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Grab your glow stick!

By O'Ryan Johnson | Sunday, February 20, 2011 | <http://www.bostonherald.com> | [Local Coverage](#)

Golf went from the Scottish moor to finely manicured links, to AstroTurf mini-ranges and now it has come inside the mall and gone dark.

GlowGolf is the latest mall trend, with a dedicated cadre of devotees who drop \$7 per kid to play on the fluorescent course. Yesterday, my daughter Riley and I joined fans at the Natick Collection to play a round, kicking off my 7-year-old's winter vacation from first-grade.

The store is lighted by the so-called black lights once popular in college dorm rooms, and now made famous by CSI sleuths who use them to uncover blood trails. The walls are painted with fluorescent jungle patterns and players hit glow-in-the-dark balls on an 18-hole mini-course.

The course and obstacles look very simple, but the designers did a good job of making it a challenge for kids. There are also ball-washing stations, where kids put the glow-in-the-dark balls under an ultraviolet light.

Angelica Kontos of Waltham was at the mall for her grandson's birthday party.

"It's an organized situation. The kids are not running around all over the place," she said. "I'm very happy with what's going on here."

Cheryl Judd said she's been GlowGolfing multiple times with her 4-year-old daughter, Jacalyn.

"We've been here five times," she said. "It's fun to have an activity to do in the winter. It's close to a lot of other fun things."

Eleven-year-old Hanna Fitzgerald was having a blast.

"It's pretty cool," she said. "Everything glows. I like golf and I like doing crazy obstacles."

But it turns out it wasn't the mini-golf that won my daughter's seal of approval. Riley said her favorite part of GlowGolf was the newest attraction, a laser maze where players have to climb through a gauntlet of laser beams like a cat burglar, and are graded on how many beams they break. Riley broke two.

Manager Rachael Fogarty said she has fans who come in twice a week.

"We get a lot of frequent customers," she said. "A lot of birthday parties, word of mouth, things like that. We try to make the birthday parties great, so the moms and kids come back."

The Natick store has been open for a year, and there are also stores at the Hanover Mall, the Solomon Pond Mall in Marlboro and at the Mall at Whitney Field in Leominster.

"It's cheerful, but not too overstimulating," said parent Allyson Hopkins.

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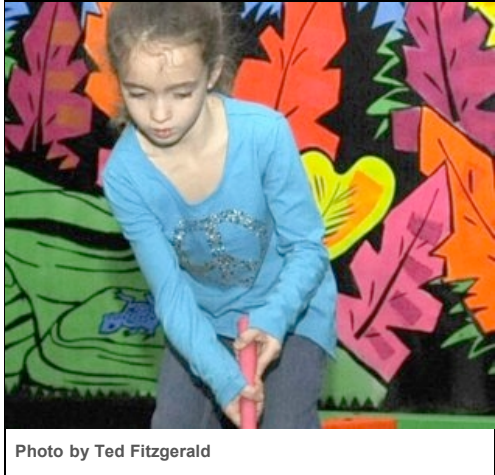
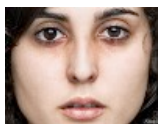


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