



Growing the Game with Get Golf Ready

PGA Professional Cheryl Anderson is finding strong success with the Get Golf Ready program among women golfers

By Tony L. Starks

Cheryl Anderson (left) has utilized Get Golf Ready as a tool to grow women's participation at the Mike Bender Golf Academy.

Have you ever noticed that women joggers in your neighborhood are often in pairs, while men are usually running solo? Or that women prefer to hit the gym and work out with a friend, while at that same gym you'll find a guy by himself trying to bench press his body weight?

These are just some of the things that Cheryl Anderson points out when trying to explain why women make up 75 percent of the participants in the Get Golf Ready program at the Mike Bender Golf Academy in Lake Mary, Fla., where she is the lead PGA instructor.

"Women like to do things together, there's no question about that," says Anderson, the 2007 Metropolitan PGA Section Teacher of the Year and the 2006 LPGA Teacher of the Year. "It's the same thing with golf; they like being with other people, talking and socializing."

Anderson contends that the group element of Get Golf Ready acts as a motivator for her women participants. It's that extra push to encourage them to get out to the course. "Even as a golf professional, it helps to have another golfer to go play with; it's that pull to get you out there," she says. "We all like golf, but sometimes you just need someone else

there to give you a little nudge, and once you're out there you love it."

Anderson is also utilizing Get Golf Ready as a way to keep her students coming back to the facility by offering two additional levels of the program. Her Level 2 Get Golf Ready classes are more detail-specific on subjects such as swing mechanics and situational golf, while Level 3 is strictly on-course play and instruction.

"This way people can see that getting better at golf is an ongoing process," explains Anderson. "They want to get to that next level so they feel like they're accomplishing something. And even my existing students—experienced golfers—take the Level 3 class because it is a great value that supplements the lessons they are already taking."

The value element is one that Anderson always emphasizes to women students who express an interest in Get Golf Ready. Women enjoy a great bargain, and what better deal than \$99 for a series of five lessons with your friends?

That's one of the ways she goes about promoting the program to women. Another is by making sure the entire staff at the facility is knowledgeable and involved. "We're all a part of it," Anderson says. "It's ensuring that whoever answers the phones or is at the counter in the golf shop can fully explain what the program is about and how someone can get involved."

Anderson also ensures that promotional material, such as posters and brochures, are visible and readily available in different areas of the facility, and that a link to the program is easily accessible on the facility website.

"Get Golf Ready is so easy to implement for the PGA Professional ... Not to mention it's a great recruitment tool for building your clientele of women golfers." —Cheryl Anderson, PGA

"Get Golf Ready is so easy to implement for the PGA Professional. The marketing material is already provided," adds Anderson. "It benefits multiple areas of our facility. The range is definitely more active, as I often see participants out there practicing, buying range balls, booking more lessons and just spending more time at the facility in general."

"Not to mention that it's a great recruitment tool for building your clientele of women golfers. I've had a number of female Get Golf Ready participants join our ladies nine-hole group. And since they're here every week, their husbands are happy and taking lessons too." ■