

1. What name would you give a new women's golf program?

Get Active Get Golfing

2. How would you describe the new women's golf program?

This program is a combination of walking, exercising and playing games that are actually golf drills. Golf has always been described as a good walk in the park so why not combine the benefits of a walk in the park with the twisting and turning that a golf swing requires. It can all be kept low impact and done at your own pace but it will get people outside off their backsides and doing something. Golfing can be described as a healthy pursuit, a social outing, a networking opportunity, a challenge (mentally and physically) and it can be competitive as well. Get Active Get Golfing is designed to be a low impact exercise/activity whilst learning the different aspects that make up playing golf. The aim being that participants get active (more healthy) and get golf (an understanding)by becoming engaged in doing drills in a game format and not just standing and hitting golf balls on a driving range. This program is adaptable/inclusive so as to fit all ages and all sizes. It would fit in with any community program e.g. local councils, heart foundation, diabetes or obesity charities /foundations. It can be done anywhere from the course to public park a car park, school oval basketball court or indoors. Which would mean it can be utilised in any weather and any climate.

3. How would the new program be run and by who?

This program can be run by the local club pro, an accredited community coach or some proficient golfers. The program would work as follows- It is designed to be a combination of walking and exercising some golf instruction and a lot of doing in a game/circuit format. It is meant to be about moving and activity and learning what golf is about (i.e. get golfing). People learn best if they are kept engaged and happy. The best way to develop new skills is to teach them through drills and games. There are three components to this program - walking/exercise - golf instruction - warm down/introduction to playing on the course.

1. Walking and exercise - a golf course is just an open space park, go for a walk around the course or part there of (power walk for more advanced) do warm up and stretching exercises and core strengthening exercises. Nothing high impact just some movement and fun under the guise of loosening up for golf but really exercising.

2. Golf Instruction - most golf instruction revolves around just that instruction, the coach / pro shows them how to do it ,whilst people stand/sit around and watch, then they line up on the range and bang balls off to varying degrees of success. This program varies that by reinforcing the instruction by playing skill based games at differing degrees of difficulty .This game i will refer to as "circuit golf". The basic gist of circuit golf is to keep moving whilst practising /learning in short sharp bursts. A circuit is set up with about nine stations involving one skill each .The skills are taken from four main areas of hitting, pitching, chipping and putting. For example hitting -driver-practice nett- beginner level-six shots into the nett along the ground in the air doesn't matter -move onto the next station e.g. 2 putting- practice green - balls 20cm from the hole in a circle - putt the balls in the hole - move on to next station .Initially the clinics would have more time on instruction but it should be - this is how to do it have a few tries now off you go do the circuit. The stations can be biased to one area e.g. hitting - six stations -driver ,3 wood 5 wood,hybrid,6 iron 8 iron - six shots at each station .When the circuit is complete back to the coach - discuss problems and reinforce the successes work on the problems . Circuit golf can be turned into a competition by adding a

scoring system - a team's event by splitting into groups and adding up the individual scores for a group total. Having a score card and sending the participants out in pairs will introduce other aspects of golf as well. If the individual scores are kept per station and spread sheeted then it would allow for tracking of strengths and weaknesses. The stations' degrees of difficulty can be varied to match participants development e.g. hitting -driver -beginner - just hit the net level 2 hit the net on the full, level 3 hit a target on the net. Keep it short and sharp and fun eg to teach balance hit the ball with a basket ball between your knees. The circuit needs to be kept moving and success orientated whilst staying away from standing around a practice fairway hitting balls into wide open spaces.

3. Warm down - introduce the golf holes - take a couple of clubs e.g. a driver and putter hit a drive or two from the tee no consequences no score go pick em up walk up to the green have a few putts on the green from varying distances again no consequence just praise the good ones do a couple of holes then walk back to the club. This keeps them moving but draws the skill drills into a conclusion and gives them some meaning but has no score so no pressure of consequences. The biggest discouragement I believe for a beginner is taking 10 shots and still not being on the green.

4. Where would the new women's golf program be conducted? (E.g. golf course, public park, gym etc.)

The obvious place is the golf course but with the circuit golf it can be adapted to fit almost anywhere from the practice fairway to the clubhouse. It can be conducted in a public space or even in a car park or an indoor venue basket ball court or indoor cricket venue. All that would change is the equipment plastic practice balls, felt putting matts artificial grass hitting matts hitting netts etc. These things can be made or purchased. Juniors can even have plastic clubs sourced through commercial outlets.

5. What should the program duration be? (Session times, number of weeks etc)

Traditionally 18 holes takes 4 hours and 9 holes takes 2 hours. Initially I would recommend no more than 2 hours for a session but as participant's progress the time can be increased to allow more course time .Program duration shouldn't be structured to say a six week block. This is where i feel people are lost because they haven't gained enough confidence to become a member. I believe this program should be looked at as more a conveyor belt and participants travel along it until they are confident to go play on the course. Circuit golf is a game within a game and its difficulty can be staggered to caterer for different abilities .It is set up to be in three levels beginner intermediate and competent people will reach those levels at different times and the scoring system will reflect that. As they get through the circuit quicker and score well the degree of difficulty goes up plus the time spent on course in stage three would increase to where they played a hole to two holes etc. Eventually the focus then can be shifted to the course and at this point the coach would hand people over to the club as membership ready. I would imagine it would take twelve to sixteen weeks. I believe that it should be an ongoing program and the participants will decide when they are ready to move on. For a club pro or a coach there focus can shift from coaching principles technique to supervising and assisting and there would be a point where they step back and allow members to take over as mentors even playing ambrose with them to take the pressure off and to teach rules and etiquette .

6. What would a reasonable cost of the new women's golf program be?

The cost of this program to participants could be zero. A walk in the park is free, if a small club with no pro to pay could run this program with volunteers for free. I would recommend charging a fee so the participants get used to paying something so as they are ready for comp fees and memberships when the time comes. For larger clubs that have a pro to pay i would envisage a cost of ten to maybe fifteen dollars. The cost to a club or school would depend upon what equipment they needed if they had nets etc .Indoors would require more equipment but a handy person could make up a net using shade cloth on a wire but all the equipment is commercially available. A great benefit of circuit golf is only a limited amount of clubs would be needed so participants would not need to buy them first. Each station only needs one club its used and left there for the next person. A point in itself that would be beneficial to increasing participation at the start .

7. Is there any other information you would like to add?

Including the activity movement aspect to golf I believe will make golf sound more attractive to people wanting low impact activity. Circuit golf will make learning more fun and less daunting and will engage the participants more, Frustration leads to quitting small successes leads to more success and more participation. Circuit golf by itself would be great for juniors to start off and the older lady could still participate by doing the walking and circuit golf and playing a few holes . Increasing participation could also be a matter of timing working women find it almost impossible to play golf. Womens golf is used traditionally to fill a quiet midweek day .Which excludes the working woman i suggest that clinics be run both midweek and on weekends and by just doing that you may increase female participation enormously .This will require a change in attitude from a male dominated golfing community that have traditionally seen Saturday as their day. I have three sisters who could not play competition golf because there was no female golf on Saturdays so they started a softball competition that is still running 30 years later .However, golf was their first choice ,the small country town they live in still only has a small female golfing contingent who play mid week .