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**Nicole Weller**, the 2013 PGA Youth Player Development Award winner, is the PGA director of instruction at The Landings Club in Savannah, Georgia.

## Have Your Students "Climb the Ladder"

### Nicole Weller on the importance of having your students "climb the ladder:"

There are a lot of great player development programs available for PGA Professionals to use for youth golfers, and many golf professionals use multiples, not just one. Although each program offers a great curriculum and results, offering many different programs can be confusing to parents and kids. That's why I designed a program that encourages our youngsters to "Climb the Ladder" of youth golf programs. This program encourages golfers ages 2-17 through the various programs that are already offered at The Landings Club, such as The Littlest Golfer, SNAG, Stick to Sports, U.S. Kids Golf, PGA Sports Academy, and so on. We offer 11 color-coordinated levels, beginning with kids ages 2-3 and culminating with high school aged students. Participants can move up levels by practicing and passing a skills test, which our instructors administer. When they graduate to the next level, they receive colored tape to place on their golf bag stands or bag tags. Each color denotes their current level, much like martial arts.



### Nicole Weller on the business impact of having your students "climb the ladder:"

Our kids love "climbing the ladder" because it gives them something specific to look forward to and practice for, and by passing their exam and earning their tape, they get a great sense of accomplishment. Our parents really like the program as well because it has simplified our existing youth golf programs and allows them to practice with their children. Although we don't charge the students to "Climb the Ladder," it has proven cost-effective; since we already offer all of the programs involved, we had no additional costs aside from the colored tape (incidental charges for

level books like USKG, PGA Sports Academy or Stick to Sports are charged to the member account), which was very inexpensive. The Climb the Ladder program has created excitement around our club and we have seen that excitement translate into a boost in participation of our other paid programs like Kids Club, which incorporates concepts like PGA Sports Academy.



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