



# golf

## NOT JUST **FORE** MEN

By Lauren Hurwitz

Often considered a sport for the elite, golf has seen a record number of new players in the past year. In 2020, the National Golf Foundation reported three million Americans tried the game of golf for the very first time – and the women of Westchester aren't missing out on the action.

Kate Wiedmar, Golf Shop Manager and Assistant Golf Professional at Winged Foot Golf Club in Mamaroneck says, "Before COVID, golf was kind of on the decline not only in this area but across the country to where courses were closing because it was getting to be a sport that takes almost five hours to play, it's expensive, and people just want to get stuff done fast! But then COVID hit, and you were limited to what you could do in your spare time, and we saw a complete change and are now experiencing a golf boom!" She adds that women are especially enjoying the game because it's a great way to get outside, exercise, and be social.

### *What to Expect When Golfing*

Not even Kathy Whitworth, arguably the greatest female golfer of all time, is showing up on her first day and hitting a hole in one. Sharon McQuillan, Director of Golf at Pleasantville Country Club, PGA and LPGA member, says one must embrace four components including taking lessons to learn proper form, investing in equipment especially quality graphite clubs, good physical fitness, and a positive mental attitude. Wiedmar adds that the sport takes a ton of patience to hone your craft.

McQuillan advises beginners to consider individualized lessons to learn the basics of how to hold a club in addition to proper stroke form. She says that depending on the course, a private lesson can start at around \$120 per hour. If a newbie really wants to get on the fast track to success, she can simultaneously sign up for a clinic to go beyond the basics. To pick a clinic, McQuillan suggests checking out the Westchester Chapters of the LGPA Amateur Association

([chapters.lpgaamateurs.com/chapter/NYWE](http://chapters.lpgaamateurs.com/chapter/NYWE)) where there are clinics such as "building the fundamentals," "taking your game to the next level" and "honing your skills." Likewise, players new or experienced can call one of the six public golf courses in Westchester, speak to the on-staff golf pro and ask about educational opportunities to advance their skills.

When going to the course to play, a typical game will take about five or so hours to play. Between warming up, playing 18 holes, and leaving time for lunch, it's easy to see how the sport can be time-consuming, be it for better or worse. Golfers should also expect the sport to cost them a pretty penny – even playing on the public courses. Clubs have gotten more expensive over the course of time. In fact, Wiedmar says one top-of-the-line driver may cost as much as \$600, and that's just for one club. With most serious players having 14 clubs in their bag, the cost can add up quickly. For those looking to just dip their toe in the green, McQuillan suggests

speaking to a golf pro for advice on brands and materials for a quality club that you might be able to buy on Ebay as starter clubs, and invest in a better set down the road once you become more comfortable with the game.

Before heading to the course, Wiedmar suggests checking the dress code. While the trend seems to be leaning towards trendier clothing at some courses, there are often strict rules regarding what is allowed and prohibited. Certain places do not allow players to wear tights, halter tops, short shorts, and rarely jeans.

### *Not an Old Man's Game*

A common misconception about golf is that you don't need to be in good physical shape. However, even if you're riding in a golf cart, McQuillan stresses the importance of being able to walk long distances up and down hills, stretch to relieve tightness, and have stamina. "With all of the twisting you're doing, you could put a wrench in your back because you're bent over and

putting a lot of strain on your lower back." Another misconception she often hears is that golf is a man's sport. "Women come to me and are very intimidated. They don't know what to do when they arrive or where to go, so I think signing up with LPGA Amateurs is a great avenue to get involved. Perhaps signing up for a beginner's league where someone with more experience will play with a group of new women, showing them not only how to play but also how to get around the course, basic etiquette of golf, how to check in at the pro shop, etc." Weidmar encourages women to avoid the misconception that the game is monotonous by adding in fun games and spicing up the game a bit, making your own rules.

### *It's Not All Fun and Games*

Local women golfers also take great pride in giving back to the community. Linda Boyer, Events Director for LPGA Amateurs in Westchester says every year, the organization hosts an annual fundraiser with different local charities as the recipient of the profits. This year, Katrine Beck of Fullerton Beck LLP and Denise Kulikowsky, will host the fundraiser in the name of Girls Inc.

of Westchester (GIW, girlsincwestchester.org) on June 13th at Salem Golf Club. The event is open to members and the public alike with fun contest holes for great prizes, a silent auction, and mingling with other players with the goal of raising as much money as possible for the selected charity. Other charities that have received funds from the annual event in recent years include My Sister's Place focused on domestic violence victims, ACDS school in Scarsdale for people with developmental disabilities, and other local organizations. "Golf is a really great way to clear my mind. I can't look at my phone on the course, so it gives me the opportunity to really be present, concentrate on something other than my practice (law), and engage with great company (the drinks on the course are great too!)," says Beck. "I have been fortunate to be involved with GIW since 2015 and as the Chair since 2019. It is truly an amazing organization that stands for everything I have fought for all my life and hope that by some contribution to this organization, I can help make a young girl's path to success just a little easier. As a female litigator who co-started a



Kate Wiedmar (and in photo to the left)

100% female owned law firm, I had my own struggles and had to learn to create my own "table"- I was fortunate to have people in my life to help mentor and navigate me. I want to make sure a young girl out there in Westchester who faces adversities in life - whether by virtue of race, gender, ethnicity,

religion, socioeconomic, sexual orientation, or other life circumstances - knows there is a sisterhood available to help her be strong, smart, and bold. I know that GIW helped me be that and I want to make sure I pay it forward."



## What You'll Need



A



B



C

A. Euforeia - Electric Poppies Women's Primo Glove, \$42 at [Euforeiagolf.com](http://Euforeiagolf.com)

B. Happiness Is Inc. - Happiness Is ... Golf (crew sweatshirt), \$89.95 at [HappinessIsInc.com](http://HappinessIsInc.com)

C. Callaway - Hyperlite Zero Single Strap Stand Bag, \$229.99 at [CallawayGolf.com](http://CallawayGolf.com)