

WOMEN GOLFERS...

...are just as serious as men, says consultant Nancy Berkley. In some cases, even more so.

1 ARE LEAVING THE GAME

No, they're not. According to the National Golf Foundation, the number of adult women golfers has remained steady the last five years at around 5 million, or 20 percent of all adult golfers. Close to 40 percent of new golfers in the U.S. are women, and the number of junior girls (6–17) has increased in the last five years.

2 DON'T SPEND ON GOLF

Golf Datatech reports that in 2014, female golfers averaged \$733 spent on equipment and \$550 on apparel. Sports and Leisure Research Group says 42 percent of women golfers planned to spend more overall on golf this season vs. 38 percent of men surveyed.

3 SHOULD PLAY A "WOMAN'S" BALL

"Woman's" means softer and lower compression, but Titleist found no performance benefit from trying to match compression to swing speed, including no more distance. The best ball for a woman golfer is the one that feels and performs the best for her game.

4 DON'T TAKE LESSONS

In fact, the NGF says that among serious ("core") golfers, 33 percent of women have had instruction vs. 24.4 percent men. The PGA of America reports that 62 percent of the participants in its "Get Golf Ready" program are women, and that the vast majority of them stick with the game when the program is done.

5 PLAY SLOWER THAN MEN

Not so, says Dean Knuth, who studied slow play for the USGA. "A short-hitting woman typically will walk right up to her ball and hit it again. Slow-playing men are very deliberate on every stroke, often taking two or more practice swings." Women are so conscious of being called slow that when men play behind them, they speed up.

