

GENDER EQUITY, TEE TIMES & MEMBERSHIP OPTIONS.

Gender Equity is the process of allocating resources, programs and decision-making fairly to both males and females. This requires ensuring that everyone has access to a full range of opportunities to achieve the social and physical benefits that come from participating in sport and physical activity. It does not necessarily mean making the same opportunities and facilities available to both males and females. Gender equity requires that girls and women be provided with a full range of activity and program choices that meet their needs, interests and experiences. Therefore, some options may be the same as those offered to boys and men, some may be altered, and some may be altogether different.

While many golf clubs already offer equitable membership opportunities for both males and females, some clubs continue to offer membership options and playing opportunities that may meet the needs of their current core membership but fail to measure up to the expectations of prospective members, future generations of golfers and the wider community. For those clubs that are yet to address the issue of gender equity, the process of implementing change can often be more of a barrier than the actual change itself. For the most part, the issue of gender equity in golf clubs in New Zealand relates to the allocation of time slots and the opportunity for equal playing access for both males and females. In order to facilitate a smooth transition, a staged approach to introducing change involving ongoing consultation with members will assist in getting member buy-in.

Below is the process that can be used at your club to generate gender equitable tee times and membership options:

THE PROCESS



The Steps Broken Down

1) Establish a Working Group

Identify a champion for positive change from within the Board or Committee who can drive the process. The next step is to establish a working group of 4-6 people which reflects the diversity of the membership including males, females, the younger demographic and possibly ethnic subsets. If your club employs staff in a management or golf operations capacity, it is important that they are also represented on the working group. The objective of the working group is to review the constitution, membership options and benefits, and make recommendations around ensuring males and females are treated fairly without discrimination on the basis of sex and address any imbalances in the benefits of membership available to males and females.

Life outside of golf clubs has changed a great deal in recent years with different work habits, variable working hours, longer commutes and modern attitudes to family life. Therefore, the scope of the working group would ideally extend to reviewing the suitability of membership options to meet the needs of a changing society beyond just gender equity.

2) Communicate with Members

The members of club should be communicated with throughout the process to ensure they clearly understand the reasoning for undertaking the review, the steps of the process and that the opportunity will be available to provide input and feedback on the changes. Members of the working group, Board, Committees and staff are change agents within a club and must be seen to be supporting the process.

3) Establish the Facts

In order for the working group to make informed recommendations, the group needs to have access to quality information. Especially where gender equity relates to equitable playing opportunities for males and females, larger clubs running close to full capacity should undertake an analysis of time slots to create an accurate picture of the likely impact that changes will have.

The working group should also understand expectations around membership from outside of the club. Have prospective members been discouraged from joining due to the current structure of memberships? Have members left the club due to limitations around playing opportunities for females, couples and families? How do funders view the club's current policies?

4) Provide a Trial Period

A staged approach to implementing change at the club around gender equity would assist in getting member buy-in and provide a platform for refining the proposed changes. Gender equity does not necessarily advocate that males and females should play together but does require that both males and females have access to prime time slots. However, clubs do need to consider that society has evolved and in order to broaden the appeal of the game and golf club membership, males and females should also have the opportunity to play golf together in prime time slots. A trial period giving both males and females equitable access to time slots on the tee sheet with some mixed times available would provide an opportunity to measure the impact of the changes and allow members to experience the shift towards gender equity.

5) Analyse the Outcome of the Trial and Collect Member Feedback

An analysis of the trial should be undertaken to ensure that the working group is informed about the actual impact of the trial on access to time slots. For the majority of clubs where capacity in prime time slots is not an issue with current levels of membership, the impact on access should be limited. Members should be given the opportunity to provide feedback on the changes and trial through a survey with staff, Board and Committee members also keeping note of the any oral feedback from members. Ultimately the outcome of the trial along with member feedback will assist in shaping the working group's final recommendations.

6) Communicate Findings

The working group should communicate its findings and recommendations to the Board or Committee. It is important that the Board or Committee continue to be mindful that the objective of the working group is not to determine whether gender equity practices should be implemented but rather how best to address any imbalances moving forward.

Adding a gender equity clause to the club's Constitution will require a motion proposing to alter the constitution to be discussed and voted on at an AGM or SGM. Depending on a club's Constitution, a club's Board or Committee may be empowered to change membership categories without altering to the Constitution.

7) Deliver Outcomes

Ultimately, your club will require the courage to implement the recommended findings, if you have followed the process above you should be in a good position to do so.

Would you like further support on delivering this?

Please contact the New Zealand Golf Community Golf Team: 09 485 3230