

## Lisa "Longball" Vlooswyk

Lisa is a 7-Time Canadian Long Drive Champion for women and currently ranked top 5 in the world. Lisa is a golf entertainer at corporate and charity golf tournaments across North America, golf journalist, and a keynote motivational speaker. Contact Lisa at [www.lisalongball.com](http://www.lisalongball.com).



**T**he joke that GOLF stands for Gentleman Only Ladies Forbidden has been the source of many a chuckle on the fairway but it truly is no laughing matter when it comes to the business of golf. Women represent the largest potential growth area in golf. What is holding them back? There are many factors that affect the number of female golfers.

Typically, it has been known as more of a male dominated sport. Young girls often go into dance class, gymnastics, soccer or swimming. This needs to change. Golf course owners and operators need to market golf clinics, camps, lessons and fun days specifically for girls aged 5-17. If we can make golf fun, social, and exciting to young girls there is a good chance they will begin to play as juniors and continue to play as adults.

# The Parting Shot

## "Girl" No Longer A Four Letter Word

The fact that women leave the game once they have children and do not pick it up again until they are empty nesters also affect female numbers. This too needs to change. Golf courses can offer family nights in non-peak hours with games, prizes, and a format where children play best ball with their parents. There can also be couples or "date" night where there is a junior program running at the same time as tee times so parents can play 9 holes.

Furthermore, women are intimidated by the game, especially beginners. Facilities need to offer ladies night, not just at the beginning of the season but throughout the year, that includes a group golf instruction portion, an

educational portion such as rules clinics and etiquette, fashion shows throughout the year and wine. Women love to socialize. If we can educate women on the game in a relaxed and welcoming way, women will play golf.

Intimidation also comes on the tee box. When I tee it up from the blues with my husband I have had starters tell me the "ladies tees" are up ahead. This cannot happen. Women who can hit it over 200 yards should be backing up and some men should be moving up a box. This means rating all of your tees for course rating and slope for both men and women.

There also needs to be a focus on corporate women. I entertain at 30+ corporate and charity golf tournaments each year across Canada and in every market at least 70% of the field is male. Their female counterparts, many who

have been introduced to the game, are too intimidated to come out and play in a tournament. We need to have clinics to get women corporate or charity golf tournament ready and give them the basic tools to get out there and network with clients and colleagues.

Bringing more women into the game and making them feel welcome at golf courses will have a positive impact on all aspects of the golf industry and your bottom line.