



*Think it over before you
put Mrs. Jones and Mrs.
Smith in the same foursome*

Women Players! They Need Understanding

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The pro can't run away and hide from women golfers any more. That day — or those days — are gone forever. It isn't necessary to cite any playing statistics saying why he can't. All he has to do is look around his club. Women are all over the place — not only on Ladies Day, but every day of the week. What percentage of the rounds do women at your club play in a season's time — 30, 40, 50? Or, possibly more?



O'Brien

Whether you are for or against the trend of the last five years or so doesn't make much difference any more. You're trapped, hemmed in, inundated, surrounded on all sides. You just don't have a choice these days unless you're able to pull some strings and end up at some rustic "For Men Only" clubs. But even they are disappearing simply because the women have discovered them.

So, why not face it? You can't get along without them if you're going to remain a golf pro. Try to understand them.

Little Togetherness

I'm not an expert on women, but as far as golf goes I've studied them from several angles — psychological, that is. I

still don't understand them completely but, at least, I want to pass along some observations I've made about them.

Let's take social togetherness. Generally, men seem to have a knack for it, probably because they have no other choice if they are going to make a living. But women don't have to be gregarious. They can pick the friends they want and reject those with whom they don't care to associate.

To some degree this female trait, or perhaps it is a privilege, can be exercised on a golf course. You can't put just any women in a foursome; you have to be selective in deciding who is going to play with whom. The unhappiest women I've seen haven't been necessarily perturbed about their golf games but with the other ladies with whom they have been paired.

Undesirable Traits

There are many reasons why some women golfers don't like other women golfers. Some of the gals are considered undesirable because they cheat, wear their shorts too short, overdress, gossip too much, take too many lessons from the handsome pro (that's you), take too much time, lack courtesy, spend too much time in the cocktail lounge or have distracting playing habits, etc., etc. You're well aware of all the failings and complaints.

But in addition to being familiar with these, I say that you have to know your women. That means that you have to keep your ears open and absorb some of the discussions of the various female person-

alities around the club (in other words, listen to the gossip) so that you know which women can be put in the same foursomes and which ones can't. Maybe you think you are above this petty business. Is so, you had better change your thinking. It is important that you know how to make those Ladies Day and tournament pairings agreeable to everyone.

Say, for example, you put Mrs. Jones and Mrs. Smith in the same foursome. Maybe they are carrying on what amounts to a feud. They may or may not play together after you put them in the same camp. But you can be sure of one thing! You have aroused their animosity by even thinking of putting them in the same group. It can hurt you, businesswise. One or the other may boycott you and persuade her friends to do the same. Have you ever had one of the gals "disappear" for a few weeks or maybe months, or when she comes in the pro shop, avoid you and stand back until one of your assistants is free to wait on her?

Don't Mislead Them!

As for the actual playing of the game, I feel that we have to use psychology in teaching it or discussing it with women.

I'm certainly not telling you anything when I say most women are too serious about learning to play golf, or in improving their skills. But the majority of them either aren't strong enough or aren't equipped to play the game very well. We know that. Yet, many of us — probably a majority — go along giving them assurance that they will improve. Some of us are even unscrupulous enough to hold out the hope that they are going to become good golfers. I certainly don't condemn a pro for trying to be an inspirational kind of teacher. But he should be honest along with it, letting his woman player or student know that she has limitations, and ultimately will be capable of playing the game only with a certain amount of skill.

Seek Satisfaction

Where the woman golfer is involved, I say let's change some of our thinking. Let's get her to thinking more about her short game and perfecting it, emphasizing that as much pleasure and satisfaction can be derived from a well placed chip shot or deftly stroked putt as from a long drive. Many women never are going to experience the thrill of the latter, anyway, so why not condition them to think of golf as

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a game of medium and short shots? It's not going to be easy because we and everyone else have done little all these years except emphasize the power aspect.

Two or three years ago, Doug Ford wrote a book in which he repeatedly suggested, "Learn to play within yourself." That phrase was worth the price of admission. It's one that I think we should use frequently in teaching and talking golf with women. I know that I have used it quite often, trying to drive home the point that if the lady golfer plays for the most part to her own satisfaction, that is all she can ask. I have been able to persuade quite a few of my women players that that is the most satisfying approach to the game, but there is still a pretty large number that remain to be converted.

As exasperating as our women golfers can be sometimes, I think we all have to agree that they are an interesting study. And, as I have suggested before, study them you must! They are an increasingly important influence at our clubs from a recreational, economic and social standpoint, and the day of suffering them or taking them lightly is gone.

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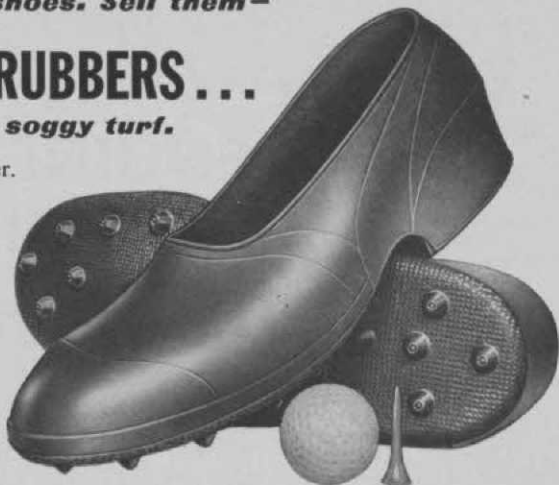
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