



# Pinecrest Golf League Puts Beginners on Course

There's no question golf can be perceived as intimidating, especially for beginners. Golf lessons and classes teach you the skills, but proficiency requires practice, and beginners are often reluctant to play the game for fear of holding up more experienced players behind them.

"If you started learning at an older age, it's a little intimidating," said Chris Sisko of Alexandria, who learned to play as an adult at Pinecrest Golf Course. "The more pressure there is to play, the more likely you are to quit."

Sisko says the Pinecrest Golf League kept him in the game by pairing him up with players of similar ability during dedicated tee times. True beginners play at the Birdie Level and are accompanied by an experienced mentor to help remind them of everything from club selection to swing mechanics to etiquette.

"I just can't speak highly enough about the mentor system," said Sheryl Leeds of Alexandria, who took up golf when she retired. "That's huge as a beginner! I call the mentor the golf whisperer."

"Going out with a mentor is very helpful," said Bryan Kinsey of Falls Church, who started playing in the league three years ago. "The mentor points out things on the course in a one-on-one setting and keeps reminding you of what to do in various situations and how to improve."

Kinsey now plays at the Golf League's Eagle Level, designed for those who are more confident and can play together without a mentor. They always have the option of returning to the Birdie Level if they find they aren't playing well and want more guidance.

"I think it's a great environment for beginner and intermediate players," Sisko said. "There's no pressure, and everyone is very supportive."

The Pinecrest Golf League also includes free monthly golf clinics with a professional instructor, opportunities to play together at other Park Authority golf courses and lunch at the end of each game. Perhaps the most enduring benefit is the friendships that are made along the way – connections that lead to friendly rounds of golf all year long.

"The social aspects of the league are wonderful," Sisko said. "You really get to know everybody."

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Leagues for players of all abilities are forming now at Park Authority golf courses. To find a course near you, turn to the Golf section.

