

SHE IS GOLF EXTENDED INTERVIEWS

LISA "LONGBALL" VLOOSYWK

*World Long Drive Championships Competitive Athlete
Callaway Golf and Golf Town Brand Ambassador
Women's Golf School Owner, CAN & USA
Golf Journalist
Lead Ambassador for Canada for Women's Golf Day*



GBC

How long have you been involved in the golf industry and what is your current role?

LV

I have been in the golf industry since 2001. I am a professional athlete (currently compete at the World Long Drive Championships), brand ambassador (Callaway Golf and Golf Town), keynote speaker at conferences and conventions, golf entertainer at corporate and charity golf events across North America, women's golf school owner with schools in Canada and the United States, a golf journalist, and the lead ambassador for Women's Golf Day in Canada.

GBC

What initially drew you to the golf industry for your chosen career?

LV

When I started competing at a World Class level in Long Drive, I had the opportunity to compete on a Tour in the United States. Through my travels across North America, I fell in love with the sport of golf, the people in the industry and started to have a burning desire to want to help others enjoy the game as much as I did.

As a former educator, I had a passion for teaching. I found I could continue to teach by sharing my journey going from a 30 plus handicap to ranked number 2 in the world in women's Long Drive and the life lessons and peak performance strategies I have learned through that process. That led to opportunities to write for several golf publications and eventually starting my own golf school for women.

I saw that 75-80% of attendees at the corporate and charity golf tournaments I attended were men. Where were the women? They were back in the office working while the gentlemen smartly did the networking. I wanted to change that. I wanted to help women feel more comfortable and confident to say yes to those business networking opportunities at the golf course.

GBC

In your opinion, what major challenges/hurdles do women currently experience in the industry, and how have you worked through them in your career?

LV

I think the greatest challenge facing women in the golf industry is that it has not been a popular career path for many. I have often been the only female golf journalist at a press conference, a small percentage of women are keynote speakers at conferences and conventions and only a fraction of PGA of Canada professionals are female, and an even smaller number are golf course superintendents.

I believe we have to start encouraging youth and young women to consider roles in the golf industry as a profession. It comes down to education. Our industry needs to create programs for young women and girls to see women who are experts in their field achieving success in every aspect of the golf industry. We need high school students and post-secondary students to see the potential for success in the golf industry. If you can see it you can be it.

As for me, I realized if there are not opportunities out there, create them. I became an entrepreneur. I worked tirelessly at my craft. The most successful people I have met, both women and men, create their own opportunities through hard work and dedication. I have run into people who discount me because I am a woman, or they make inappropriate comments to me. I surround myself with people who support me. I refuse to work with clients that tolerate a disrespectful environment and seek I out people I respect and admire for advice.

GBC

Have you participated in any recent workshops / conferences that focus on bringing together women in the golf industry, and if so, what was your main takeaway from that experience?

LV

I was honoured to be the keynote speaker for the first annual Women's Summit at the Golf Business Canada Conference & Trade Show in Calgary in 2018. It was an incredible opportunity to share ideas and strategies with women from across Canada in the golf industry. I learned a tremendous amount at my table, listening to the stories, the pitfalls and the solutions as the ladies discussed their challenges. Many women exchanged contact information and have continued to stay in touch. There is something magical about women helping women. The energy in the room was palpable. My main takeaway was to ask for help. There are so many talented women in our industry that we need to reach out to connect, learn, share and grow.

GBC

What advice would you share with a female who is interested in beginning their career or moving over in their career to the golf industry?

LV

I would tell her that the golf industry is an amazing profession full of passionate people. I would tell her that relationships are key, and she should seek out someone she trusts and respects to be a sounding board. She doesn't need to reinvent the wheel. Seek out someone in the industry who is killing it in the role she would have, and ask them for advice. That is the fast track to success.

GBC

What is your proudest moment/achievement of accomplishment of your golf industry career to date?

LV

Over the pandemic, I have hosted over 30 virtual golf clinics for my sponsor, Golf Town, to help lift people's spirits and keep them excited about the game even when courses were closed. My videos have received over 2 million views and counting, and I have had hundreds of women reach out to me telling me how much I have changed their game, how much more they are enjoying it, that they are hitting it 30+ yards longer or have dropped 10+ strokes off their game and that I have inspired them. They thank me. These messages from around the world make my heart swell and are confirmation to me that I need to keep doing what I am doing and that I make a difference.

GBC

Do you have any other specific projects/comments/stories regarding women in the golf industry that you would like to share?

LV

I am very proud to volunteer my time as the Canadian lead for Women's Golf Day. I have been involved since inception because I see the positive impact that this initiative has for growing the game for women and creating a fun and safe place to learn and feel welcome. I also volunteer on the Diversity and Inclusion Committee for the Golf Journalists Association of Canada. I joined the committee to help women and anyone else underrepresented in golf media have equal representation, have a voice, and have their stories told.

LIZ HOFFMAN

*President, Golf Canada, ON
PGA of Canada Diversity and Inclusion Task Force
Member
Golf Canada Golf Industry Advisory Council Member*



GBC

How long have you been involved in the golf industry and what is your current role?

LH

I've been involved in the sport of golf as a junior golfer growing up in a family of golfers. I took a sabbatical from the game as my time was spent between family and professional career at the University of Toronto. I brought my profession to my passion when I reengaged as a member and volunteer at the Thornhill Club and agreed to be the Junior Captain and run the junior program with Bill and Billy Walsh our professionals. My partner Rick and my sons Matt and Mark were all enjoying the game and I certainly didn't want to get left behind! I served as President of Golf Ontario and a member of their Board prior to joining the Golf Canada Board in 2012. I'm currently President 2021 and 2022.

During my time with Golf Canada, I have contributed across a multitude of committees, councils and working groups including most recently serving as Chair of the Compensation Committee, the World Junior Girls Steering Committee and as a member of the Ad Hoc Committee on Governance Renewal.

I am currently a member of the PGA of Canada Diversity and Inclusion Task Force. I have previously chaired the Amateur Competitions, Sport Development and Human Resources Committees, as well as the Ad Hoc Committee to Review the COC Report. I have been a member of the Audit and Risk Committee, the Diversity Enhancement Working Group, and the Volunteer Services Working Group.

I am also a member the Board of Directors of the Golf Canada Foundation, serving on the Executive Committee as Secretary and chairing both the Scholarships & Grants and the Women's Fund Committees.

A past President of the Golf Association of Ontario, I was the non-playing captain of Canada's Women's Team at the 2012, 2014 and 2016 World Amateur Team Championships and served as Golf Canada's delegate to the Biennial meeting of the International Golf Federation in 2018. In 2020, I participated as a program mentor in the R&A's Women in Golf Leadership Development Program and also joined the PGA of Canada's Diversity and Inclusion Task Force. I have been active as a tournament chair and starting & scoring official at Golf Canada amateur, professional, and international competitions.

GBC

What initially drew you to the golf industry for your chosen career?

LH

I brought my profession to my passion! My background as a recognized leader in the Pan-Canadian sport scene as an athlete, coach and administrator over many decades was a perfect fit for the direction of Golf Canada as the National Sport Federation, governing body for the sport and an Olympic Sport partner.

GBC

In your opinion, what major challenges/hurdles do women currently experience in the industry, and how have you worked through them in your career?

It is so important that women see and experience other women in leadership positions across the industry and that the culture of any organization or golf facility be an inclusive one for women. To be successful, you must have an intentional support network and allyship within your organization, and that is something that I felt increasingly in my time with Golf Canada, both among the staff, leadership and volunteers at every level of the organization.

I was inspired to see my colleague and friend Diane Barabé lead Golf Canada over the past four years through the new modernized Rules of Golf as our past Rules Chair. Similarly, our Chair of Handicap and Course Rating—Alison Chisholm—led the rollout of the new World Handicap System. I've also been proud to see advancement opportunities for women staff members playing prominent roles on Golf Canada's executive team including Vanessa Morbi as our Chief Marketing Officer; Alison Richmond as our Senior Director, Human Resources and Administration, a soon to be announced Director of Diversity, Inclusion and Safe Sport; and others contributing to the senior leadership group across sport, championships, commercial, heritage and the Golf Canada Foundation.

At the University of Toronto, I was expected to take on leadership roles within my faculty and throughout the university. Whenever the opportunity presented itself, I took it on.

Today in golf, there is a shift in leadership in the Provincial Golf Associations as five current Presidents are women and each association has strong representation on their respective Boards. Golf Canada has five women on the Board of 13—this is a step in the right direction. The PGA of Canada Diversity and Inclusion Task Force will be tabling its final report to their Board and there will be significant change in gender inequality and in all underrepresented groups.

Golf Canada Diversity and Inclusion Alliance is also bringing forward strategies for growth in this important space and while there is much work to be done, I am very pleased with Golf Canada's commitment to creating an inclusive environment for our organization and taking a leadership position in this important area for our sport.

GBC

Have you participated in any recent workshops/conferences that focus on bringing together women in the golf industry, and if so, what was your main takeaway from that experience?

LH

Outstanding and energizing to see intentional change in the Canadian golf industry and around the world. The time is NOW to continue the advancement of opportunities. Besides my own path, I'm pleased with the scope of professional development and mentorship opportunities that many of our Golf Canada staff have gained experience through.

GBC

What advice would you share with a female who is interested in beginning their career or moving over in their career to the golf industry today?

LH

The time is right and the golf industry needs change and is positioned for change. There will be many opportunities out there and it is important to embrace them.

- GBC** *What is your proudest moment/achievement of accomplishment of your golf industry career to date?*
- LH** *My election as President of Golf Canada and the opportunity to continue to make a difference in Canadian golf during my time in office.*
- GBC** *Do you have any other specific projects/comments/stories regarding women in the golf industry that you would like to share?*
- LH** *I've had an amazing opportunity over the past year as a member of the PGA of Canada Diversity and Inclusion Task Force and to work closely with all 17 task force members. We have brought forward game changing recommendations to the PGA of Canada Board and its zones to adopt new policies and practices in its operations and governance to be more inclusive and diverse; an intentional and active recruitment plan for the golf industry to increase the diverse perspective in the game and business of golf; a Marketing plan on allyship and education to the realities of discriminatory actions in the golf industry; and targeting diversity and inclusion from the lens of 1) Governance 2) Operations 3) Workforce 4) Participation.*

NADIA DI MENNA

*General Manager and Owner/Operator Le Versant Golf Club, QC
NGCOA Canada - Quebec Chapter President
NGCOA Canada National Board, Member
Golf Canada Golf Industry Advisory Council Member*

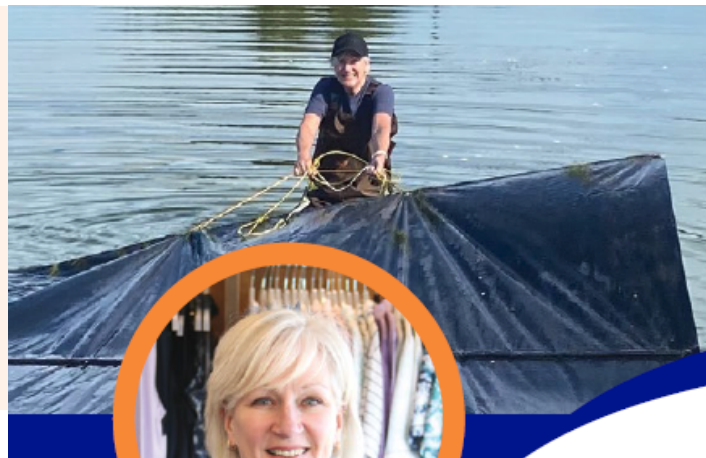


- GBC** *How long have you been involved in the golf industry and what is your current role?*
- ND** *I've been the General Manager at Golf Le Versant for 33 years as well as President of the NGCOA Canada – Quebec Chapter since 2018.*
- GBC** *What initially attracted you to the golf industry for your chosen career?*
- ND** *Le Versant is a family business founded by my father, Pasquale Di Menna in 1988. Over the years, our course became the largest single location facility in Canada with four 18 hole courses. Having been in the business since my teenage years, I have a great understanding of the benefits and challenges of our industry.*
- GBC** *Have you participated in any recent workshops/conferences that focus on bringing together women in the golf industry, and if so, what was your main takeaway from that experience?*
- ND** *As President of the NGCOA Canada – Quebec Chapter, I had the privilege of representing the entire golf industry during meetings with various government agencies, particularly regarding the development of the opening protocol for the 2020 season in the midst of a pandemic. The message conveyed by the Table de concertation definitely appealed to new fans.*

- GBC** *What advice would you share with a female who is interested in beginning their career or moving over in their career to the golf industry today?*
- ND** *There are many aspects to running a golf course which creates great opportunities for women to get into golf as a career. It takes a village to operate a golf course: from the pro to the superintendent, food and beverage, administration and management.*
- GBC** *What is your proudest moment/achievement of accomplishment of your golf industry career to date?*
- ND** *Dealing with a global pandemic was undoubtedly the most challenging time of my career to date! Everyone in the industry quickly adapted and did everything possible to provide a safe environment for both our customers and out staff. The results speak for themselves, as can be seen on all the courses!*
- My greatest accomplishment, however, has been raising my two wonderful children, Cristina and Alessandro, finding a balance between my personal and professional life in this huge golf complex, thanks to the precious values received from my parents, Diane and Pasquale.*
- GBC** *Do you have any other specific projects/comments/stories regarding women in the golf industry that you would like to share?*
- ND** *Creating a desire among new women golfers requires role models, ambassadors and women of influence. When I meet women golfers who thank me for the initiatives I have introduced, it encourages me to pursue my mission of encouraging and supporting more women to take up the game of golf and to surpass myself.*
Golf contributes to so much in life, whether we are talking about the health benefits, the social aspect, the learning, the fun, a better awareness of oneself and especially, it creates beautiful life-long friendships!

CAROL ANN BAXTER

Owner and Director of Everything, Archie's Family Golf Centre, ON
Life Member of the LPGA
Executive Director, PGA of Canada Ottawa Zone



- GBC** *How long have you been involved in the golf industry and what is your current role?*
- CA** *Golf has pretty much been my entire life. At the age of 4, my family, along with four other families bought a working farm in Caledonia, ON and transitioned it into a golf course.*

It was there that I learned what dedication and hard work meant! All 5 "dads" had full-time jobs elsewhere and worked tirelessly evenings and weekends to do all the work necessary to build the course.

For the past 21 years I have been Owner and Director of Everything at Archie's Family Golf Centre in Cornwall, ON. I am a Life Member of the LPGA and the Executive Director for the PGA of Canada Ottawa Zone.

GBC

What initially drew you to the golf industry for your chosen career?

CA

Initially, I really didn't have a choice. However, after University I decided to work outside the industry. One day my boss came into my office as I stood looking out the window and asked, "At what point are you going to figure out that you're standing on the wrong side of that glass?" That was all I needed. I had already been working on a casual basis for the new HP at the Cornwall Golf Club. It wasn't long before I was there full-time and became an Apprentice Professional with both the LPGA and PGA of Canada.

GBC

In your opinion, what major challenges/hurdles do women currently experience in the industry, and how have you worked through them in your career?

CA

Access to Opportunities | I believe we make our own opportunities. Now more than ever, I believe women hold the trump card in the golf business for any progressively thinking organization.

Balancing Responsibilities | I would have to say, for me at least, this was the hardest part. With 2 young boys at home, being a single mom and business owner was tough. My solution was to surround myself with great people. A great GM who has been with me for 20 of my 21 years at Archie's, a fantastic live-in nanny that helped raise my boys and provided a constant and loving environment (and had dinner for me on the table after a long day) and of course family who were there for me at every turn.

Inadequate Support Systems/Gender Inequality/Unfavourable Business Environment | When I started out, I couldn't name a single support system designed specifically for women in business and certainly not in the golf business. It was difficult. We had to work 10 times harder for the recognition and support that definitely came more readily and easier for men even if we had the same (or more) qualifications.

I do believe it is better today. Women are beginning to get more and more recognition for their contributions, their acumen and for the important role they play in the golf industry. Today there are financing opportunities and support services specifically designed for women entrepreneurs.

Fear of Failure/Additional Expectations | Fear of failure has always been my driving force, and I have failed. However, it's those failures that make us stronger, help us learn, make us more resilient. A true entrepreneur takes many chances throughout their career but that's part of the fun! There were many who expected me to fail when I took over sole ownership of the business, particularly the banks. It was an exhausting exercise, but for every "I'm sorry you don't qualify" I got more determined, more creative and I found other ways.

GBC

What advice would you share with a female who is interested in beginning their career or moving over in their career to the golf industry today?

CA

Any progressive golf facility will recognize the importance of having females in a variety of roles in their business! As a PGA Professional you are in high demand! Take advantage of this opportunity and showcase your skills. There is no better mentor for young female golfers than another female. We hold the keys to growing the game and keeping the next generation of females engaged with the game!

GBC

What is your proudest moment/achievement of accomplishment of your golf industry career to date?

CA

When my marriage broke down several years ago so did my business partnership. It was a scary time as I didn't have the resources to carry on alone. I had to use every connection, call in every favour, leverage everything as well as make a few deals with a few devils to be able to buy out my ex-partner/husband and continue to operate Archie's on my terms. 11 years later it is most definitely my proudest accomplishment as the business continues to prosper and grow, the devils are gone, debts are repaid and I'm still standing proud!

GBC

Do you have any other specific projects/comments/stories regarding women in the golf industry that you would like to share?

CA

COVID has created a unique opportunity for golf. Whatever role you play in the industry, leverage it to cement player engagement and keep new players coming back year after year.

LESLEY MCMAHON

General Manager and Owner/Operator, Balmoral Golf Course, AB

Past President, NGCOA Canada National Board

NGCOA Canada - Alberta Chapter Advisory Board Member

Golf Canada Golf Industry Advisory Council Member



GBC *How long have you been involved in the golf industry and what is your current role?*

LM *I am a third-generation golf course operator so I would say my entire life. I'm older than 49 and that's all the details I'm giving.*

GBC *What initially drew you to the golf industry for your chosen career?*

LM *Growing up in the business, it was of course a very attractive option for a career path, but it was never a requirement that I would run the course. After some adventures, I found myself drawn back to it.*

GBC *In your opinion, what major challenges/hurdles do women currently experience in the industry, and how have you worked through them in your career?*

LM *Golf is an old game. There are parts of it that are steeped in tradition. In some ways, this is a positive. In many other ways, it creates barriers. The culture that still remains at many courses and clubs do all they can to perpetuate the stereotype of golf being a man's game and industry. If we can begin to break down the culture at more facilities and be more female friendly and welcoming, the female golf market will grow exponentially. If the female market grows, the amount of women that see it as a viable career choice will also grow. Not even considering golf as an option hinders the growth of women choosing it as a career.*

Getting into the career of golf was not a hurdle for me, but there have been many hurdles as my career has progressed. Becoming GM at 21 years of age, I faced not only gender related obstacles but also age-related ones. The assumption that my older male subordinate must be the one actually in charge, or requests to speak to my father or husband, when I didn't give an answer to the person's liking. In a tough situation of conflict with a customer or employee that needed a strong remedy I would not be seen as strong and decisive but rather as emotional and unkind.

I was extremely lucky to have a great support system of family, friends, co-workers, and colleagues that had my back and gave me strength. I would never say that I had a problem balancing my responsibilities or a fear of failure any more than any other industry.

GBC *Have you participated in any recent workshops/conferences that focus on bringing together women in the golf industry, and if so, what was your main takeaway from that experience?*

LM *Along with Nathalie Lavallée, I co-founded the Women in Golf Business Summit that has been part of two Golf Business Canada Conference & Trade Shows. I think there is immense value in getting together as women in the golf industry and discussing our unique challenges and strengths. It is a real opportunity to gather and share ideas and solutions. The main take away I received from the Summit was that there are many going through the same challenges and I am not alone.*

GBC *What advice would you share with a female who is interested in beginning their career or moving over in their career to the golf industry today?*

LM *I would tell any women wanting to get into the golf industry that it is an amazing opportunity, a challenging and interesting career, and to not let anyone stand in her way of accomplishing what she wants.*

- GBC** What is your proudest moment / achievement of accomplishment of your golf industry career to date?
- LM** One of my proudest achievements is becoming the first female president of NGCOA Canada. It was a particularly challenging time as my second year was the first season of the pandemic, and we had to navigate uncharted waters. It was my honour to serve as president and to continue with the board now as Past President.
- GBC** Do you have any other specific projects/comments/stories regarding women in the golf industry that you would like to share?
- LM** I am proud to see the increasing number of women in key decision-making positions in the Canadian Golf industry. The more that this happens, the more the way is paved for the women that will follow us.

MORGAN CREIGHTON

Assistant Superintendent
Woodside Golf Course, AB



- GBC** How long have you been involved in the golf industry and what is your current role?
- MC** I entered the industry as a high school student in 2008 and have been involved in it ever since. I am currently the Assistant Superintendent at Woodside Golf Course in Airdrie Alberta.
- GBC** What initially drew you to the golf industry for your chosen career?
- MC** My sister, Dani Creighton, worked at Edmonton Petroleum Golf and Country Club as the assistant horticulturalist. I saw how much she enjoyed the type of work she was doing, so I decided to apply. For the short period of time I worked at EPGCC, I really enjoyed myself. The following season I applied at Edmonton Country Club. This is where I fell in love with the work. I have always been an early morning and outdoorsy person, so this line of work came relatively easy for me. I had originally wanted to be a high school science teacher, but quickly realised that I was not on the correct path for long term happiness. The assistant there at the time, Kevin Douglas, suggested Olds College to me and the following fall I moved to Olds.
- GBC** In your opinion, what major challenges/hurdles do women currently experience in the industry, and how have you worked through them in your career?
- MC** "Gentlemen Only, Ladies Forbidden". While golf was invented in the late 1700's when women had no rights and were treated as property that is not the society we live in today. I think that one of the biggest hurdles that most women face in this industry is the presumption that we cannot do the same type of manual labour, therefore getting overlooked for certain opportunities or learning experiences. I believe that it is even more drastic if that person has children. I believe that, as a woman, I must work 10% harder than an equal male counterpart to be taken roughly as seriously.

MC *I, unfortunately, have been employed at places where I was made to feel less of a human because I am female. Where people will test how far they can push boundaries, and then wonder why I am unhappy with them. While very few people that I have come across are outright sexist, there is a lot of views that are so far engrained into people's core values that it remains difficult to change. That is why this movement is so important. It is developing support systems for women that previously were not available. It is bringing the inequalities to the forefront of some conversations and making those who are a little behind the times stand out.*

GBC *Have you participated in any recent workshops/conferences that focus on bringing together women in the golf industry, and if so, what was your main takeaway from that experience?*

MC *I was lucky enough to be one of 50 women chosen to attend Bayer's inaugural "Women in Golf" event in 2019. This event was amazing for many reasons, but the three main takeaways that I had were the connections I made, the realization that I do BELONG, and the drive to work on being a part of the change we are seeing.*

GBC *What advice would you share with a female who is interested in beginning their career or moving over in their career to the golf industry today?*

MC *I would tell them that it's not going to be easy, but put your head down, deliver a good product, and show that you are capable. Be willing to put in the time, and this industry is worth it.*

GBC *What is your proudest moment/achievement of accomplishment of your golf industry career to date?*

MC *I am very proud to have created "Women in Turfgrass Management" and the mentor program it facilitates for women coming into this industry. WITM hosted its first conference in February of 2021 that had 96 people virtually attend from 3 different continents.*

GBC *Do you have any other specific projects/comments/stories regarding women in the golf industry that you would like to share?*

MC *Women are amazing. The comradery, the resounding support, the compassion, the understanding, the drive to never settle. We are there for each other. This movement has allowed connections and programs to be developed to help women to understand how outstanding they are. It is not meant to tear men down; it is meant to build us up.*

During the 2019 "Women in Golf" event Kelly Lynch, a Pure Seed regional manager, posed the question "What makes you brave?" This question rocked me to my core and made me self-reflect more than anything I have ever been asked. The truth is the women. The sense of belonging, the golf industry as a whole and the overwhelming support shown for this movement makes me brave. While you can never have 100% of people on your side, the ones that are rock.

SHERYLE ROWLAND

General Manager/COO,
Silver Springs Golf and Country Club, AB



GBC How long have you been involved in the golf industry and what is your current role?

MC I was introduced and started working in the golf industry 30 years ago. My current role is General Manager, COO at Silver Springs Golf and Country Club in Calgary, Alberta.

GBC What initially drew you to the golf industry for your chosen career?

I was drawn to this career based on my love for the game and people, the values golf instills and the culture it breeds.

GBC In your opinion, what major challenges/hurdles do women currently experience in the industry, and how have you worked through them in your career?

MC *Balancing Responsibilities* | One of our biggest challenges would be balance. I find that I am pulled in many different directions and want to do the best in every area. We can't be everything for everyone. I continually take stock of priorities month to month and try my best to focus on those. It is critical to hire good people and set up a team that buys into you and the club's vision.

Inadequate Support Systems | Being a minority in the industry leads to a lack of relatable role models. Not every colleague or boss can relate to what we are dealing with. This can leave a person feeling isolated or missing that lack of connection and without that it is hard to get the support that is required. I have found it is important to take the lead in communicating well with my bosses and keep them informed of what I am dealing with.

Gender Inequality | Throughout my career, I have entered positions and have been paid less than the previous male in the same position. Learning from this, I would suggest others try and educate themselves on salary comparisons and promote themselves.

Unfavourable Business Environment | To help overcome inappropriate behaviour or comments in the workplace I think it is important to have policies around member and employee conduct and respect. This helps protect all females from inappropriate behaviour or harassment and provides an avenue to voice a complaint and be heard/supported.

Fear of Failure / Unrealistic Additional Expectations | I have certainly felt like I cannot take my foot off the pedal, and I am looking to constantly bring value to the organization. In my position, there is a continual change in board members, and right or wrong, I have felt the need to prove myself over and over. The feeling of having to work hard and prove myself is a feeling I have had my entire career.

GBC *What advice would you share with a female who is interested in beginning their career or moving over in their career to the golf industry today?*

MC *Reminding them they are just as capable of any other person. Follow your passion and believe in yourself. Don't give up. Network with other women. There are many other women willing to empower each other, share advice or experiences in the golf industry or other male dominated careers.*

Communicate well with your team and those you work for. Speak up and be confident. Surround yourself with those who you admire and who are in your camp. This career can pull you in a lot of directions.

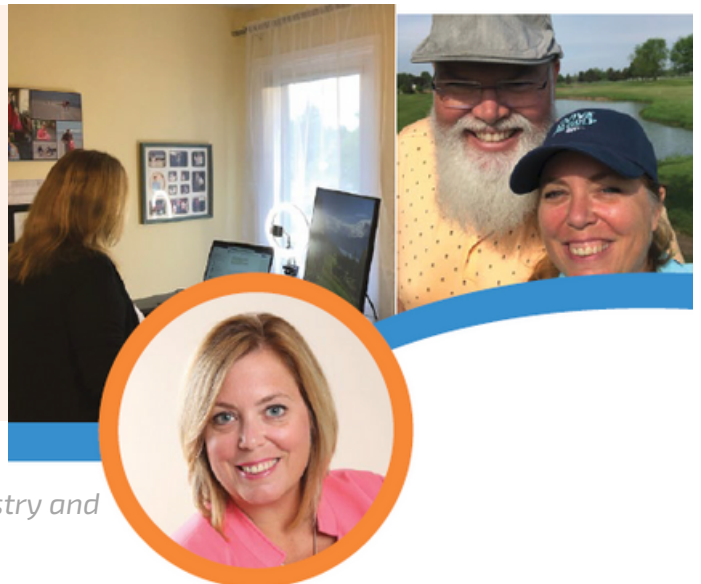
Stay true to your values and priorities.

GBC *What is your proudest moment/achievement of accomplishment of your golf industry career to date?*

MC *Receiving my first Head Professional position was a great moment from me. To then maintain the role and improve each year as a golf professional and person, and ultimately become General Manager at a Club I love, all equates to my proudest achievements.*

LESLEY HAWKINS

*General Manager,
adidas Golf Canada, ON*



GBC *How long have you been involved in the golf industry and what is your current role?*

LH *I have been involved in the golf industry since 1990, when I started as a pro shop assistant at Elm Ridge Golf Club in Montreal. My current role is General Manager, adidas Golf Canada.*

GBC *What initially drew you to the golf industry for your chosen career?*

LH *After years of urging, I finally started playing golf at 15 at Summerlea Golf Club in Montreal. They had a great junior program which attracted 50-75 juniors every Wednesday and Thursday morning. I spent a few summers at the golf course just playing, hanging out on the putting green, and enjoying the summer.*

LH After my first year of university at McGill, I needed a summer job, so I applied to a posting from Elm Ridge and that was the start of my love of the industry. However, I had not planned to spend my career in the golf industry – I was only exposed to the golf course side of the business which included 6 days a week, long hours in the summer, and unemployment in the winter, not overly attractive. So, after I graduated from university, I left the industry for 14 months and then returned as I missed the community, camaraderie, and quite honestly the fun of the business – it's easy to work in a sport you love.

While it was not my plan to remain in the industry my entire career to date, it has served me very well. It is a small-town industry in that everyone knows everyone; it is a community of amazing people talking about a wonderful sport.

GBC In your opinion, what major challenges / hurdles do women currently experience in the industry, and how have you worked through them in your career?

LH Throughout most of my career, I was the only female in the room. There was no opportunity to see "me" in the industry, no female role models or leaders. Initially, I tried to blend in and be "one of the guys" and then realized that it was not authentic to who I was. So instead, I focused on outworking my peers; I made sure that I knew my business inside and out. I created allies around me and made sure that there were advocates in the room when I wasn't. I sought out opportunities to raise my hand to try new things – it didn't matter if I didn't know the subject, as I knew I could learn quickly and always wanted to push myself.

Now, some thirty years later, there are more women in profile positions and the industry is slowly changing. However, there are still plenty of hurdles, not the least of which is that there is a lack of diversity in the boardroom where decisions are being made. Diversity doesn't just mean demographic diversity such as gender or race, but diversity of thought – bringing new ideas and ways of working to the industry. Women still face some archaic assumptions like female golf pros should only work with the women's membership; women are the best to sell soft goods (apparel, footwear); females should always be on the beverage cart on the course; and the list goes on. To truly change these invalid assumptions, we need more women in the room when decisions are being made.

GBC Have you participated in any recent workshops / conferences that focus on bringing together women in the golf industry, and if so, what was your main takeaway from that experience?

LH Having participated in numerous events profiling women in leadership in golf, there are several common themes – there are lots of good insight shared and the audience is full of women. To truly affect change, we need to have the decision-makers in the room – no matter the gender. I do appreciate that there is some comfort in having a safe space to share, but to truly affect change we need to be brave enough to speak up no matter who is in the room.

GBC *What advice would you share with a female who is interested in beginning their career or moving over in their career to the golf industry today?*

LH *The golf industry is like a small town in that everyone knows everyone and once you join the business, most people spend their entire career in it. There is a vast array of options within the industry, not just being a golf professional, so my advice would be to get in the door in any position. It may not be your first choice of position, but once you get in, work hard to prove yourself, ask lots of questions, take every course available, find a mentor and keep learning. While this is not only applicable to the golf industry, work for someone who inspires you and make sure that the culture of your work reflects your own personal values. And lastly, be your own advocate because no one is going to take care of your future better than you.*

GBC *What is your proudest moment / achievement of accomplishment of your golf industry career to date?*

LH *In 2017, when adidas sold TaylorMade, I had the opportunity to hand-select my team to drive the adidas Golf business. It has become my proudest achievement as we have enjoyed great business gains, but more than anything, I have seen the team come together, support each other, become great friends, and continually push each other to be better. We would literally go through a wall for each other.*

GBC *Do you have any other specific projects/comments/stories regarding women in the golf industry that you would like to share?*

LH *Women can be the harshest critics of themselves and other women – we need to stop that. We need to be each other's greatest cheerleaders, lift each other up, advocate for one another and seek each other out to help drive more diversity and change within the industry.*

NATHALIE LAVALLÉE

Chief Operating Officer,
NGCOA Canada, ON

GBC *How long have you been involved in the golf industry and what is your current role?*

NL *Chief Operating Officer of the National Golf Course Owners Association Canada (NGCOA Canada). I have worked at the NGCOA Canada for 21 years.*



GBC

In your opinion, what major challenges/hurdles do women currently experience in the industry, and how have you worked through them in your career?

NL

As much as we say we want to change the 'ol boys club' stereotype/perception, I often feel that we don't 'walk the talk'. As an industry, we talk about being more progressive and inclusive however every golf conference (here or south of the border) or meeting I have attended in the past 21 years, uses the pronoun HE when referencing an owner, a superintendent, a pro a GM, 99% of the time, unless we are talking about a server or beverage cart staff person. Until we change that narrative, it will never feel 100% inclusive to women.

The sad part is that most people don't even realize they are doing it – it's just so ingrained in our industry vocabulary, but that's not an excuse to continue with the status quo. I encourage everyone reading this to speak up in meetings when only the HE pronoun is being used. It may sound like a small thing, but we need to start somewhere and I'm convinced that if we all make a concerted effort to be more inclusive in our narrative, it would go a long way in attracting and keeping women to our industry.

Gender Inequality | I know it exists, it's all around us, but I feel lucky that in my job at the NGCOA Canada, I haven't really had to deal with it. Perhaps it's because of my strong belief that what matters is 'the' person and the job they have rather than their gender. Anytime I come across a situation where someone says to me, 'you're a woman, should you really do this', my response is always, 'if my name was Bob, would we be having this discussion' and if the answer is no (which it most always is), it shuts down the conversation.

GBC

Have you participated in any recent workshops/conferences that focus on bringing together women in the golf industry, and if so, what was your main takeaway from that experience?

NL

Lesley McMahon, who at the time was the NGCOA Canada's first female President, and I launched the NGCOA Canada Women in the Golf Business Summit in 2018 and hosted our 2nd Summit the following year. COVID interrupted our 2020 plans but the NGCOA Canada is committed to continuing with this event to help create a platform where women can support women and feel less isolated.

There was so much energy during both Summits and at the same time, I felt an overwhelming sense of relief from the women in the room that they no longer had to navigate through this industry by themselves. Perhaps in the future there will be a segment within the Summit that includes men as I think all stakeholders in the industry need to be part of the conversation. My only regret is that we didn't do it sooner.

GBC

What advice would you share with a female who is interested in beginning their career or moving over in their career to the golf industry today?

NL

Stay true to yourself, be strong and don't let yourself be defined by gender.

- GBC** *What is your proudest moment/achievement of accomplishment of your golf industry career to date?*
- NL** *That I've been with the NGCOA Canada for 21 years and have been part of its success along with an incredible team. In 2020, I was honoured to be named the Canadian Golf Executive of the year by the Younger Awards presented by SCOREGolf.*
- GBC** *Do you have any other specific projects/comments/stories regarding women in the golf industry that you would like to share?*
- NL** *I would love to see more women golfing and sometimes feel that we create barriers to making that happen. It's okay to let women who are new to the game, tee it up in the fairway. There is nothing better than to watch a beginner golfing female smile from ear to ear when she connects with the ball and gets to the green – even if she tee'd it up the whole way. The only thing better than that is when she realizes that she no longer needs the tee and is now a committed golfer, buying clubs and clothes, taking lessons, booking golfing vacations and joining a league. Had I told my ladies' league partners 4 years ago that 'they really shouldn't be teeing it up because those aren't the rules', I wouldn't be golfing with amazing friends every Monday. They would have given up and moved on to something else. Golf is hard so my philosophy is to make it fun and easy at the beginning. They'll get there – we just need to give them the time.*

MARY DEPAOLI

*Executive VP & Chief Marketing Officer,
RBC*



- GBC** *How long have you been involved in the golf industry and what is your current role?*
- MD** *I am the Executive Vice President & Chief Marketing Officer at RBC. In my role, I am responsible for building RBC's brand and reputation globally across its Personal & Commercial Banking, Insurance and Wealth Management businesses through an integrated approach to brand, marketing, sponsorship, social media, communications and corporate citizenship. In addition, I serve as the Chair of the Board responsible for overseeing the RBC Foundation, one of Canada's largest corporate donors.*

As RBC's EVP & Chief Marketing Officer, I lead the sponsorship strategy for RBC's golf platform, and have played an instrumental role in the evolution of the platform in recent years, notably with the transformation of the RBC Canadian Open:

- In 2018, RBC along with partners Golf Canada and the PGA TOUR announced the date change from July to a premiere spot on the PGA TOUR schedule in June, one week before the U.S. Open.*

MD

- The 2019 Canadian Open had a record-setting year with 120,000 fans heading to the tournament, which was held at the iconic Hamilton Golf and Country Club.
- The 2019 RBC Canadian Open also introduced the RBCxMusic Concert Series featuring sold-out performances by country-duo Florida Georgia Line, and Canadian rock band The Glorious Sons.
- RBC has a longstanding commitment to the game of golf in both Canada and the U.S., and is proud to be title sponsor of two PGA TOUR events, the RBC Canadian Open (since 2008) and the RBC Heritage (since 2012). RBC is also the title sponsor of the RBC PGA Scramble of Canada, the country's largest amateur golf competition taking place at more than 140 golf facilities across Canada.
- RBC is proud to support a world class roster of 14 Team RBC golfers including seven Canadian golfers: Corey Connors, Graham DeLaet, Adam Hadwin, Brooke Henderson, Mackenzie Hughes, Alena Sharp and Nick Taylor.
- RBC supports emerging Canadian golfers through Golf Canada's grassroots developmental programming and the High Performance National Team

GBC

What initially drew you to the golf industry for your chosen career?

MD

As I was building my career, first in financial services and then in marketing and brand sponsorship, I learned how invaluable hosting clients and partners on the golf course was for establishing strong relationships.

As a brand, RBC is drawn to golf for many reasons, notably:

- *The exposure golf provides the RBC brand through our tournaments and Team RBC ambassadors;*
- *The opportunity to build strong relationships with our clients, and provide clients with unique, money can't buy experiences;*
- *The ability to play a foundational role in sport: RBC's support for golf is all-encompassing, supporting amateur golf initiatives, emerging professionals and some of the world's top golfers. The holistic support to our golf sponsorship is what makes it meaningful and successful.*

GBC

In your opinion, what major challenges/hurdles do women currently experience in the industry, and how have you worked through them in your career?

MD

Lack of representation and diversity in general are still probably the biggest challenges facing women who want to work in the golf industry. It's hard to see a pathway to success with the absence of female mentors in senior roles, or a professional network that doesn't reflect your gender enough to fuel your sense of possibility.

In my experience, the best way to work through these challenges is to broaden the pipeline and make the sport more accessible, not just with respect to gender, but all aspects of diversity. Building a more inclusive playing field is good for everyone who cares about golf – it's a catalyst for new ways of thinking, new fans and ultimately new growth opportunities. Having Liz Hoffman take the helm as President of Golf Canada is a huge step in the right direction.

GBC *Have you participated in any recent workshops/conferences that focus on bringing together women in the golf industry, and if so, what was your main takeaway from that experience?*

MD *The CP Women's Open hosts a Women's Leadership Summit each year that RBC is proud to support and participate in. I'm also deeply involved with WISE Toronto – an organization dedicated to helping women advance their careers in the business of sports and events through peer support and mentorship programs. As a founding Board member, I've learned so much from the strong network of women who are breaking new ground in the front offices of professional sport every day.*

GBC *What advice would you share with a female who is interested in beginning their career or moving over in their career to the golf industry today?*

MD *I would say go for it. The sport of golf is growing, and it's open to disruption like never before. At RBC, we often say if you want to serve the market, you need to hire the market – and it is no different when it comes to sports. The golf industry has everything to gain from hiring more women, and providing them with real opportunities to build exciting careers.*

GBC *What is your proudest moment/achievement of accomplishment of your golf industry career to date?*

MD *2019 was a milestone year for the RBC Canadian Open. Not only did we welcome 120,000 fans to Hamilton Golf & Country Club, but we also introduced the RBCxMusic Concert Series featuring sold-out performances by country-duo Florida Georgia Line, and Canadian rock band The Glorious Sons. Watching Rory McIlroy hoist the RBC Canadian Open trophy sporting a Toronto Raptors jersey was a moment I'll never forget.*

But all of the success and momentum behind that tournament began in 2018, when we announced the tournament date change from late July to a premiere spot on the PGA TOUR schedule in June, one week before the U.S. Open.

Securing the date change was ground-breaking for our tournament, and has set us on a path for success ever since.

GBC *Do you have any other specific projects/comments/stories regarding women in the golf industry that you would like to share?*

MD *We're incredibly proud of how Team RBC's own Brooke Henderson has become a beacon of inspiration for young girls on the golf course, and how Team RBC's Alena Sharp has been a positive spokesperson for the LGBTQ+ community.*

We're also very encouraged to witness how the sport's fan base has changed and expanded in the last few years. As an example, we saw women's registrations for the upcoming RBC PGA Scramble increase by 73% in the space of just one year.