

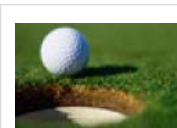
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[/pittsburgh/stories/2010/05/24/daily35.html](#)**PITTSBURGH**  
**BUSINESSTIMES**

Thursday, May 27, 2010

## Pittsburgh focuses on women's golf

Pittsburgh Business Times

Women's golf is getting special attention in Pittsburgh this summer, with the 2010 U.S. Women's Open set for Oakmont Country Club July 5 - 11. Inspired by the tournament, the Pittsburgh Business Times created two Top 25 Regional Golfers lists, giving businesswomen their own list for the first time.

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Women have come a long way in the business-golf world, according to Terri Sokoloff, president of Ross-based restaurant service company **Specialty Group** and No. 16 on the list, but there are still some obstacles before there's an equal playing field.

Working around some golf courses' "women's restrictions" on tee times can be a challenge, Sokoloff said. Once, when she dared venture on a golf course during a restricted tee time, someone took her golf bag off a cart to prevent her from playing at the "wrong" time.

"There will always be a boys' club, it doesn't matter how far we've come," she said.

To put Sokoloff's love of golf in context, she has a putting green in her backyard, is a member at both Diamond Run and Treesdale, and has a handicap of 13. She thinks of Fred Couples as her "golf boyfriend."

But the restrictions on female golfers at many clubs leave Sokoloff scratching her head. "What if you have a female CEO who wants to play?" she said. "I understand when they restrict tee times for special events, but it's amazing to me that so many courses take it so far."

That is a pitfall for women who may want to pick up the sport, said Sandy Thomas, a retired **LPGA** pro who is launching a business aimed at helping children and adults learn the sport she has been playing for 50 years.

"Women in part have to be careful when they go to the club, that it's not a women's restriction day," she said.

Thomas has a patent pending on a system that helps promote hand-eye coordination and swinging for children, and she is working on seminars that teach golf and its accompanying etiquette to women. Understanding the game can really help to make people feel more comfortable when invited along on a business golf outing, she said.

*Malia Spencer and Kim Lyons contributed reporting*

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