

# Case Study

**How your club can take the lead in growing female participation**

May 2018



## Introduction

Since 2011, there has been a 16% decline in the number of female members at golf clubs across New Zealand and currently just 23% of club members and approximately 10% of casual participants are female. Research has shown that women are the key decision makers in regard to what families do with their

leisure time and money, and represent an important opportunity for golf as a sport and an industry. NZ Golf's 'She Loves Golf' campaign recognises the opportunity to embrace this market segment and aims to inspire more New Zealand women to participate in the game of golf.

## A Long-Term Approach to Growing Female Participation

Russley Golf Club in Christchurch is taking a long-term approach to growing female participation through their regular involvement in the She Loves Golf campaign. Success is measured by a participant's ongoing engagement in the game and the club has provided a pathway that recognises an individual's learning style and motivation for getting into golf by offering a range of coaching and playing options. The Women's Committee along with PGA professional, Jess Reid, have worked together to develop and provide opportunities that will continue to keep women engaged and enjoying the game. "She Loves Golf has given us a clear pathway for bringing women to our club and the game. It's fun, friendly and so encouraging to see beginners get hooked on this great game" said Bridget Hoffman, Women's Club Captain – Russley Golf Club.

### Encouraging Women to Try Golf

A recent global study asked female non-golfers what would encourage them to give golf a try. The top three responses were;

- A free give golf a go session
- Easy access to affordable lessons
- A relaxed atmosphere

Russley has worked hard to ensure their pathway for women ticks all the boxes. During the 2017 She Loves Golf campaign, the club ran a 'Fore the Ladies' taster event which attracted over 40 women. Russley along with other clubs in the district engaged with Canterbury Golf to promote their club taster events at the regional She Loves Golf launch. The regional event was the perfect springboard for launching the campaign in Canterbury and many of those women who attended that event were looking for more opportunities to give golf a go. The club also used social media and engaged with their members to spread the word about She Loves Golf at Russley.

At the club taster event, the emphasis was on providing a welcoming and relaxed atmosphere that gave the women confidence and made them feel comfortable in what can be an unknown and sometimes intimidating environment for first timers. The club chose an evening coinciding with its popular twilight golf which always brings a vibrant atmosphere to the club.





**Social:** A gazebo was set-up on the practice range with drinks, nibbles and She Loves Golf goodie bags to welcome the ladies and set a relaxed tone for the event. After some social time, the women were split into four groups to start their golf experience.

**Learning:** Stations were set up on the range and short game area with sessions run by golf professionals and volunteer coaches covering putting, chipping and long game. The women were also given a tour of the clubhouse and golf shop to help familiarise them with the facilities and friendly faces at the club.

## The Next Step

The club was proactive about collecting contact details from participants at the taster event in order to engage with them about options to take the next step. Recognising that these women were at varying stages along the pathway meant offering a range of affordable and flexible coaching and playing options.

- **Summer Coaching and Playing Sessions:** A weekly program allowing women to come along and pay on the day without having to commit to a series of lessons. The program provided the option to learn the basics on the practice fairway with a golf professional or head out on course to play a few holes with other participants and a buddy.
- **Women's Clinics:** Group coaching clinics offered to She Loves Golf participants covering the basic skills. The clinics also facilitated the opportunity for participants to meet and engage with other women learning the game.
- **Coaching and Course Access Package:** An affordable package including lessons (individual or group) and access to the golf course.
- **Flexible Membership Options:** Affordable alternatives to full membership.

## Results

42

### PARTICIPANTS

The taster event attracted 42 women

20-25

### ONGOING

Over 20 women attended ongoing coaching & playing sessions

5

### NEW MEMBERS

The 2017 She Loves Golf campaign brought 5 new members to the club.

## Conclusion

Research shows there is a widely held perception among non-golfers that you have to commit to a membership to play golf and that, combined with expensive equipment, getting started can be a costly exercise. There is an opportunity for golf clubs to take a customer-focused approach that can successfully appeal and engage women in golf through offering taster sessions and flexible, affordable options for learning and playing the game.

Results from golf clubs participating in the She Loves Golf campaign suggest that increased female participation can be achieved by taking a long-term approach to growing the game.

For more information on running a She Loves Golf event at your club, you can contact the Community Golf team at NZ Golf on 09 485 3230 or your Regional Support Manager.

