



PWGA Poll: Haggin Oaks named NorCal's top women-friendly public golf course

Executive Director Caroline O'Brien to present award to Sacramento complex

Rocklin, CA (April 11, 2016) – Sacramento's Haggin Oaks collected more than twice as many votes as any other nominee in February voting conducted by the Pacific Women's Golf Association to find the most women-friendly public golf course in Northern California.

PWGA Executive Director Caroline O'Brien will present an award to Haggin Oaks during the complex's annual Golf Expo April 29-May 1.

"We're very pleased at the participation of our members in the poll, and in its outcome," O'Brien said. "Haggin Oaks has been a great partner to the PWGA, with five women's clubs and a deep commitment to growing the game among women. And they've recently created a new position, Golf Ambassador, to help them strive for even higher participation and satisfaction among women golfers."

That commitment starts with the customer-first philosophy that Ken Morton Sr. has insisted on since he started working part-time at Haggin Oaks in 1958. Today he's CEO of Morton Golf, which manages the complex.

"Our staff is constantly being observed and nurtured to treat people with respect and with a caring and positive attitude," Morton said. "We provide significant Customer Service Training as well as management training for monitoring and managing of behaviors. Our goal is for everyone to be a happy, friendly and enthusiastic staff member."

Morton spoke in general about customer service, but acknowledged that the needs of the female golf customer warranted some research. The results – particularly statistics in the *Sacramento Bee* reporting that women's golf declined as much as 40 percent after the last recession – prompted Morton to hire Linda Reid as Golf Ambassador to focus on training Haggin Oaks staff to serve and communicate better, especially with women golfers.

"We have found that most of the problems we have with women is that we simply haven't communicated with them to let them know what we are doing, why we are doing what we do and how what we do impacts women," Morton said. "We must educate our staff about how to specifically

communicate with the five different generations of women who enter the game and those who are already playing the game of golf. Each generation of women communicate differently and each generation looks at golf in a different way.”

Reid is developing such programs as “Wine and Wedges,” an evening clinic series, and “Get Course Ready,” an extension to the PGA of America’s popular “Get Golf Ready” introduction to the game. “If I can bring more players into the game by creating a welcoming, comfortable learning environment where they can make new friends, become healthier and embrace this great game, it’s good for them and it’s good for golf,” Reid said, noting that men are not excluded from programs designed to appeal to women.

Haggin Oaks was designed 83 years ago by the renowned architect Alister MacKenzie. Today there are five sets of tees on the walkable MacKenzie course, starting at 4,552 yards, and the two Arcade Creek nines have red tees at under 2,000 yards and an innovative short-game set at around 1,200. Rates depend on starting time; for instance, a prime 9 a.m. weekday time for a nonresident “guest” is \$35.

PWGA poll voters’ comments included: “They just cater to women golfers in every way, including the store.” ... “Friendly employees and awesome women's programs.” ... “Has great women teachers.” ... “Fun to play and very accommodating to ladies, then the shopping!”

The famed-among-shoppers Haggin Oaks Super Store houses what may be the largest selection of women’s golf merchandise – especially fashion and shoes – in Northern California.

PGA Head Golf Professional Mike Woods was honored but not surprised to lead the way in PWGA balloting.

“We don’t track it, but I’d say our percentage of rounds by women is much higher than the (17 percent) industry average,” Woods said. “I think it could be as high as 25 percent. We take great pride in our personal relationships with all golfers, and hope to deepen each of those relationships in the years to come.”

With more than 400 voters selecting five courses each – most, of course, touting their home clubs -- Haggin Oaks wound up collecting nearly twice as many votes as runners-up Pacific Grove Golf Links and Lincoln’s Turkey Creek Golf Club. Bailey Creek in Lake Almanor and Sacramento’s Bartley Cavanaugh completed the top five.

About the Pacific Women’s Golf Association: Organized in 1947 by Helen Lengfeld to promote amateur golf for women living in Northern California, the Rocklin-based PWGA continues to serve women golfers at public golf courses through more than 200 member clubs comprised of nearly 10,000 individuals. In addition to supporting several benevolent projects, the 501(c)(7) membership association provides educational, competitive and social opportunities, including eight major tournaments annually. For more information, visit GolfPWGA.org or contact Executive Director Caroline O’Brien at (916) 315-8204.