



“If you want to figure out how to get more women into the game of golf and keep them there you should ask one particular group: women.”

MARK WOODWARD, *Contributing Editor*

Shouldn't ladies lead the way to golf growth?

Women have played a role in golf dating back to the 16th century when Mary, Queen of Scots, and one of the first recorded golfers commissioned the construction of the first golf course at St. Andrews, Scotland. According to some history books she was also one of the first to coin the word caddie. It then took a long, long time before the first recorded women's golf tournament happened and even longer for the first women's golf association to be formed. It seems rather odd to me that women played such a big role in the foundation of golf yet it isn't translating into a strong presence within the game today.

The cover story of this issue is on ways to get more women involved in the game today and therefore helping grow the game. I was talking to a female colleague in the golf industry and she caused me to look at the entire subject of women and golf a little differently in the matter of a few short minutes.

If you look at the history of the golf industry, in general, there are very few women in high-level positions. Granted there are a lot of women in our industry but they're not in positions of authority. Whether we want to admit it or not, the golf industry in the United States is still a “men's

club” in this regard. Sorry, but it's the truth.

My point is, if you want to figure out how to get more women into the game of golf and keep them there you should ask one particular group: WOMEN. You need to find out what they want out of the game, what makes them happy to come to the golf course on a regular basis, what you need to do to make them feel wanted, how to reduce the intimidation factor and most importantly how to make the game of golf fun for them — like the National Women's Golf Al-

liance is doing (see page 16.) And even more important, we need to encourage women to be in positions of authority and take a leading role in the decision making process about the future of our game. In my opinion women in power positions will bring more women into the game. And my colleague brought up a great point: “Where there are more women, there are more men!”

I remember several years ago I was involved in the National Institute for Golf Management, a golf management institute held in Wheeling, West Virginia at Oglebay Resort. When I first

got on the Board of Regents, it was all men. The best move we made in the 18 years I was part of the institute was to get women on the Board of Regents. They brought such a different perspective to our discussions and let's face it; in many cases they are just flat-out smarter than us guys. This move alone changed the dynamic of the board and we instantly got better at everything we did.

As mentioned, for hundreds of years there have been women in golf. In fact, all the way back to the very beginning of this great game, yet here we are today still trying to figure out the solution to a very important issue in our industry. After all, if you look at the past census for the U.S. there are more women in the U.S. than men. In some years there are as many as 6 million more women than men.

It makes sense that if we as an industry could capture just a small percentage of these women and turn them into golfers, the industry would grow substantially. After all, women are responsible for 80-percent of consumer buying decisions in the U.S., according to the National Center for Education Statistics.

So, there you go. Another article with a man writing about how to get more women into the game of golf. Excuse me while I go ask my wife why she doesn't play golf.

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