



Golf Fore Gals members from left: Nancy Smeal, Diane Martel, Linda McLean and Karyn Rovers.

Women's club puts emphasis on having fun

BRAD ZIEMER
VANCOUVER SUN

These girls, or gals, just want to have fun.

Cyndi Lauper's early '80s anthem could well be the theme song for Golf Fore Gals, a Vancouver-based women's club that places an emphasis on enjoying what can be a difficult and frustrating game.

Company owner Diane Fru says making the game more enjoyable and accessible to women is one of the keys to growing the game.

"Two-thirds of our members are what we call social members or recreational members," Fru says.

"That means you have an inkling about the rules but if they use the odd hand wedge or the odd foot wedge it's not a sin. They are out

there to have some fun.

"We're trying to invite women to the game and once they get here we have to make sure they are welcomed."

Statistics indicate the industry hasn't been doing a particularly good job of that.

A 2012 study published by National Allied Golf Associations found that about 30 per cent of 5.7 million Canadians who play golf are women. But that study also found that women are leaving the sport at a higher rate than men and cited a variety of reasons, including family obligations, time constraints, feeling intimidated and unwelcome in a male-dominated environment and a lack of other women with which to play.

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Additional Golf Fore Gals members from left: Angela Rey, Sharon Niven and Diana Sturhahn.

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Fru says Golf Fore Gals, which has been in existence since 1999, is trying to address some of those concerns.

"Time is an issue for women, so one of the things we are trying this year at Mayfair Lakes in Richmond is something we are calling 6 after 6," Fru says.

"That means six holes after 6 o'clock ... We are hoping this will attract women to come out and play six holes and then maybe go back into the restaurant for a glass of wine or something to eat."

Golf Fore Gals has three membership categories. In addition to the aforementioned social category, there is a beginner division, which includes lessons as well as a rules and etiquette seminar, and a Golf Canada/Handicap division that allows more serious players to track their handicaps.

Golf Fore Gals is affiliated with more than 60 B.C. golf courses, including Metro Vancouver layouts like Mayfair Lakes, Morgan Creek Golf Course, Greenacres, Country Meadows, Redwoods and University. It has four B.C. chapters: Vancouver, Fraser Valley, Thompson-Okanagan and

"Golf Fore Gals is about much more than just golf. It's also about women, community, friendship, sharing and having fun."

DIANE FRU
GOLF FORE GALS OWNER

Victoria-Gulf Islands.

Members pay an annual membership fee, which is \$180 for social members, and have access to tee times and events through the Golf Fore Gals website.

Fru says it's an excellent way for women to connect with other women for golf.

"Golf Fore Gals is about much more than just golf," Fru says.


"It's also about women, community, friendship, sharing and having fun."

For more information, visit golfforegals.com.

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