



## **The Massanutten Method for Success with FlingGolf**

What does it take to consistently be one of the leading FlingGolf courses in the country, year after year?

Learn from PGA Pro Brett Mowbray and his staff at Massanutten Resort how they generate \$35,000 to \$50,000 or more in incremental revenue every year and average over 1,500 rounds by filling empty tee times with FlingGolf players. They have done all of this with no changes to their course and a small investment in FlingSticks.

### Some of Brett's Best Practices

- Have staff trained on the use of a FlingStick and always available to give a quick demo to interested players (5-10 minutes will do the trick)
- Offer Regular Weekly Clinics/Demos
- Offer a FlingStick and a bucket of balls to get them hooked on the range
- Have FlingSticks on display in a golf bag in your pro shop – the stick itself is always a conversation starter and helps spread the word
- Offer discounts or an Introductory Package (e.g., \$25 for 9 holes, FlingStick rental and a cart after 2PM)
- Have a FlingStick Rental Fleet of different sizes available for players
- Reach out to your existing golfers to encourage them to bring their families and friends to try FlingGolf while they play golf
- Have videos of how to play FlingGolf on your website.
- Hand out New Swarm's Quick Start Rules card and other collateral to players
- Reach out to local summer camps, colleges and youth sports teams and coaches to come and try FlingGolf
- Promote FlingGolf as a way for corporate outings and team building events to include non-golfers
- Use your social media posts, and link to @flinggolf and #flingstick

- Mention that you welcome FlingGolf players on your website and link to FlingGolf videos. Make sure it has its own tab/page so that it is not buried within your other content and people can really learn about it.

### Additional tips for Resorts and Hotels:

- Add FlingGolf to brochures/activity cards that are given to guests upon arrival
- List FlingGolf as a distinct activity on your website, ideally not as a subset of traditional golf
- Play FlingGolf videos in guest rooms
- Include FlingGolf in your newsletters, emails and other marketing materials
- Promote FlingGolf as a family activity that can involve *everyone*.

### Interview with Brett Mowbray, PGA Pro, Director of Golf at Massanutten Resort

#### **How did you learn about FlingGolf?**

I first saw it in Golf Business Magazine in 2014. I scanned the ad, emailed it to my boss, and we ordered a FlingStick.

#### **Why did you want to bring this new game to the course rather than keep your grounds limited to traditional golfers?**

Ask any professional: Golf has been flat for about 10 years or more. We're missing the millennials and it's a big thing. Golf is about tradition-- for this generation, it seems boring. This generation grew up on video games, and golf takes a long time to play. This generation likes things casual, golf clubs are seen as formal, they have rules about what you can wear, that puts younger people off. So we're looking for anything that sparks their interest. We wanted to focus on family friendly activities, and FlingGolf is perfect for that.

Also, people in general are always looking for something new. I'm looking for any way to increase revenue.

#### **Why did you choose FlingGolf rather than some other sport?**

With FlingGolf, the website said you don't have to alter the golf course at all, you just need one stick. My first thought process was--with foot golf, it looks

like soccer. Here, you're swinging the club, it kind of looks like a golf swing. Plus with foot golf, you've got to build holes in the side of the course.

With FlingGolf, you don't need to make any alterations to the course.

### **What was involved in the initial investment to bring FlingGolf to Massanutten?**

We ordered 24 FlingSticks at first, 18 for rentals, 6 for the shop. We had separate rack cards--the FlingGolf people sent down rules cards. That's all we needed--we didn't need to do anything different to the grounds.

### **How did staff and management feel about FlingGolf?**

Some of my guys are traditionalists, they thought I was nuts!

### **How did you educate the staff about the game?**

Just used some of the stuff that FlingGolf had online, like the videos, and checked out the rules card. It wasn't that hard. And then when the sticks came in, everyone just picked them up and tried them.

### **How did you get the word out that FlingGolf was available?**

There's a magazine at check-in at the resort that we pass out to guests. We had something small there that said, "Ask at the pro shop about FlingGolf." On our website, we added a picture of FlingGolf, and a tab with a link to the pricing and some videos from the FlingGolf crew. We also have two in-house tv channels at the resort. We had an ad for FlingGolf pop up. That was enough-- people would just come into the pro shop and ask for it.

Every Monday we have a wine tasting up on the decks of the ski lodge. We usually have staff up there talking about golf, so they would just bring a FlingStick up with them also, and after seeing the stick, people would ask about it.

In the pro shop, we have the FlingSticks available right as people walk in. They are a great conversation starter, so people ask what they are which gives us an opportunity to let them know about the sport.

### **What were the hardest parts about bringing FlingGolf to the resort?**

The only two big questions were, "How do we price this?" and "When do we allow people to play?" I get a lot of calls asking what we did. I thought, "If we price it the same as golf, that might kill it. Let's price it below to start off with,

to give it a chance to get off the ground.” As far as the time of day--mornings and early afternoons are our busiest time for golf. Originally we decided not to open the course up to FlingGolf until 2pm, but then that quickly moved to after noon.

In order to get people out playing at slower times, we decided to offer an introductory deal at different times of the year: \$25 gets you 9 holes, a FlingStick to play with and a cart rental.

### **When did you introduce FlingGolf at your course?**

It was the first Saturday of April, 2015.

### **How rapidly did FlingGolf take off?**

By the end of April of our first year, we had 100 FlingGolfers. Toward end of May 150--and that's empty nester time. None of the kids are here. You get a lot of couples. By the time summer was around, we were over 200. In July, we did 405 Flingers. In August, we did 325. I was thinking, "If we could do 1000 rounds it would be cool." Next thing you know, we'd gotten to a thousand by the end of July. It took off pretty quickly.

### **How do you get interested customers started?**

We suggest they rent a stick and go down to the driving range to practice. We give them a few pointers to show them how. 9 out of 10 groups who have tried it at the driving range come back and say they're ready. Then we show them the rack card, go through the rules, and it doesn't take many tosses until they start getting the hang of it.

We offer clinics on a weekly basis and always have someone available from the staff to show people how to start.

### **Any difficulties with playing?**

Well, the easiest way is flinging it as hard as you can. The hardest part is being 10 yards off the green and getting it close--it's harder for touch shots, but that just takes a little practice.

### **How did you end up pricing it?**

A little less than regular green fees. And then the stick rental--we charge \$10 for adults, \$5 for juniors, whether they play 9 or 18 holes. Most people play 9 holes. Separate rack card. Alex from FlingGolf sent down rules cards.

### **Who was it popular with?**

Kids. Juniors. We're a resort, so in the summer, we usually have thousands of owners and guests visiting the Resort. We have a waterpark and ziplines along with many more attractions. We have a captive audience with lots of kids just looking for something to do. It wasn't just millennials.....it was a lot of kids, families, and older people. Lots of the 55 to 60 age range.....husbands and wives wanted to try it. It surprised us. People who are looking for a different way to play golf.....who wanted to play golf but wanted something that was quicker, but mostly something fun.

Guys might play golf in morning and then come back and play FlingGolf with their kids in afternoon. We had people doing it last week, first week of December, and not one of them had ever been on a golf course.

### **Who wasn't it popular with?**

We have people in the local area who are golfers, and they still just come for traditional golf.

### **What was the initial reaction from traditional golfers?**

Some of them go "What the heck are they doing?" It's just curiosity--there's never been any bad comments. As long as they're not feeling unwelcome, it's fine.

### **Does having FlingGolf on the course interfere with regular golf?**

No. We looked at it as a way of filling our tee sheet up. In fact, when customers come and haven't had any experience with golf, we often offer FlingGolf to them. As any pro knows, a group of inexperienced golfers can really jam up your pace of play and lessen the experience for everyone, but that same group can move much faster playing FlingGolf.

### **How did business increase as FlingGolf took off?**

My goal the first year was a thousand rounds, but we quickly went over 1,500 rounds. Since then it has been a consistent revenue generator for us. We have days when we are doing almost as many FlingGolf rounds as we are doing traditional golf rounds, especially in the off-season"

### **Why might someone who doesn't play traditional golf be interested in playing FlingGolf?**

We've seen many different reasons. Maybe a person wants to get outside and have fun but golf doesn't seem fun or interesting. Maybe a golfer who suffered

an injury is recovering, and they still want to be out on the golf course, and this isn't as stressful on their back. Or a husband and wife might want to do something together, and the husband's a golfer, but the wife took golf lessons and didn't care for it-- FlingGolf is easier. The couple can spend the afternoon out on the course together, he plays golf, she plays FlingGolf. Or the kids in a family might not be interested in golf, but the parents are avid golfers. The kids tried FlingGolf and they loved it, so now the whole family can connect on the golf course. We can give everybody a reason to be out there.

And it's really great for larger groups. We had a company retreat that was looking to do team-building exercises. We went out on the range for about half an hour, then the team were all ready to go out on the course and play. Only four of them had ever been on a golf course before, but with FlingGolf they were all able to go out and have fun. Another time, we had a family reunion, with 24 people. 12 of them played golf, and the other 12 played FlingGolf and all had a great time on the course together.

### **How hard is it to learn to play FlingGolf, especially compared to traditional golf?**

It's a much quicker learning curve. I could give you golf lessons for a half a day, and you still might not feel confident and enjoy playing right away. With FlingGolf, people can spend a half an hour on the driving range getting the feel for using the FlingStick, and they're ready to go.

### **What do people say after they play FlingGolf?**

When people are done playing traditional golf, and you ask them how it went, they tell you their score. When you ask people who just finished playing FlingGolf how it went, they don't tell you their score--they tell you how much fun they had. Regular golf is defined by the score, but for most of our players, this is about laughing and having a good time.

### **Does FlingGolf require the same time commitment as regular golf?**

FlingGolf is a little quicker. We've had groups who've never been on a course before but they still play 9 holes in less than 2 hours, sometimes closer to an hour and a half.

### **Are FlingGolfers repeat customers?**

Yeah, definitely, they'll try it, come back out, do it again.

**What are some of the groups that come out to play?**

Team building, church groups, summer camps, youth and college sports groups.

**Where are the possible revenue sources that flow from having FlingGolf on your course?**

Green fees, rack cards, stick rental, golf cart fees..... there's other ideas we haven't tried here. If I was at a country club, I'd do birthday parties with the kids. Also, like anyone else, they eat and enjoy a soda or beer while they are playing.

**How much of a revenue increase do you see offering FlingGolf?**

We are consistently bringing in between \$35,000 to over \$50,000 per year. That's revenue that wasn't there before.

**What has been the reaction from management and owners after the first season of FlingGolf?**

Very favorable, in a year where the weather patterns have been up and down. A lot of what we do here, typically, is about summer break, the Canadian schools' break week, the New York schools' break week and this past year we lost out on those because we had bad weather. We started the season behind, but we ended ahead. I think FlingGolf was the reason.

**Will any of these FlingGolfers turn into traditional golfers eventually?**

I talked before about how flat *golf* golf is. The PGA came up with PGA Junior league, it's like a little league baseball on the golf course, they're in teams with jerseys, its about fun, you're getting them there and they ask their parents to come out and play. Same with FlingGolf. I think some people who are playing FlingGolf may ultimately want to try regular golf, but at the same time I am happy to have any players on my course having fun.

**What advice do you have for other resorts and courses looking to increase course volume and revenue?**

First thing, evaluate your clientele and customer base. For a resort, you'd have to be crazy not to try this. Do it. Your business has a large volume of kids? No brainer. Are there camps and youth sports in the area? They would be interested. If you have a club with golf and tennis, this could be a way to get your tennis players out on the course. Then—just try it. You don't have to sink a ton of money into it to get started.