

# Desert Mountain Launches Junior Sports Academy

*Innovative instruction programs in golf and tennis for ages 4-17 open to members' children and grandchildren; Academy-only memberships also available*

SCOTTSDALE, ARIZONA, USA, March 3, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Desert Mountain—the exclusive, Scottsdale club and community and home of seven signature golf courses and three surfaces for tennis—is opening a [one-of-a-kind Junior Sports Academy](#) (JSA). Focusing on young golf and tennis enthusiasts, the JSA will offer children ages 4-17 a different kind of instruction, focused on providing experiences that inspire curiosity, immersive play, and self-guided exploration into golf and/or tennis.

“The Junior Sports Academy aligns perfectly with the club’s vision to provide outstanding experiences for members and be the finest private club and community for golf and recreational lifestyle activities in North America,” explains Damon DiOrio, CEO of Desert Mountain Club. “With dozens of younger families investing in Desert Mountain and what we offer, along with more children and grandchildren spending more time here as they participate in remote learning, enhancing their experience became very timely and very exciting.”



(left to right) Ryan Johnson, Desert Mountain’s Director of Racquet Sports; Paxton O’Connor, Director of Golf Instruction; and Richard Franklin, Head of Junior Golf Development.

The golf curriculum launches this month and JSA golf programming will be held during after school off-peak hours at the Outlaw golf course. To run it, Desert Mountain has brought in Richard Franklin, an international leader in junior golf instruction. Striving to “bring out the best in young learners,” Franklin studied childhood development and behavioral psychology before landing on the discovery that fun and interactive games on the course are the best way to both teach and excite children. Franklin’s game system, called “DiscoverGolf,” will serve as the learning platform for the golf component of JSA.

“Richard is an original thinker who is bringing a level of ingenuity and fun to our Desert Mountain families,” explained Paxton O’Connor, PGA, Director of Performance & Instruction. “We’re starting something very special and new to Arizona, with lessons that guide our youth to think differently on the golf course, while deliberately training curiosity, immersive play, and self-guided exploration,” he said. O’Connor recruited Franklin from Deerpath Golf Course in Lake Forest, IL where he spent 12 years leading the youth golf program.

Only someone with a background that combines childhood development, behavioral psychology, professional golf and graphic design could be responsible for creating a board game-style golf curriculum with titles that include “Croctology,” “King Putt” and “Nutcluster.” Croctology, in particular, requires the student to putt through a series of very menacing cardboard crocodile teeth to reveal a ramp, which leads to the next step in the game where precisely placed puts will win the game.

At Desert Mountain Club, the golf portion of the Academy will offer 90-minute sessions up to 6 days a week, timed to begin after kids are done with the day’s schooling, plus one or two sessions on weekend days. A 4-to-1 (or better) student-coach ratio will be maintained and learning will be sequenced as a series of games that lead up to a big end-of-day event. Young families at Desert Mountain may refer the Academy to friends and teammates. The Club has created a new Non-Equity Junior Sports Academy membership to accommodate referrals.

The DiscoverGolf game system and methodology has reached more than 7,000 young golfers worldwide and is in use at more than 250 golf facilities on five continents. All games, complete with characters and functionality have been developed by Franklin.

Training sessions encompass team-based challenges with high levels of player interaction, goal quests, games and activities that bring out each child's creativity, problem solving skills, engineering capabilities, communication/team management, and skill development.

As an alternative or goal-focused step, a second offering speaks to students that have potential tournament aspirations as this program offers a more technique-driven roadmap. Juniors in this group can expect more intensive instruction, more drills than games, and specialized on-course.

“Golf is usually taught in a linear way: grip, stance, tempo, etc.,” says Franklin. “I believe in an

approach that honors the non-uniform nature of childhood development. Leading young people requires us to adapt with culturally relevant programming that honors a child's kaleidoscope of prior experiences, unique perspectives, emotions, and personality that is brought to bear on our lesson tee."

### Tennis Program

The JSA Tennis Developmental Pathway program is run by Ryan Johnson, Desert Mountain's Director of Racquet Sports, who possesses an extensive background in youth tennis programming. Since joining Desert Mountain in August, Johnson has developed a series of graduated tennis skills programs and clinics for young tennis enthusiasts. The full JSA tennis experience is ideal for the developmental player and will provide comprehensive training opportunities and a pathway for players with competitive aspirations. The JSA Tennis Performance program will launch later in 2021 and will emphasize strength training, nutrition, on-court drills, and match play.

The JSA programs are open to children and grandchildren of members and is available upon referral as part of the Non-Equity Golf Junior Sports Academy Membership.

For additional information on Desert Mountain Club, access the web site at [www.desertmountain.com](http://www.desertmountain.com).

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