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PGA Best Practices: Women & Golf

February 2, 2017

Rob McNamara on Women & Golf: Create a Women's Golf Program That Builds Skills Over Time



Rob McNamara, the PGA head golf professional at the Farmington Country Club in Charlottesville, Virginia, is the 2001 and 2008 Middle Atlantic PGA Section Merchandiser of the Year for Private Facilities and the 2007 Ping National Club Fitter of the Year.

Rob McNamara on the importance of creating a women's golf program that builds skills over time: At the Farmington Country Club, we support PGA initiatives in an effort to grow the game of golf. One particular program that we adopted and adapted to meet our members' needs has proven greatly successful. The First Swing was originally geared toward a co-ed audience, but registration at our club was primarily comprised of women. So we took the name and tweaked the format, and we now have a flourishing and vibrant women's golf program. What was introduced as a way to get new golfers into the game has done that and more at Farmington Country Club. First Swing introduces the participants to the basics of the game. It is followed by Second Swing, a reinforcement of the principles learned in the introductory sessions. From there the women go to the First Round, which puts them on the course, applying their newfound skills, playing full rounds of golf. The final stepping stone in our women's program is First Tournament. These sessions introduce competition into the rounds. We have found that this progression at four weeks per session gives the participants adequate time to grasp the content learned in each session, while continuously building on what was previously covered. After golf, the women spend time socializing, talking about their rounds, and enjoying a drink of the week. At Kentucky Derby time, we serve mint juleps, Cinco de Mayo brings out the margaritas, and sometimes we just have beer. Each program is as popular as the next. Following the PGA's lead on First Swing has had lasting effects at our club.

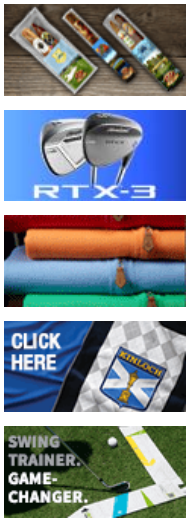
Rob McNamara on the business impact of creating a women's golf program that builds skills over time: With four different levels of learning, and women always looking to sign up, we run several sessions concurrently. We limit the

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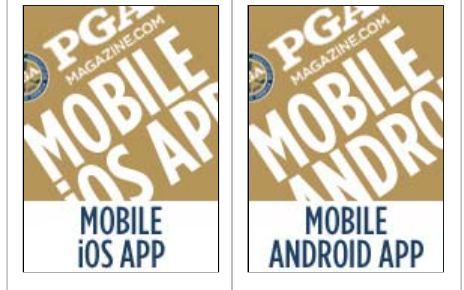
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sessions to 20 women each. So that's 60 participants learning the game and improving their skills at any one time. Each four-week session costs \$150 per student. At 20 students per session, that's considerable revenue for our club. With each student ideally working her way through all four sessions, we are looking at \$600 in revenue from each participant. These funds are divided between the instruction, food & beverage, and even some prizes from the golf shop to be awarded after the First Tournament program. In between sessions, and even between lessons, the women are coming to the club to play and practice, increasing rounds and cart revenue, as well and food & beverage and golf shop sales. We took a program introduced by the PGA on a national level and made it work for us, and all aspects of our club are benefitting. We're also making golfers out of women who never dreamed they could play like they are, and that's the best part.

If you would like to email the author of this Best Practice directly, please email rmcnamara@fccva.com

Editor's note: The above comments reflect the opinion and experiences of the submitting PGA Professional and are not endorsed by PGA Magazine or the PGA of America.



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