

of Babes

Bradley Chandler

Age: 16 **Handicap:** 10

Years active in The First Tee: Six

Bradley Chandler of Pinehurst, N.C., began golfing with his father as part of a youth program. But the First Tee program, launched by his father in Pinehurst, took his game and development to a new level. That First Tee chapter had seven members, including Chandler, when it started six years ago. It has grown to about 100 members.

“Kids want things to do, and they want to do those things together,” Chandler says.

Part of his accessibility to the game revolved around

a par-3, nine-hole layout with artificial greens. The low-maintenance turf allowed the course’s owners to set a lower price point: \$15 to golf all day. Chandler and his friends could stay at the facility all day and play golf, cards and then more golf. Chandler scored an ace at age 10.



Bradley

Lauren Lynch

Age: 16 **Handicap:** Doesn't keep one

Years active in First Tee: Five

Lauren Lynch began participating at the Maple Grove, Minn., chapter of The First Tee when the organization began to recruit more women in 2004. It was offering free golf programs and, of course, focused on character development.

She began the program with a couple of friends from school, and now those bonds remain close as they mentor younger kids in the program.

“The more kids that get involved at an early age will mean more kids that carry through and continue to play later in life,” she says. “I’m not very competitive and I don’t score well, but golf has so many great things, like being outdoors, getting exercise, participating in business opportunities. But most of all, it helps you grow with your etiquette and become a more charismatic person.”

Lynch says more parent-child events can help grow the game because playing with a parent in the beginning helps create a positive experience and lasting bonds with family and the sport.

Continued on page 32



[ABOUT THIS SERIES] “Growing the Game” is *Golfdom*’s quarterly series – now in its fourth year – that focuses on how the golf industry can attract more players to create more rounds. In addition to this installment on how to make golf more accessible for youngsters, we’ve also explored the impact women, minorities, disabled golfers and baby boomers could have on increasing play. We’ve also talked to golf course architects about ways they can make the game more friendly for beginners and average golfers, and we’ve highlighted creative marketing programs that golf courses use to attract new golfers. Visit our archives at www.golfdom.com to view the 2006-2008 “Growing the Game” series.

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Viviana

Continued from page 31

Viviana Perez

Age: 17 **Handicap:** 6

Years active in First Tee: Seven

When she was a child, Viviana Perez of Chesterfield, Va., began going to the golf course with her father, driving the golf car and basking in the summer sun. She

says letting kids have fun first on the golf course is an effective way to help engage them and coax them to come back.

“What kid doesn’t like to drive a golf car or hit balls as hard as they can on the driving range?” Perez asks.

As a Hispanic, Perez says she grew up in the game knowing she was different than most players. While the sport has grown more culturally diverse, she says it still has a way to go.

Perez says diversity is a key way to grow the game, especially because younger generations have lost ways to learn formal etiquette. In an era of instant communication like text messaging, as well as a breakdown of respect for elders, kids don’t know how to learn proper etiquette. Perez says golf can teach them.

Clifton Jordan

Age: 15 **Handicap:** 5

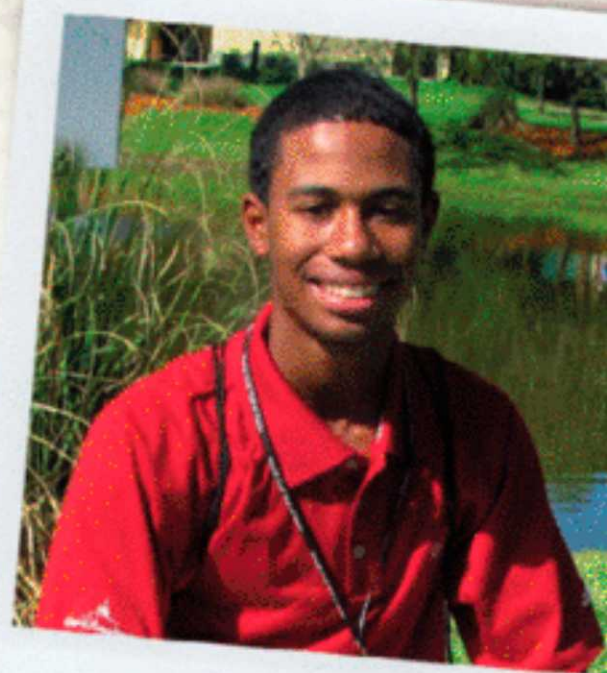
Years active in First Tee: Five

Clifton Jordan of Memphis began going to the golf course with his grandfather at a young age. He quickly learned that he had some natural ability, but what kept him coming back was spending time with his grandfather, a support system he still savors.

“If you look at great athletes and other successful people, they have a great family support system, and that’s crucial for growing the game,” Jordan says. “Those bonds start early, and they can start early for golf.”

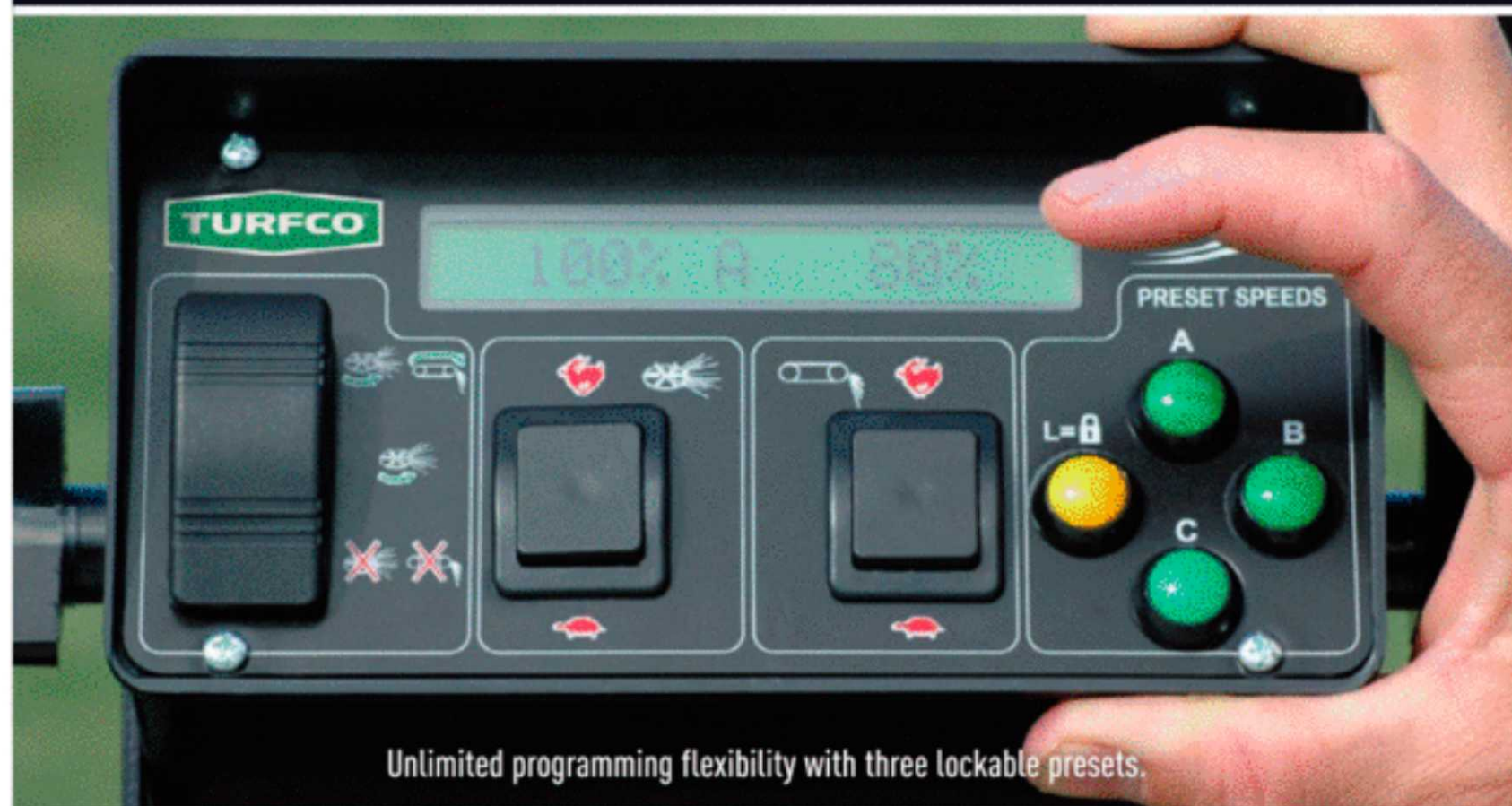
Jordan says shorter and more family-oriented courses can encourage families to play more golf together. Let’s face it: 7,000-yard tracks are fun for good golfers, but they are discouraging for beginners and poor golfers. More importantly than scoring, it’s crucial that beginners feel like they are improving.

“Golf is a game you can always get better at, and that’s what keeps you coming back,” Jordan says.



Clifton

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Continued on page 41