

# AT THE GLASS CEILING

As their ranks grow,  
women golfers swing away  
at male-only barriers

By TRACIE CONE  
Herald Staff Writer

**S**ome club-wielding businesswomen trying to crack through the glass ceiling at work are betting that a lobbying-chip shot might do it. As more business deals are negotiated over a struggle for a par than a martini at a bar, more women are seeing golf carts as their vehicles for success.

For the first time in golf's history, the sport is growing faster among women than men. Of the 28 million people who call themselves golfers, nearly one-fourth are now women. Many of the new players are businesswomen who hope that having a sport in common with their bosses and colleagues will be good for their careers.

"Unfortunately, it's still a man's world, and you have to be able to play their game," says Victoria Moore, a vice president at NCNB in Fort Lauderdale.

She is able to play their game — unless, of course, the men are getting together to play on a Saturday morning at Coral Ridge Country Club in Fort Lauderdale or at Riviera Country Club in Coral Gables, to name two places. In that case, Moore could not play, and it would have nothing to do with her abilities.

As business is still a man's world, golf is still a man's sport. Many country clubs have barriers against women. They'll take a woman's money, but ban her from the golf course on Saturday mornings, the most popular time to play. No women, no matter what. Even if there was a vacant tee time, a woman couldn't play. Even if it were pouring rain and nobody else wanted to play, a woman couldn't. It's tradition: Men only.

"Men work all week long," says Howard Zimmerman, general manager of Emerald Hills, where women can't tee off on Saturdays until 11:30 a.m. "They can only play on two days. Women are not working. They can play any one of the weekdays. Women that play



DAVID GRAFF / Miami Herald

## 'Pandemonium' followed invasion of male turf

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**L**uce Lowell thought that the rule reserving her country club's golf course for men only on Saturdays was stupid. And sexist. So she got an exception.

This is what else she got: cursed at, spit at and urinated at.

The Long Island club changed the men-only rule for Lowell, but male club members were livid that she had dug her spikes into their turf. Lowell, who spends winters in Boynton Beach, describes that day:

"A group of men in golf carts followed me to the hole where I was supposed to start. They started yelling obscenities at me. . .

"I tried to ignore them, but they kept yelling and following me around the course while I was trying to play. It was pandemonium for the next two hours. I'd hit a ball, and they'd steal it. One man pulled out his penis and urinated on the ground in front of me. Then they sped to the tee ahead of me and blocked it. I went to another hole; they followed me.

"I'd tee up a ball, and they'd knock it off the tee. On one hole they surrounded my cart. I was alone, but I was determined not to let them run me off. One man kicked my ball off the tee and screamed in my face that I'd never play



E COHN BAND / Miami Herald Staff

ing is growing so fast  
ro Tina Bruce, right,  
night for women.

# It's tee time for women golfers

The days are gone when men alone stand around water coolers practicing air swings

## GOLFERS, FROM 13

golf don't work."

"That just blows me away that that is still being done in this day and age," says Tina Bruce, a golf teacher at Golf Club of Miami, a nondiscriminatory course.

"Some men still don't like to see them out there," says Tom O'Brien, head pro at Dade's Fontainebleau Golf Course, which doesn't reserve Saturdays for men.

Though it's more prevalent up North, where old-money clubs follow staid traditions, some South Florida clubs deny women equal access to facilities by following rules written when many women didn't work and could golf on weekdays.

Other clubs, such as Adios Golf Club in Broward County, don't have women members at all, though men-only private clubs will go the way of formerly all-male institutions such as Harvard if Gov. Lawton Chiles signs an anti-discrimination bill passed by the Legislature last week. The bill acknowledges the golf course's roll in corporate America by stating that barring women and minorities hurts their chances for career advancement, therefore, clubs can't do it anymore.

### Saturday-morning loophole

But the bill doesn't do anything about private country clubs such as Lago Mar in Plantation and Emerald Hills in Hollywood, two more places that let women join, but don't let them golf on Saturday mornings.

"We didn't know about this loophole when we wrote the bill," said Bernardo Escobar, an aide to Sen. Jack Gordon, when told of it Thursday. "We can go in next year and fix it."

Public golf courses are already barred by law from discriminating. But the practice at private clubs is so common nationally that even the Ladies Professional Golf Association plays some tournaments at discriminatory courses.

"The logic is that Saturday is men's day. Men like to play on Saturday mornings," says head pro Kirk Jones of Emerald Hills. "For some reason Tuesday was adopted as Ladies Day. It's been going on for 20 years."

"That's just the way it's always been," says Ron Sharp, head pro at Coral Ridge for 11 years. "We have Ladies' Day on Tuesday. What we do here is not uncommon at all."

### Morning is prime time

The best tee times are weekend mornings, not just because most people don't work then and the temperature is cooler. In golf, you can't tee off until the people playing ahead of you are out of your hitting range. A couple of slow foursomes can cause long waits by late morning. Greens get stopped up in the afternoon like a slow drain. Golfing late in the day becomes a game of hurry up and wait. At discriminatory clubs, those unfortunate golfers are most likely to be women.

"Tee times may not seem like a big issue," says Arthur Teitelbaum of the Anti-Defamation League in Miami. "But it's

## SAMPLING OF CLUBS

Here is a sampling of country-club golfing rules:

■ **Doral Country Club, Miami:** No restrictions.

■ **Miramar Golf and Country Club:** Men only Saturdays and Sundays from 7 until 7:30 a.m.

■ **Inverrary Golf Club, West Broward:** No restrictions.

■ **Weston Hills Country Club:** Men only on Saturdays from 8 until 9 a.m.; women on Thursdays from 9 until 9:30 a.m.

■ **La Gorce Country Club, Miami Beach:** Men only on Saturdays until noon; women only on Friday mornings.

■ **Riviera Country Club, Coral Gables:** Men only on Saturdays until 1 p.m.; women only on Tuesdays until 1 p.m.

■ **PGA National, Palm Beach Gardens:** No restrictions.



**HOLLY DUQUETTE:** "Women have to work harder to get ahead, that's the reason I'm out playing."

emblematic of a larger problem, and that is that women are not treated equally as members of these clubs."

Discriminatory clubs often operate under the antiquated assumptions that only men can shoot a good round of golf, that women play slowly.

"When I go out on a golf course, it's an automatic stereotype," says Tina Bruce, the pro. "They figure I can't play. Then they'll see me hit, and they'll say, 'Oh, you have a nice swing,' like they're surprised."

"Men are terrible," adds O'Brien. "They mistakenly label the women as slow golfers. I hear it all the time. They refuse to play behind them. But they're wrong. The women that I see show much better golf-course etiquette than the men."

Perhaps the men who carp have never heard of under-par professional players such as FIU grad Pat Bradley, a hall-of-famer, and Floridian Beth Daniel, or Joan Heller, who just clinched the club championship at Gleneagles Country Club in Delray Beach with a respectable 80 on a par-72 course.

"I can understand how this whole thing came about," says Bea Zuckerman, a snowbird who belongs to Gleneagles, which doesn't discriminate, and Indian Spring Country Club in Maryland, which does. "Women used to stay home and could go out during the week, and men could only play on weekends. But that ain't so anymore."

### Avoid the issue

Some women like Zuckerman, who has petitioned her club in Maryland to change, are fighting

back. But the powerful men's golf groups, which have the clout to back them up, avoid the tee-time issue.

The PGA Tour, for instance, canceled a tournament at Shoal Creek in Alabama two seasons ago when it was revealed that the club didn't admit African Americans, and a club in Chicago dropped off the tour when the PGA wanted them to let women join. But the tour, which brings prestige and money to any club hosting one of its tournaments, did play last weekend at Bay Hill Country Club in Orlando, which bars women on Saturdays until after 11 a.m.

"We haven't raised the issue of tee times at this time," says Sid Wilson, public relations director of the PGA Tour, which sponsors the all-male PGA, Seniors and Hogan tours. "Once they are members they can work within the system to get things changed. We're not in the business of telling clubs how to conduct their business."

Nor has PGA America — the group that certifies and sets standards for the golf pros who run the courses — taken a stand. Of PGA America's 6,800 head pros, only 64 are women.

"The PGA, on the issue of tee times, does not have a position," says Joe Steranka, director of communications. "If you don't want to play at a club with restrictions, you don't have to join."

### Lots of mail

Nobody has done a national study on golf courses and their policies toward women, but *Golf for Women* magazine has received a lot of mail on the subject from readers.

"These policies exist in virtually every part of the country," says editor George Kehoe. "It seems like only now is there a networking going on, and women are realizing it's not just a local problem. They're becoming more vocal about it and recognizing that something needs to be done."

Florida's new anti-discrimination bill bars discrimination against all minority groups if the club has more than 400 members, has members whose employers pay their membership dues, or rents space to groups from the outside to use.

Gordon introduced the bill, he wrote, because these clubs often "serve as a venue for pursuing business deals and making personal business contacts." If women and other minorities are barred, their careers could be damaged.

Escobar, Gordon's aide, says a smart attorney could stop tee-time discrimination with the law. "I do hope some women challenge on the basis of this law," he says. "When they submitted their applications, it was for full rank and privileges."

### No women allowed

The most famous club that historically has barred women is Augusta National in Georgia, home of the prestigious Masters' tournament. But Burning Tree Country Club in Maryland made the news last year when the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the state's decision to revoke a tax break the club received for maintaining its courses as open spaces. The upscale club in Bethesda traditionally gives memberships to the president and members of the Supreme Court (except Sandra Day O'Connor, of course). Members decided they'd rather pay an extra \$300,000 a year in additional taxes than let women join.

"The general public doesn't realize these policies exist," says Jan Bradshaw, founder of Fair-

ways for Women, a California-based group trying to force clubs to drop discriminatory practices.

Says Kerry Graham of the LPGA: "The only way women will get heightened success — more tee times and visibility — is if they participate more. As they become loyal customers they will get more power."

Last year, the LPGA vowed not to play at clubs that don't let women join. The organization also issued a statement saying members support "equality in playing times." However, it still holds tournaments at clubs that don't agree because it has trouble finding enough places to host its tour.

"Changes are coming a lot quicker now," says Elaine Scott, LPGA spokeswoman in Daytona Beach. "It has to do with the growth of women's golf. It will change even more, as more and more women take up the game."

### Golfing for business

More and more are. Barbara Zander, a commercial banking officer at NCNB in Fort Lauderdale, picked up golf clubs last year in self-defense.

"When the last female left our office who didn't play and I was the only one, I decided I'd better get serious," says Zander, 25. "I refuse to be the only one left in the office when they go on a golf outing."

Attorney Kelly Cambron started taking lessons, and now uses golf to open conversations with other attorneys she meets in Miami. "It's definitely an ice-breaker," says Cambron, 29.

Some teaching pros have begun holding after-work golf clinics for businesswomen. Carolina Club in Margate started one last fall. Tina Bruce started the Ladies Beginning Golf Association two years ago, and now has day and evening groups.

### Because they want to

"Here's the difference in this new breed of women golfers: They're here because they want to be, not because their husbands want them to play golf," Bruce says.

Golf among women is growing so fast that six months ago 400 folks from the golf industry — professional players and organizations, equipment and clothing manufacturers and teaching pros — met in Orlando to discuss ways to change attitudes and make golf more accessible to women, who spend \$1.6 billion a year on the sport.

The days are gone when men alone stand around the water cooler practicing their air swings.

"Now the guys around the cooler ask me how my golf game is coming along," says Holly Duquette, a senior programs manager at Florida Power & Light in Miami. "Talking about golf is good for establishing rapport in the workplace... Women have to work harder to get ahead, that's the reason I'm out playing."

Michele Richards, 23, started golf lessons last year.

"A year ago my boss told me a lot of deals are closed on the golf course," says Richards, a personal banker at NCNB in Miami. "I decided I better learn how to play."

Meanwhile, Tina Bruce has this message for men who may be too quick in discrediting the women they meet on the fairways.

"Instead of judging a book by the cover, read the book first before you think, 'Oh, she must not be able to play.'"

You may be sitting across from her at the next board meeting.