

## Jake Sylak | Youngstown State Golf

Hi my name is Jake Sila and I'm on the men's golf team here at Youngstown State. Advice from coaches mentors in the past. One of the biggest pieces pieces of advice that I've gathered over my years of playing golf is really to just kind of hone in my mental strengths or mental abilities behind the game. You know there's only so much that you can really teach as far as a golf swing. Everything's so unique to everybody. So for me a lot of the teaching and the mentorship came from the mental side of the game being able to. You know kind of push through some of the adversity of those long days and really how to turn yourself around when you know it's going to be a long day. So one of the biggest things that I focus on not to sound like a broken record but really is strengthening my mental game. It's been one of the things that I have found to be most effective. Besides you know swaying thoughts and all this other stuff that you would commonly get the mental side of the game for me has been something that. You know through a lot of work and a lot of dedication to that work I have found to be one of the more effective parts of lowering my scores and being able to maintain that sense of focus throughout the day. Mechanics behind some of my stuff. I'm a natural fader of the golf ball. I like to work the ball from left to right but I've been trying to work on hitting the ball a little more right to left not necessarily something that I've tried to like. Become the part of my game but I've learned over the you know past couple years here that being able to work the ball right to left can help in some situations. So for me I'm really trying to work on you know staying through the swing as long as I can trying to drop my elbow into that slot. I tend to get over the top get a little quick when I'm nervous or kind of you know a little bit tense. So finding a way to just make sure I'm always in that slot. And then extending through the swing without really flipping my arms too much which would be a tendency for that opposite end swing. Honestly one of the biggest challenges for me throughout my high school process becoming a college athlete was really the transition to college athletics. It was really you know I was very fortunate to be blessed with the ability to play golf and to be able to play it at the highest level being Division I but once I got here it was it was different. Everybody was as good if not better than I was so I really had to you know work on the mental game like I mentioned and allow myself to not take that as a threat and allow it to be a learning process learn from the older guys pick their brains see what they do what they don't do well what they do do well. Um

and just kind of pick and choose from that as to what my game would ultimately turn into as a leader now on our team Some of the things that I've picked up from from players in the past technically speaking I've played with a lot of guys that do like to draw the ball and as I mentioned I'm trying to work on drawing it a little bit more So when I I'm I'm a very fast swinger of the of the golf club Um it's something that I've really tried to work on but one of the things I've had to pick and choose from those guys is to you know know when to reel it back to hit the certain shot I think in the past I've tried to overcorrect stuff and when I get too quick it's just it doesn't even have a prayer of turning over Um so really one of the things that I've learned from those guys in the past and even guys on the team now is how to control and slow my swing down to get the result I want even though I feel like I might not be swinging it as fast or hitting it as far the results still end up being better or the same if not better distance wise and all that stuff So my recruitment process was Maybe a little bit different I I was in between you know a lot of different sports that I loved you know picking and choosing what I ultimately wanted to do in college Obviously loved golf I've loved loved it for a long time started playing when I was 3 and 43 or 4 years old So for me you know throughout the help of my high school coach Sean Brown and some different mentors that I've talked about You know we just really dialed in I wanted to be at YSU I've always loved it here I've loved playing the idea of playing and putting on the Y being that I'm from Youngstown so we really focused on YSU There were some different schools out there as well some schools down south that were appealing as a golfer of course but really You know once I got in touch with Coach Joy we started talking We realized that our values and our goals of what we wanted and viewed for myself for the 4 years were in line It was an absolute no brainer As soon as I got the email that said I had the offer on the table I committed I think within I think I committed within the hour So it was it was where I wanted to be It was what I wanted to do and I'm happy to be here Why Youngstown State It's it's my home It's where I'm from I've taken a lot of pride in you know being from Youngstown Um obviously you know that might be a common answer but for me you know it was an opportunity to play golf at the highest level that I could continue my golf career past high school and like I mentioned I've you know there's a picture of me with the little you know Youngstown State face paint on when I was a kid going to football games Like that is what I've always wanted to do It's been a dream of mine And you know whether it's professional golf or not in the future for me you know if this is

the end of my college career so to say I'm happy to do it at home My golf career here has been a little up and down I my freshman sophomore year wasn't necessarily the best It was just you know going through learning curves and and just really developing into the player that I am today Yeah like I said freshman sophomore year wasn't the best Junior senior year kind of took a little bit of a leap And um and really just learning from the guys in the past learning from the guys now allowing my you know my mind to open up to some different different techniques and different thoughts in general has really ultimately kind of pushed me into where I am I've had a top 5 finish now in college which was really good for me We were picked I think 8th or 9th out of 10 teams at conference last year and we ended up placing 3rd and had a real chance there um to crack the top two and if not win it if something were to completely go wrong with right state Um but yeah so you know battling through the adversity and not listening to you know what People in the polls had to say about us last year and going out there getting in the top 3 was something that I'll always remember Balancing athletics and in school is one of the most important things that you can do I think it's an important character builder For me personally it's just been one of those things that I've needed to kind of talk to advisers about talk to different coaches about and I found that for me it just works well if I get my stuff done you know early in the week I've been a little lack lackluster on that in a you know past few but Um I've realized that you know getting my stuff done early and not having to worry about it later in the week just takes so much stress off of you and the professors really do a great job It's one of the ultimate reasons I came here as well you know you're in a class of 25 to 30 All the professors know your name you know they know exactly where you're at in standings and if you're not doing your stuff they'll get on you for it So for me it's talking to professors talking to advisers talking to coaches and just getting ahead of stuff and it just makes life so much easier Having the ability to To be able to tell my story you know that's part of the reason that I'm at YSU that I came here you know it's it's great to be home and it's great you know to go back to my actual home and you know people ask me how is YSU how's golf you know golfers we might not have the biggest platform in the world and we know that but but the close people around us you know and the people that we work with on a daily basis know us and It's just been it's been an incredible opportunity to have a platform at all regardless of how big and stature we we know we have a platform We know we represent not only us but our families our coaches our team We know we

have a responsibility regardless of how big that may be for A professional golf it just might not be on the cards I'm definitely going to try to qualify for you know US Open tournaments and all that stuff the big tournaments that you can still qualify for but for me I saw that Washington guy the other day He's hashtag open to work now That's pretty much the route that I'm heading towards But no I've had a lot of really great connections a really great internship with a company I did called P3 So for me personally job wise I'm looking to go into hospitality software sales Um continuing that internship working with my uncle who's been a really big help as well So definitely try to qualify for the tournaments and if one week it all goes right fantastic And if it doesn't so be it I have my degree so that's why we're here The biggest piece of advice that I can give to someone that is looking to play Division I golf or even just sports in general in college don't be afraid to ask you know in high school Had I known what I know now in a way I would have asked a lot more a lot more people granted I would never I wouldn't change it for the world but I would have asked a lot more questions sent a lot more emails been a little more proactive I didn't really start taking the recruiting process seriously until kind of the beginning of my senior year I didn't really email a bunch of coaches asked to you know can I come to camps and stuff like that So if it's golf if it's baseball football track whatever be proactive um go to camps camps are huge Um and just you know be willing to learn when coaches are talking anything you know constructive criticism or praise be willing to learn be willing to listen and when your time's called be ready to go Hi my name is Jake Sele I'm a senior on the YSU men's golf team and check me out on Next Level Prep