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Caught on the game

In a sign of health for the industry, the vast majority of adult golfers (84 percent) say they’re hooked on the game or want to be. In our 2007 consumer survey we posed the question: “Even if you don’t play golf very often, would you say you are hooked on golf?” Almost three-quarters (72 percent) indicated they’re hooked, whatever that term might mean to them. Another 12 percent said they’re likely to be hooked in the future.

Hooked golfers play and spend three to four times more than nonhooked golfers - all the more reason to try to get them hooked.

The 6.8 million golfers who say they’re not hooked are far more likely to say they’re intimidated or embarrassed at the golf course. So, efforts to make these players feel more comfortable could have a substantial return on investment.

Source: National Golf Foundation

INTERESTING FACTS about golfers not hooked on golf

- 44% are intimidated by other players
- 20% are intimidated by the environment in general
- 13% are embarrassed by their lack of knowledge of etiquette
- 16% are intimidated by facility staff
- 51% are embarrassed by their lack of skill
- 15% are embarrassed by their lack of knowledge of the rules

GOLFER PROFILES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Hooked now</th>
<th>Not hooked now but likely to be in the future</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of adult golfers</td>
<td>17.2 million</td>
<td>2.9 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% female</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average age</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average score</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average rounds</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average equipment spending 2006*</td>
<td>$254</td>
<td>$89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intimidated by players/staff/environment</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Embarrassed by lack of skill/knowledge</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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After 35 years on the job, Wisconsin's Monroe Miller plans to move on

By Pat Jones

I have a confession to make: Monroe Miller pisses me off.

It's irritating the guy can write circles around me, a so-called professional journalist. But he also can grow grass with the best of them, has stayed in the same job for almost 40 years, is a stalwart supporter of his university and has provided mentorship and wisdom to hundreds of young people and peers throughout his career. And he's a great guy.

It's just not fair. Miller is a thorn in the side of full-time golf/turf writers like me. That's why we've all banded together to petition to force him into retirement at the end of this year.
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Sandy Kurceba, Director of Golf
Falcon Lake Golf Course, Falcon Beach, MB
32' x 120' Legend® building
Monroe Miller is proud of his contributions to his alma mater, University of Wisconsin-Madison, and of his advocacy for the golf course superintendents in Wisconsin. Photo: Chad Kempf
good care of his baby. He’s looking forward to traveling with his wife, Cheryl, and not sweating about article and ad deadlines every day.

**Do you ever wonder if you could have gone into journalism full-time?**

I thought about it when I was in high school. I enjoyed English, took forensics and made the state championship in play reading. I loved speaking and writing. But I didn’t like the idea of someone telling me what to write. I couldn’t get into the idea of being assigned a story, so I probably wouldn’t have been a good reporter. I wanted to jump right to being a columnist. A column is great because you don’t have to worry about it. If readers like it, they like it. If they don’t, they don’t.

**For you, what’s the most difficult thing about writing?**

I love to write long. The difficult part is to write short. Mark Twain once said, in a letter to a friend, “I’m sorry this letter is so long. I didn’t have time to write a short one.”

**What article are you most proud of?**

That’s an interesting question because you forget so much of what you write. The one I probably remember best was “A Super Girl.” It was a tribute to my wife written on my 25th wedding anniversary. It evoked a reaction from so many people. You have to be a special person to be married to any of us in golf, because we’re not around much. She never complained about me being gone, the fact the lawn wasn’t mowed, etc. Cheryl and I are two hearts beating in one line. We both love the same things.

**How difficult is it to get other superintendents to write articles?**

I quit asking a long time ago because I was afraid I would actually get one. Often they weren’t the best, and I’d spend more time rewriting them than I would if I’d just written it myself in the first place. So, I’d pretty much just ask the guys I knew who could write. And don’t get me started on president’s messages. Back in the days of fax machines, I’d get these six-page-long faxed messages from the president that I was supposed to boil down to one page. It’s a failure of our education system. I sometimes wonder if good writing is going to be a thing of the past in 20 years.

**How do you encourage others, particularly younger guys, to get involved in chapter leadership?**

The only ones I can influence are the guys who are close to me, and I can only do it by example. I talk constantly about how the guys who influenced me did those things. The young guys just need to get started. The chapter presidency is an eight-year commitment. It’s just shitwork mostly — paperwork, meeting notices and such.

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It's not difficult. You have to have the sense of service and commitment. I haven’t noticed it’s much different than two decades ago. Some understand the obligation, some don’t. My only advice is to just do something.

**What have you tried to teach the UW-Madison students who have worked for you throughout the years?**

We’re lucky to be in a university town with a turf program. But we have strict rules. If you’re late three times, you’re out. It’s a bit of a shock for them, but it’s the best thing to do for them. I’ve taken advantage of my proximity to the school. About 100 former employees of mine are in the business or are superintendents.

Monroe Miller was the unpaid editor of The Grass Roots, official publication of the Wisconsin GCSA, for 24 years. Photo: Chad Kempf

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