



# Cottage Grove Boys Golf



Coach Kent Russo goes over grip technique with his team.



The team hits some balls at a recent sunny practice.

## Team Rundown:

More than anything, head coach Kent Russo is brutally honest about his team.

“I just let them know that they’re not good yet. You guys have a long way to go,” he said. “And they know – it’s not a secret. They go out and play with some guys that are decent and then they know, ‘Oh, I do have a long way to go.’ You can’t hide it.”

From reminders at practice to the team-issued schedule that has the date of the state tournament listed with the words “no chance” next to it, there is an air of reality that is rarely seen on teams. Part of this stems from the fact that last season was the first time in eight years the Lions did not send anyone to the state tournament.

“This year, we’re starting over... So these are the experienced guys,”

said Russo pointing to juniors and seniors on the team. “But their game is really green. They really haven’t figured it out yet.”

Russo notes that the way to get better in golf is to simply constantly be playing the game. And for high school students that means grabbing a friend and spending free time out at the golf course and just getting better.

“If you can throw a baseball half-way decent, you’re always going to be able to throw a baseball. You can hit a baseball. You can run track, obviously you might not be as fast if you take time off, but you can still do it. This game, if you don’t get to a particular skill level, you’re never going to get there unless you work at it,” he said.

## Team Perspective with Jonny Bench:

*On his history with golf:*

I’ve been golfing for a really long time. My parents started me young. They actually gave me that little plastic golf set from the Dollar Tree. So I’d go out in my backyard and do that. So I’ve been doing this for as long as I can remember.

And I really started getting into it once I started the team here at the high school. Now I’m kind of re-learning everything over the course of four years and (Russo) been a huge help, he’s been a great coach. I still have a lot to learn.

*On how they stack up in league:*

I feel like we’re definitely not at the bottom but we’re not at the top either. I don’t think we’re in the middle either, I think we’re above average of the other schools. But yeah, who knows.

*On what he’s looking forward to in the upcoming season:*

I’m looking forward to varsity. I’ve never been on a varsity team. So this will be my first year and I feel like I definitely have earned it because I’ve been playing JV for the other three years. It’s very exciting. I’ve never been on varsity for anything. It’s also scary because you’ve got some pretty good competitors on varsity, and I don’t know. We’re working on it.

There’s a lot more matches (on varsity) and it’s also a lot more competitive. The JV is nice because it’s pretty relaxed. You’re just going out to have fun but with the varsity it’s more competitive.

**Tires LES SCHWAB**

**GO LIONS!**

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