

Women Tee Up for a Weekend on the Greens

By Kasey Loudermilk



While I was growing up, I always thought I'd like to learn how to play golf. But my dad thought differently. He seemed to think that my two brothers were the athletes in the family, and that I would, in fact, be bored on the greens. So I simply waited. Several years later, when the opportunity arose for me to learn the game with other women during a beautiful weekend at Hickory Knob State Resort Park in McCormick, SC, I jumped at the chance.

The ladies' golf weekend started Friday afternoon with optional beginner golf instructions where we were taught how to hold the club with interlocking fingers and execute a basic swing. That evening, we enjoyed the social aspects of golf at a reception and welcome event. I met women of all ages and levels of play, and began to realize the diversity of the women who are interested in playing golf.

First thing Saturday morning it was back to the golf course. We were split into three groups: beginners, intermediate and advanced. I, of course, was in the beginners' group having never set foot on a golf course. My group's first instructor was Joe Stevens, a member of the PGA who also happens to be the head golf pro at Wild Dunes Resort in Charleston. He taught us the details of the short game, including what clubs to use and how to hit the ball. I was surprisingly good thanks to our experienced teacher, and the morning got off to a great start.

Next we moved to a hill with tall grass to learn how to chip a ball. David Hyduke, the golf pro from Cheraw State Park, taught this class. This type of stroke was much more difficult, but it was fun to watch the balls go flying as we practiced.

We also learned how to putt. I was excited about this class; after all, my brothers and I play putt-putt in Myrtle Beach every year, and I thought I knew a bit about putting. However, putting in golf and playing putt-putt...not at all alike. Who knew?

LPGA pro Lee Hammett, our putting instructor, was the only female instructor of the weekend. She talked to us about ways to improve our putting by feeling comfortable and wearing our favorite outfits in order to improve our mental game.

Between classes, we went into the clubhouse for a catered lunch and a chance to spend some time getting to know each other. It turns out women travel from everywhere to play at this spectacular course at Hickory Knob. This course, part of the rest of the amenities within the state park, offers 18 holes of outstanding play along Strom Thurmond Reservoir. I met some very interesting retired women who play once a week, as well as ladies who, like me, were trying to get their skills up to par, so to speak.

Our last lesson was from Hickory Knob golf pro Tommy Rankin and Ken Green, a retired golf coach from McCormick, SC. They are both experts on driving and had us beginners hitting balls 100 yards in no time. Of all the lessons, I really enjoyed driving the most because you can hit the ball hard and far away.

After an invigorating morning of lessons, we had the afternoon off. Most women practiced their newly acquired knowledge with a round of golf, but my friends and I rented kayaks to go out on the beautiful and soothing Strom Thurmond Reservoir. Though I had never kayaked before and was very nervous that it might flip, I soon became very comfortable as we paddled to the middle of the lake then around the edges to watch wildlife.

Saturday evening we all got together for dinner and a fashion show with the newest styles in golf, from golf shoes all the way up to hats. On our final day, all 92 ladies were teamed up according to our expertise and played a full tournament. It was quite a workout but an enjoyable opportunity to practice our new skills.

The event was so successful the 2nd Annual Ladies Golf Weekend is set for March 15-16, 2008. It provides a great weekend for you and your friends to take to the greens to enhance current golf skills or just to learn the basics. Hickory Knob is an amazing golf resort—definitely above par.

Find out more in Places...

Turn to page 128 in the "green pages" for more on Hickory Knob State Resort Park.

