



CHANGE GOLF INSTRUCTION REPORT

CITY OF MADISON 2019

Report by Sue Shapcott, Ph.D., PGA GB&I

Owner: Change Golf Instruction

Introduction

Change Golf Instruction partners with the City of Madison. Our shared goal is to recruit and retain golfers through instructional programming. Our broader goal is to develop a sense of belonging and a community of golfers that is inclusive of underrepresented groups; women and golfers of color. Although we teach young and old players, our business focusses on adult players (the needs of junior golf are met by The First Tee program).

Change Golf Instruction's strategy is evidence-based. Sue Shapcott applies her own research, and other educational research, to ensure good pedagogical practices. To retain golfers, Change Golf Instruction funnels players from the range and into leagues. This ensures golfers keep playing at City of Madison courses, and introduces them to other golfers. Change Golf Instruction also incorporate social science in its marketing and communication to ensure that everyone can see themselves represented as golfers.

Our approach to golf instruction has yielded results. 2019 was the fifth year of our partnership. We have continued to introduce new golfers to the game, we have continued to increase the number of unique golfers we interact with, and the number of players who engage in our leagues grows each year. Our success benefits the City of Madison golf courses by providing a stream of golfers who have loyalty to Change Golf Instruction.



Why Change Golf Instruction Believes in Public Golf

GUEST COLUMN

Sue Shapcott: Madison golf courses enhance community

May 19, 2019

TRY DIGITAL FOR 25¢ A WEEK



As reported in the [State Journal](#), the city of Madison financial statements for golf make for a sobering read. The financial losses are troublesome and reinforce the need for decisions about the future of the city's golf courses.

As Mayor Satya Rhodes-Conway weighs options, part of her decision should be based on her fiduciary responsibility to Madison's taxpayers. But I hope she also considers other important factors.



“The city of Madison golf courses deliver access to physical and social benefits to a population in our community that other sports don’t provide. Every day on city-run golf courses I see generations of families spending time together. I see newly bereaved spouses who have turned to golf to find a network of friends and support. I meet people who have moved to Madison for a new job, or to be closer to grandchildren, and who are looking for golf leagues to meet other like-minded people. And most often, for retirees, golf becomes a substitute for their work routine, and their playing partners replace their co-workers. This community we have at Madison golf courses is unique and should be valued.

My daily exposure to people on Madison golf courses provides just anecdotes, of course. But my experience also is grounded in research. The benefits of golf are not lost on academics. Search any academic journal database and you will find articles reporting how golf provides exercise that reduces weight and increases cardio health. The golf swing increases balance and strength — critical factors for an aging population. Playing golf reduces loneliness and increases social networks. Spending time outside with friends also can reduce stress. (Arguably, that last point may depend on one’s golfing performance).

That’s why preserving golf is so important. Only city-run golf can democratize the game and ensure its benefits are accessible to every member of our community.”

Sue Shapcott, Ph.D., PGA GB&I



Change Golf Instruction Client Demographics

Women and people of color are chronically underrepresented in golf. Our goal is to make golf's benefits more accessible to more people by introducing them to the game through instruction. We recognize the barriers that stop underrepresented groups playing golf and we try to address them by creating a coaching culture that increases all golfers' sense of belonging. In addition, we lead by example. Our instructional team is diverse. It includes women, men, a member of the African American and LGBT community.

According to the National Golf Foundation, women make up approximately 25% of golfers in the USA. Our client base is made up of 53% women – twice the national average for golf. The percentage of women we teach represents the approximate percentage of women in the Dane County population (50%, U.S. Census).

CHANGE GOLF CLIENTS

47% 
Men

53% 
Women

NATIONAL GOLFER AVERAGE

75% 
Men

25% 
Women



Nationally, adult golfers of color make up approximately 6% of the golf population (National Golf Foundation). In Dane County, the population is approximately 84% White (U.S. Census). Currently, golfers of color make up approximately 9% of Change Golf Instruction's clients. Although we are performing better than the national average, we are committed to increasing the diversity of golfers in Madison. We are conscious of our marketing and promotional material to ensure it promotes inclusion.





Track Record of Bringing Golfers to City of Madison Courses

City of Madison courses provide a low-barrier entry to golf (less rules, less intimidation). Over the last five years the number of new players we have introduced to the game has increased, as has the number of unique players we interact with.

In addition to teaching golf, we consider it our responsibility to funnel players into leagues. When golfers join leagues, they meet other golfers, they keep playing golf, and they develop their own community.

The golfers we bring to City courses for instructional programming use the facilities to practice and play. Our leagues demonstrate more directly how Change Golf Instruction benefits the City of Madison courses.

Year	Number of New Golfers	Unique Clients	League Players*	League Rounds
2015	25	211	-	
2016	35	316	-	
2017	56	474	-	
2018	58	570	75	1,355
2019	86	675	91	1,638

* League players are recruited from entry-level classes and general client database. Leagues are played at City of Madison Courses.



In 2017 the City of Madison introduced a Public Links Championship for women (a men's tournament was already in existence). The tournament demonstrates how Change Golf Instruction and the City of Madison work together to promote an inclusive environment at City courses.





Change Golf Instruction's Growth

Change Golf Instruction has partnered with the City of Madison for five years. During these five years, we have seen a steady growth in our business. This represents the trust and reputation we have developed in Madison for providing accessible golf instruction.

