOIREPORTER/AUTHOR-DYMPHNA-V-479258306.CMS)/ TNN / Apr 23, 2023, 07:55 IST

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CHENNAI: After a six-year hiatus, the Madras Gymkhana Club, home to an 18-hole golf course, one of the oldest in the country, has restarted its summer camp. The 10-day long course began last week with 45 participants. "We received more than 200 inquiries," says head coach Pradyumna Prakash, who adds that owing to the interest, they are kickstarting a year-long junior golf programme.

With golf becoming an Olympic sport, young and old alike are interested in the game. Parents want their children to get started because there is scope for growth in the national and international scene. Adults want to play because it's a sport that has less stress on the bones and joints. Plus, the greens are a great place for business networking.



Tamil Nadu Golf Federation (TNGF) has also got a camp on for summer, at the 80-acre golf course set in Nandanam with Cosmopolitan Club having a joint lease.

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“Some of the children we have trained have gained golf scholarships in the US. We seek to provide children with a curated coaching regime,” says Jayanan Satagopal, TNGF head coach. “We also provide coaching to 15 underprivileged children at a time. We give them equipment and teach them how to play as well as support them if they continue the sport. Some of them have topped their age category at the zonal level.”

Pradyumna says more juniors are winning international tournaments. Golf, in fact, has seen 88 wins by Indian players at international tournaments. “For children, golf improves concentration skills and to be more disciplined in the long run. Facilities are also developing in Chennai. The future for golf is looking good,” he says.

“There is a misconception that golf is elitist. With more access to facilities, anyone can enter the sport,” says golfer Hari Manoj, who is involved in the MGC camp.

Indoor golf centres too have cropped up in the city. Golfer’s Edge, which opened this year, provides a mini golf setting with a virtual simulator and a 170 sqft putting green. “We provide coaching classes and equipment for those who want to try their hand at the game without the pressure of playing at a full golf course,” says cofounder Bharath Aravind. “The simulator gives instant feedback to improve form. Only professionals usually have access to such data, but now it’s accessible to everyone.”

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