

MODULE 1

Why Golf Is Mental

Part of the Master Your Golf Brain System

Powered by My Mental Caddy™

Introduction

You've probably heard the phrase "golf is 90% mental" thrown around a lot. Jack Nicklaus said golf is 99.9% mental. His instructor Jim Flick — who was one of my first mentors when I started teaching — said golf is 90% mental and the other 10% is mental.

So let's talk about what that actually means and why it matters to you.

How Do You Know If This Is Mental?

Before we go any further, let me answer the question you might be asking: **How do I know if I need to work on the mental part of my game?**

Because maybe you're sitting here thinking, "Is it really my brain? Or do I just need to fix my swing?"

Here's how you know.

First: You're not taking all of your talent out onto the golf course.

If you can perform better on the range than when you go to the golf course, **that's mental.**

If you're disappointed with your results and frustrated by the way your game is showing up out there, you're most likely getting in the way of your talent mentally — with your thoughts and your emotions.

It's not your swing. You have the swing. You've proven that on the range. The question is: can you take it to the course?

Second: Golf is a big part of your life, and you're not enjoying it.

Maybe you live in a golf community. Maybe you're part of a golf family. Maybe you belong to a country club, and golf is just one of the hobbies you've chosen.

But you're not enjoying your results. You're not enjoying your time on the golf course.

That's mental.

Because golf should be fun. And if it's not — if you're walking off 18 feeling frustrated, disappointed, or

like you just wasted four hours — then something needs to shift. And that something isn't your swing.

Third: You have a human brain and you play golf.

Honestly? If you have a human brain and you're playing the game of golf, **it is worth working on the mental part of your game.**

Here's why: you cannot access all of your talent unless you can guide your brain.

Notice I didn't say "manage your mind" or "control your thoughts." I said **guide your brain.**

Because that's what this is. It's not about shutting your brain down or forcing positive thoughts. It's about stepping into leadership — being the leader of your own brain out on the golf course.

And that's a skill. It's learnable. And it's worth doing — not just for golf, but for everything.

So if any of those three things resonate with you, you're in the right place.

And now that we know this is mental, let's talk about why golf is so mental in the first place.

What "Mental" Actually Means

Here's the thing — I'm not a huge fan of the term "mental." It has some baggage, right? When someone says you're "in your head" or you're "a head case" or you're "not mentally tough enough," none of that feels very good.

You could be crushing it in every other area of your life — successful, smart, capable — and then you step on the golf course and it's like, *who am I?*

So let me give you the definition I actually like: **mental just means relating to the mind or involving the process of thinking.** That's it. It's not about you being broken. It's about managing your thoughts and your emotions on the golf course.

And honestly, that's the ultimate goal. If you can think clearly and manage your emotions, you're going to be able to take more of your talent out onto the golf course.

But here's the problem: most of us were never taught how to do that.

Why Golf Is So Mental

So why is golf so mental? Why does it mess with you so badly?

Let me break it down. There are **two big components** to why golf feels so hard mentally.

Component #1: What Happens Shot-to-Shot

On the golf course, you're dealing with two things in real time:

- Your thoughts over the golf ball
- Your emotions over the golf ball

And you've got to manage both — quickly — between shots.

At home, if you're having a bad day or you're frustrated, you've got time. You can go get a glass of wine, call a friend, sit on the couch and zone out. But on the golf course? **It's your turn to hit.** You don't get to say, "Hold on, I need a minute to process this anger." You've got to hit the shot.

And if you don't know how to process emotions quickly, you're swinging from disappointment, from frustration, from fear. That's the challenge.

You can go from excited on the tee to frustrated after a bad bounce to anxious over a shot you don't trust — all in the span of one hole. And most of us don't know what to do with all of that.

We just react. We tighten up. We swing faster. We start thinking about the score instead of the shot. And before we know it, we're not playing our game anymore.

That's the first component.

Component #2: What You Carry the Whole Round

The other component — and this is the one people don't talk about enough — is **what I call the weighted rain jacket.**

You know those horrible, heavy, sweaty Gore-Tex rain jackets? I had to wear them when I played in college, and I hated the feeling of swinging in them. They were so restrictive. That's what we put on ourselves mentally.

This is the stuff you're carrying around the whole round:

- What's going to happen at the end of 18?
- How are you going to judge your score?
- What are you going to make it mean about you?

This is where **perfectionism** shows up. **Fear of failure. Fear of disappointment. Low self-worth.** Beating yourself up with "I'm not good enough."

A lot of people tell me, "No, no, I'm pretty confident off the golf course. I don't have these issues anywhere else — it's just golf." And I'm going to tell you: **if you have good self-worth, you have it everywhere.** It doesn't turn on and off depending on where you're standing.

If you're telling yourself "I'm not good enough" or "I feel like a failure" on the golf course, that's showing up somewhere else in your life too. We just haven't connected the dots yet.

I call this **waiting to go get a spanking.** You know what's waiting for you at the end of 18, and it hangs out with you all day. That adds another layer of mental management on top of all the individual shots.

That's the second component.

The Bottom Line

So those are the two big reasons why golf is so mental:

- What happens shot-to-shot — managing your thoughts and emotions in real time, with no time to process
- What you're carrying the whole round — that weighted rain jacket of perfectionism, fear, and self-judgment

And here's the kicker: **you can have all the talent in the world, but if you can't manage your mind, you're not taking that talent to the course.**

You're leaving it on the range.

What's Next

Now, I know what you might be thinking:

"Okay, Kathy, I get it. Golf is mental. My brain is the problem. But **what do I do about it?**"

That's exactly what we're going to cover. But before we can fix it, you need to understand **what's actually happening up there**. Because once you know how your brain works — once you know what to expect from it — managing it gets a whole lot easier.

And that's what we're going to talk about in the next module.

Key Takeaway

"Mental" isn't a bad word. It just means you're managing your thinking and your emotions. And golf is mental because it forces you to do that **fast** — shot-to-shot — while also carrying the weight of what you're making it all mean.

You're not broken. The game is just exposing something you were never taught how to do.

Action Step

Before we move on, I want you to do one thing.

Pick one round — your last round, or the one coming up this week — and answer this question:

Where did I leave shots on the course because of what was happening in my head?

Not because of your swing. Not because of a bad lie or the wind.

Because of your thoughts or your emotions.

Was it:

- After a bad hole that turned into three bad holes?
- Standing over a shot you didn't trust?
- Trying not to mess up instead of just playing?
- Beating yourself up and then playing tight?

Just notice. Don't judge it. Don't try to fix it yet.

We're building awareness first.

Write it down. Put it in your notes. Or just think about it on your next drive to the course.

Because once you can see where your brain is costing you shots, you can start guiding it differently.

Continue to Module 2: How Your Brain Actually Works