

# The Right Invitation:

## 2011 Women's Golf Longitudinal Research



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# The Right Invitation

## 2011 Women's Golf Longitudinal Research

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### Historical Context and Background:

- Prior research conducted and sponsored by The Little Family Foundation and other organizations have spoken to the missed opportunities to truly engage women in the game of golf. While recent strides have been made to create more welcoming and need-specific services for women, the golf industry is still faced with flat to declining participation and large numbers of women who drop the game each year due to a variety of factors including hostile environment, poor placement of tee boxes, service lapses, limited accessibility to a desired golf experience and women-specific products and services.
- The 2009 multi-phase “The Right Invitation” research identified a suite of facility “Best practices” shown to be key drivers of satisfaction and increased play. The study concluded that these best practices can be implemented nationally and at the grass roots level to address the salient needs of women golfers and provide a more inviting experience and increased satisfaction, participation and retention of women golfers.
- This 2011 Longitudinal Study was commissioned as a benchmark year of a continuing program to actually track impact and variance of key dependent variables of player participation and satisfaction as well as facility financial and rounds performance at select “Best Practices” and “Control” public golf facilities.



## Basic Conclusions

- Directional Conclusions support the findings of the 2009 study and present strong evidence that best practices elements yield stronger operational performance for golf facilities while simultaneously building greater loyalty, participation and enjoyment among the women who play at these facilities relative to those who do not.
- Women at Best Practices Facilities played 16% more golf than those at facilities not deploying best practices.





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## KEY CONCLUSIONS

Implications from the 2011 Longitudinal Work

### Women at Best Practices Facilities Demonstrate Greater Levels of Loyalty, Satisfaction and Participation



- Findings suggest stronger facility loyalty among players at Best Practices Facilities relative to those at control facilities.
- While revenue growth was challenged at golf facilities, overall, best Practices facilities outperformed control facilities across key operational areas and overall
- Women at Best Practices facilities played more golf in 2011 than those at Control Facilities.
- Findings suggest more favorable change in rounds volume per playable day for best practices facilities

### Women at Best Practices Facilities Demonstrate Greater Levels of Loyalty, Satisfaction and Participation



- Best practices lead to more women golfers at a facility.
- Women from Best Practices Facilities are attitudinally more favorable about their golf experience than those from Control Facilities!
- Women at best practices facilities are more likely than those at control facilities, to have taken formal golf lessons.



### Best Practices Facilities Show Stronger Operational Performance



- Directional evidence demonstrates that Best Practices conditions lead to more desirable pace of play!
- Best Practices Facilities are significantly more likely to deliver on the most important elements of a good golf experience.
- Women from Best Practices Facilities are more likely to have USGA Handicaps.

## Key 2009 Findings

### DEFINITION OF A “BEST PRACTICES FACILITY”



- The 2009 findings, subsequent analysis and review with industry leaders identified conditions as “women friendly best practices” for a golf facility
- To qualify as a “best practices facility” for the longitudinal study, a golf facility needed to meet at least 80% of these conditions. Of the 600 facilities interviewed in 2009, less than 60 met this qualification!

## Key 2009 Findings

### **DEFINITION OF A “BEST PRACTICES FACILITY”**

- ▶ Four or more sets of tee, with the forward most set of tees ideally under 4,500 yards (though up to 4,800 yards considered), all to allow golfers to reach greens in regulation.
- ▶ A golf shop of 500 square feet or more with a good selection of well displayed women's clothing and equipment and a dedicated women's department
- ▶ Both men and women staff present in the golf shop
- ▶ Abundant directional signage on the golf course
- ▶ Greeters present at the facility entry/starting area
- ▶ Ample jugs of drinking water present at a minimum of three tees per nine holes
- ▶ Both men and women staff available for golf instruction



## Key 2009 Findings

### **DEFINITION OF A “BEST PRACTICES FACILITY”** (continued)

- ▶ 2+ women's or non gender specific restrooms per nine holes
- ▶ Healthy Food Options served
- ▶ Family golf day programs or tee times
- ▶ 9-hole and other flexible rates such as pay by the hole
- ▶ Corporate/women's golf leagues
- ▶ After hours socials for women
- ▶ On-site child care

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## KEY FACILITY FINDINGS

### Best Practices Lead To More Women Golfers At A Facility

- Facility operators were asked to indicate the percentage of customers who were women. Looking at variation from pre-season to post season, the following facility types were more likely than control facilities, to show positive change:



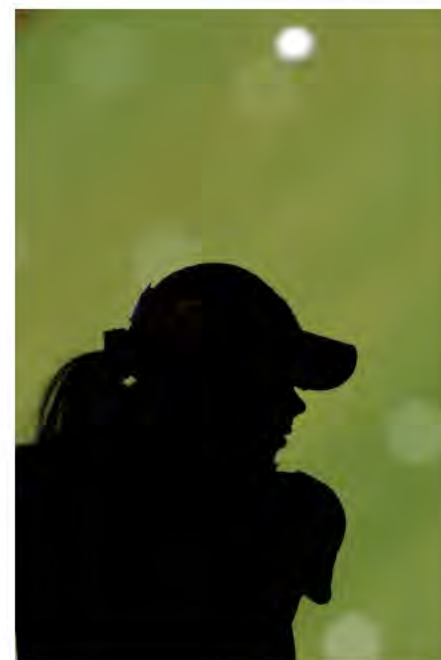
	INDEX vs Control Facilities
Best Practices Facilities	133
Five+ sets of tees	172
Four+ sets of tees	125
Forward tees less than 4,800 yards	172
Ample Directional Signage	133
Greeters present	200
Male and female instructors present	240
Women's Leagues offered	160
Separate womens merchandise section in the golf shop	150
2+ restrooms on each nine	160
Healthy Food Offerings	141



### Revenue Implications: A Tough Year Overall...But Best Practices Significantly Outperformed Control Facilities

#### **Best Practices facilities were:**

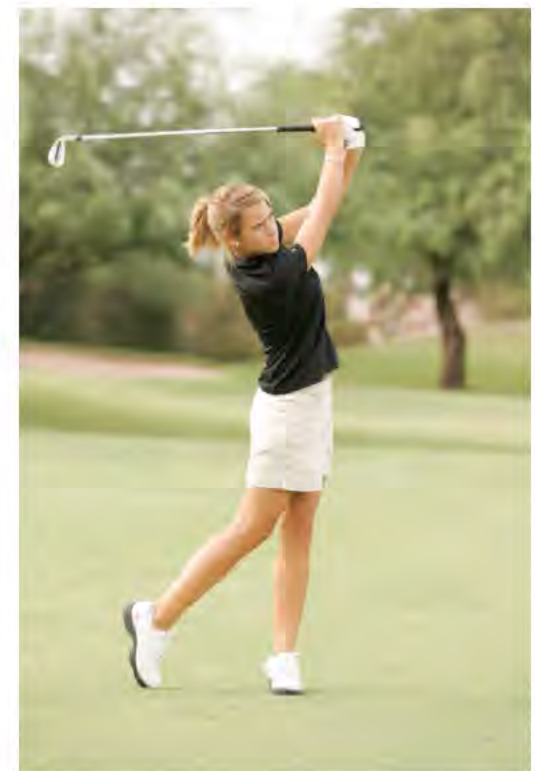
- 71% more likely to see positive or flat variance in green fee revenue vs YAG. Control facilities were 46% more likely than best practices facilities to see a year over year decline in green fee revenue overall.
- Slightly more likely to see a positive year over year variance in merchandise revenue than control facilities.
- More than twice as likely as control facilities to see positive or flat merchandise revenue vs YAG. Control facilities were 75% more likely to see a year over year decline in merchandise revenue.
- More than twice as likely as control facilities to see positive growth in F& B revenue. Control facilities were 87% more likely to see a year over year decline in F & B revenue.
- 29% more likely as control facilities to see an increase in average overall yield (Total revenue per round) vs YAG. Control facilities were 17% more likely to see a year over year decline in revenue per round.



### Best Practices Elements Present Alongside Positive Related Revenue Growth

A number of interesting observations reveal the presence of relevant best practices elements corresponding to positive revenue change in related revenue centers. While data is not projectable to show direct causality, note:

- Those facilities with women specific golf leagues and 2+ restrooms per nine holes were more likely than facilities without these characteristics to show positive green fee revenue growth vs YAG.
- Those facilities with a golf shop staffed by both men and women were more likely than those facilities without this characteristic to show positive merchandise revenue growth vs YAG.
- Those facilities with both men and women golf instructors were more likely than those facilities without this characteristic to see positive lesson revenue growth vs YAG.



### Potential Drivers of Positive Revenue Per Round Growth

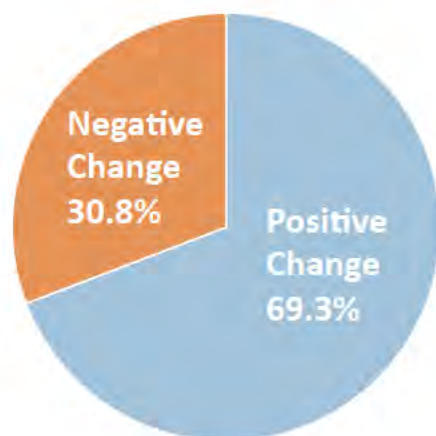
As noted earlier, best practices facilities were 29% more likely than control facilities to see an increase in average overall yield (Total revenue per round) vs YAG. Control facilities were 17% more likely to see a year over year decline in revenue per round. Additionally, those facilities with the following best practices elements present, were more likely to show positive yield growth than control facilities in general.

- ▶ 4+ or 5+ sets of tees
- ▶ Golf shop of 500+ square feet
- ▶ Abundant directional signage on course
- ▶ Greeters
- ▶ Ample drinking water on course
- ▶ Male and female instructors
- ▶ Family Golf programs
- ▶ 9-hole rate programs
- ▶ Women's Golf Leagues
- ▶ After golf socials
- ▶ Dedicated women's merchandise area in the golf shop
- ▶ Male and Female merchandise sales staff
- ▶ 2+ Restrooms on each nine
- ▶ Healthy Food Options available
- ▶ Dedicated women's locker rooms



### Findings Suggest More Favorable Change in Rounds Volume Per Playable Day For Best Practices Facilities

- Facilities provided total rounds played and playable day data for the prior and initial test years. From these data points, we calculated rounds per playable day for each, and the analysis shows the following directional trends for Best Practices vs Control Facilities



**Best Practices Facilities**



**Control Facilities**

Those facilities with forward tee yardage under 4,800 yards, dedicated women's locker rooms, ample drinking water on course and 2+ restrooms per nine holes were even more likely than best practices facilities in aggregate to show positive change in rounds per playable day

## Best Practices = Greater Lesson Revenue?

- The data suggests that women at Best Practices Facilities are 27% more likely than those at Control Facilities, to have taken formal golf lessons.
- Women at facilities with both male and female instructors, were twice as likely to have taken a formal golf lesson than those at Control Facilities.



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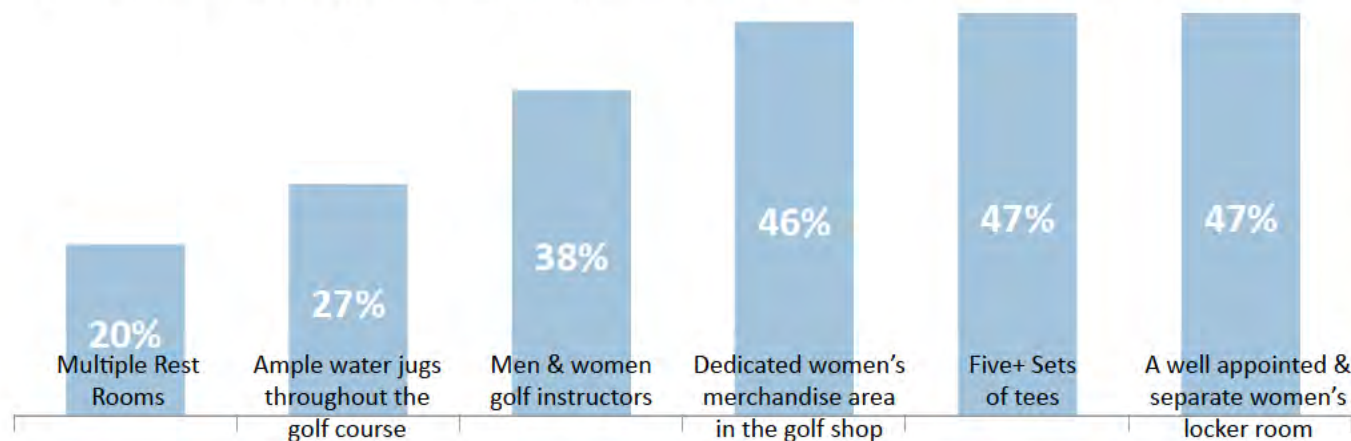
## KEY GOLFER FINDINGS



## Findings Suggest Stronger Facility Loyalty Among Players at Best Practices Facilities!

- Women participants at Best Practices facilities were more loyal and 24% less likely to play the plurality of their 2011 rounds at a competitive municipal or public facility than those from control facilities.
- Migration is least likely for facilities with the following characteristics:

**If a facility had the below best practices criteria, bars indicate the percentage of women who played the majority of their 2011 rounds at a different facility.**

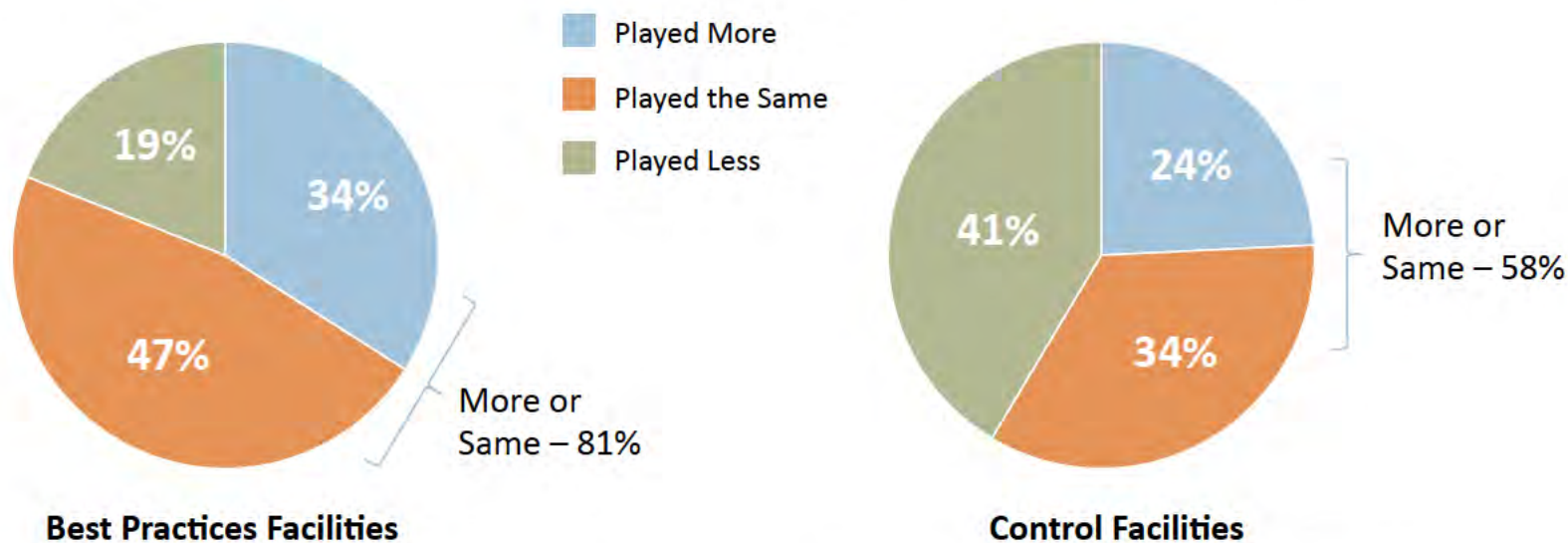


More than two thirds of women recruited from facilities with three or less sets of tee boxes, played the majority of their 2011 rounds at a different public or municipal facility!



### Data Suggests that Best Practices Facilities Drive Greater Levels of Play!

- Those women participants at Best Practices Facilities were 42% more likely than those from Control Facilities to indicate that they played more golf in 2011 than they did in 2010.



- Twice as many women from Control Facilities played less often in 2011 than those at Best Practices Facilities!

## Data Suggests that Best Practices Facilities Drive Greater Levels of Overall Play!

- Women whose host facilities offered the following Best Practices elements, showed greater propensity to have played more total 2011 rounds relative to 2010 rounds:

### Most Critical Best Practices

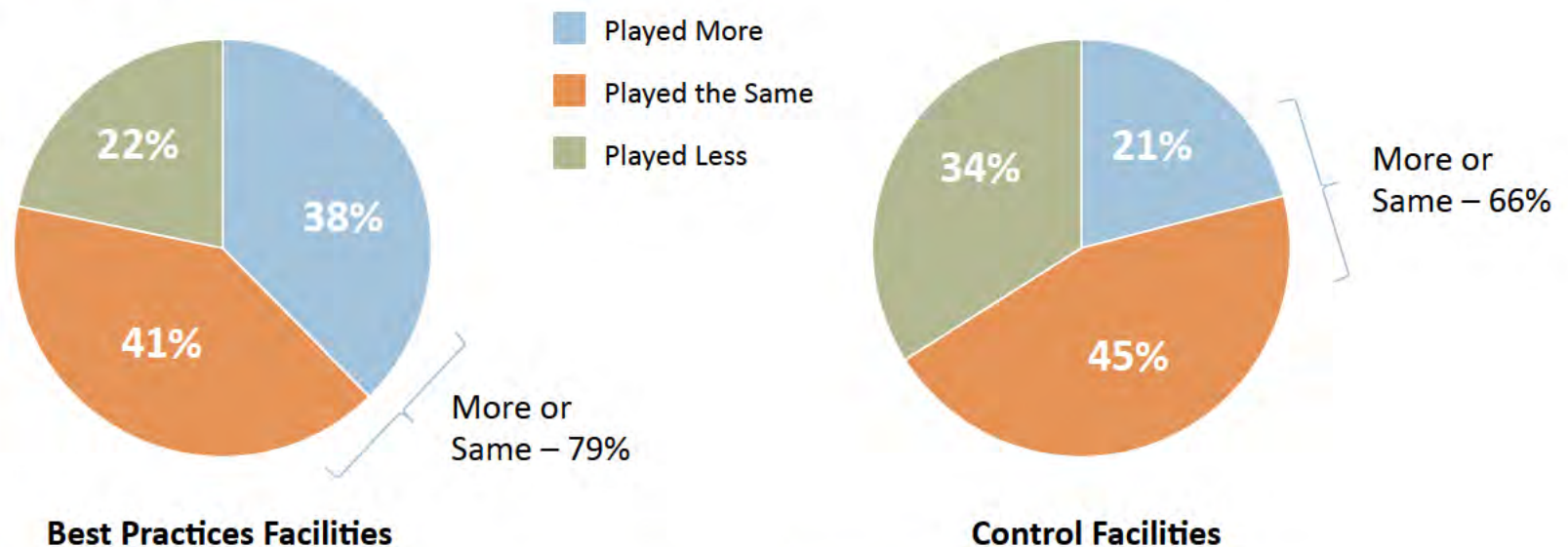
- ▶ Four or more sets of tees
- ▶ Greeters at the first tee
- ▶ Male and Female Instructors/staff
- ▶ Family Days
- ▶ On Site Child Care
- ▶ After Hours Socials
- ▶ Separate Women's Merchandise areas in the golf shop
- ▶ Healthy Food Offerings
- ▶ Separate men's and women's locker rooms

### Next Tier Best Practices

- ▶ Forward Tee total yardage under 4,800 yards
- ▶ Golf shop of 500 or more square feet
- ▶ Frequent and visible directional signage on course
- ▶ Special 9 hole rates
- ▶ Women's Golf Leagues

Incidence of virtually ANY best practice led to higher incidence of increased 2011 play relative to observed rounds reported at a typical "control" (non best practices) facility

More Evidence Of Facility Loyalty...Women At Best Practices Facilities Were 81% More Likely To Have Played More Often At Their Host Facility Than Those At Control Facilities!



Women at Best Practices Facilities were twice as likely to play exclusively at their home course, than those from Control Facilities.



## The Following Best Practices, In Isolation, Drove The Greatest Incidence Of More 2011 Play At The Host Facility:

### Most Critical Best Practices

- ▶ Four or five sets of tees
- ▶ Male and Female Instruction Staff
- ▶ Family Days
- ▶ On Premise Child Care
- ▶ Separate Women's Merchandise areas in the golf shop
- ▶ Healthy Food Offerings
- ▶ Separate men's and women's locker rooms

### Next Tier Best Practices

- ▶ Forward Tee total yardage under 4,800 yards
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- ▶ Greeters at the first tee
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Incidence of virtually ANY best practice led to higher incidence of increased 2011 play at the host facility, relative to observed rounds reported at a typical "control" (non best practices) facility



### Reasons Cited For Increased 2011 Play:

	Women at Best Practices Facilities	Women at Control Facilities
I have more people that I enjoy playing with	58%	*
I've joined a golf league or local program	58%	17%
My game has improved	50%	33%
Less Work Demands	33%	17%
Less Family Demands	25%	17%
The facility has made improvements that make the game more enjoyable	25%	*
Health Reasons / I'm healthier	8%	*
I've recently bought new equipment	8%	17%

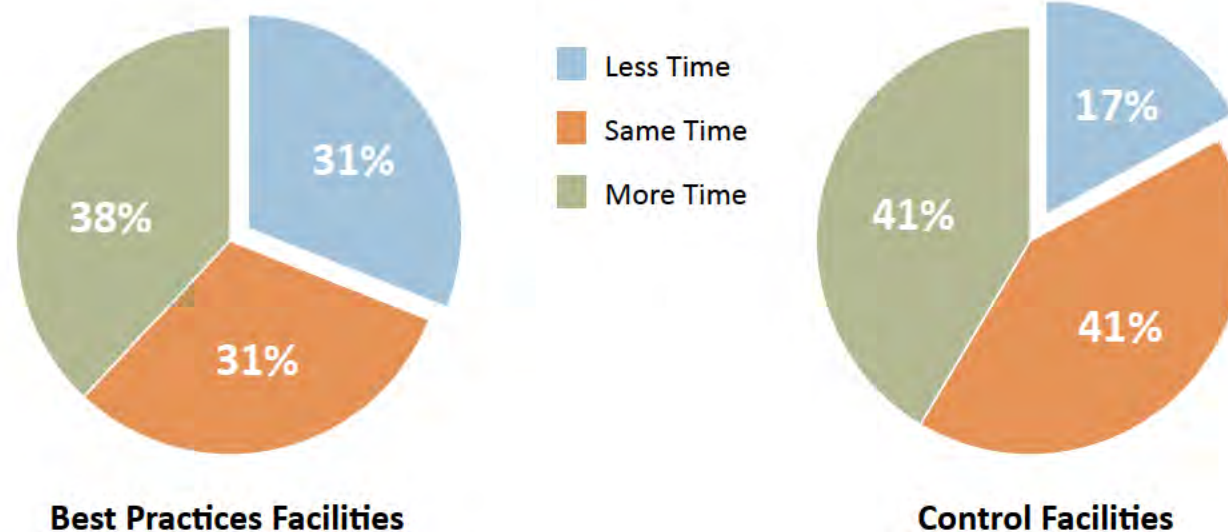
Note \*= insufficient data.

### Directional Evidence that Best Practices Conditions Lead to More Desirable Pace of Play!

- Women were first asked to indicate : “Ideally, how long should an 18-hole round of golf, on a regulation course, take to play?” Expectations were identical among those at both best practices and control facilities.
- They were later asked: “And how long does a typical round of golf take for you at \_\_\_\_ (Name of host best practices or control facility) \_\_\_\_?”
- Data was analyzed to reveal variances between the time required to complete a typical round at the host facility and the time cited as ideal for a round of golf and yielded the following results:

## Directional Evidence that Best Practices Conditions Lead to More Desirable Pace of Play!

### The Time It Takes For A Typical Round Minus The Time Desired For An Ideal Round



Note that best practices elements yielded a significantly higher incidence of shorter time required to complete a round compared to the control facilities.

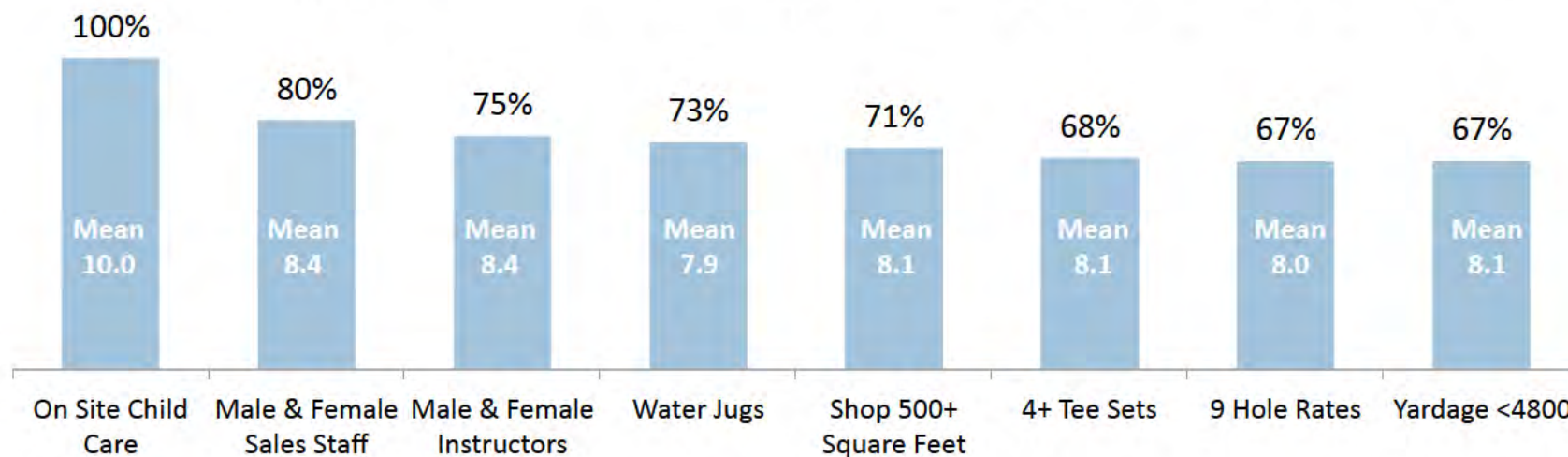
However, the incidence of **ANY** single best practices element yielded better performance than control facilities in aggregate!



## Best Practices Elements and Overall Satisfaction Levels:

Child Care, Male and Female Staff, "Reasonable Yardages" From the Forward Tees drive positive experiences!

- Women were asked to indicate their overall satisfaction levels with a typical round of golf at their host facilities. The chart below details mean scores and "top three box" (rating of 8-10 on a 10 point scale) satisfaction ratings for facilities offering specific best practices elements. For example 73% of women playing at facilities with water jugs, were very satisfied with that facility.





## Women from Best Practices Facilities are Attitudinally More Favorable About Their Golf Experience than Those from Control Facilities!



## The Roots of Satisfaction:

In the Mind of the Customer, Best Practices Facilities are significantly more likely to deliver on the most important elements of a good golf experience

- The charts that follow show meaningful variation in overall perceptions of Best Practices Facilities relative to Control Facilities across the board. Making this even more compelling is that the qualifications for “Best Practices” were fixed attributes of the facility, or provided by the general manager/head professional. These results suggest that, indeed the customer notices!





### The Roots of Satisfaction:

In the Mind of the Customer, Best Practices Facilities are significantly more likely to deliver on the most important elements of a good golf experience

TOP 3 BOX AGREEMENT	Best Practices Courses	Control Courses
It is easy for me to make a tee time when I want to play	97%	79%
I have [had] a consistent and enjoyable group of playing partners.	94%	76%
The cost of a round of golf is a good value for the satisfaction I get from playing	91%	83%
I am able to play with people of my choosing	84%	76%
The staff and other players at the facility are courteous and make me and other women feel welcome.	84%	72%
The golf course is [was] well maintained/conditioned	78%	76%
There is appropriate directional signage on the golf course	78%	62%
The restaurant/ Grill Bar is comfortable	78%	38%
The course is good for my level of play, with the right amount of water hazards and sand bunkers.	75%	69%



## The Roots of Satisfaction:

In the Mind of the Customer, Best Practices Facilities are significantly more likely to deliver on the most important elements of a good golf experience

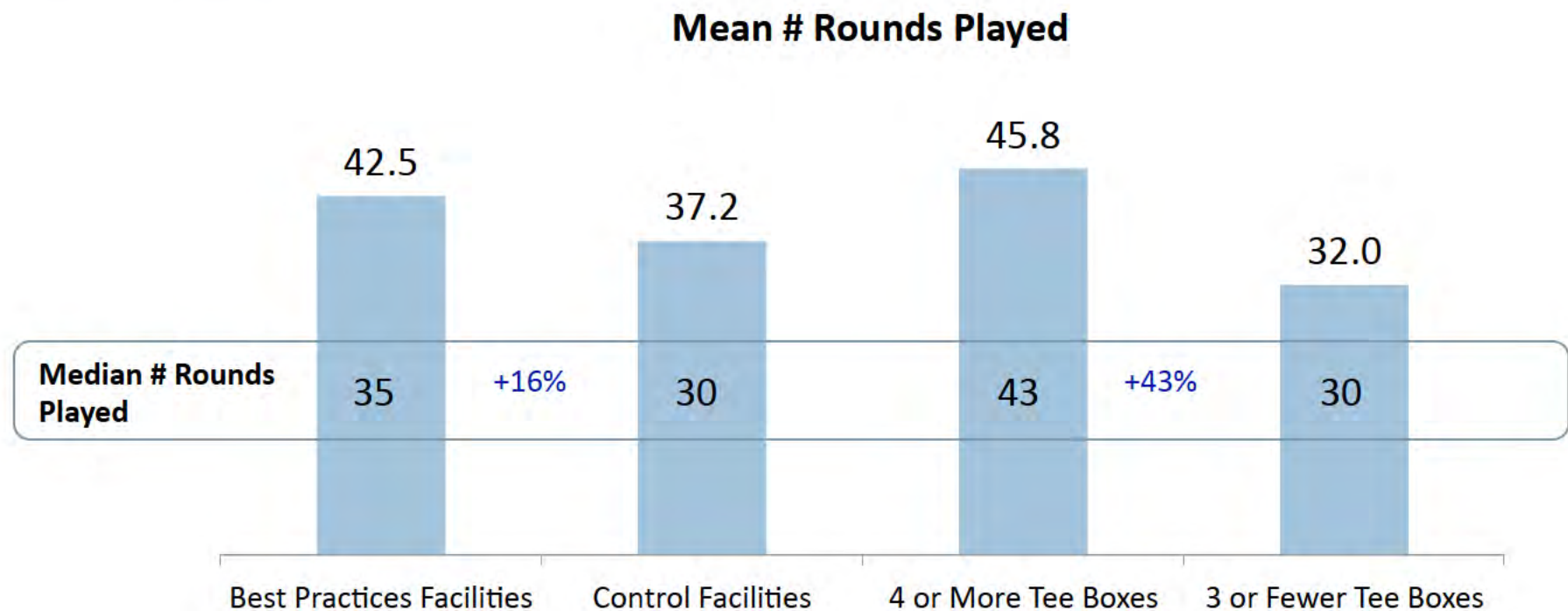
TOP 3 BOX AGREEMENT (continued)	Best Practices Courses	Control Courses
The golf course is[was]physically beautiful	75%	55%
There are ample practice facilities	75%	41%
There are enough short holes on the golf course	72%	69%
It doesn't take too long to complete a full round of golf	72%	66%
Golf Shop staff is readily available to greet and direct me upon arrival	72%	66%
There are golf leagues available for me to join	69%	55%
There are a sufficient number of clean and adequate restroom facilities on the golf course	66%	52%
The menu at the restaurant/bar includes a good variety of food that I enjoy	59%	28%
There is ample drinking water available	56%	38%
There is availability of Instruction or lessons	56%	28%

### The Roots of Satisfaction:

In the Mind of the Customer, Best Practices Facilities are significantly more likely to deliver on the most important elements of a good golf experience

TOP 3 BOX AGREEMENT (continued)	Best Practices Courses	Control Courses
There are a number of 9-hole, pay by the hole and other flexible pricing programs available to meet my needs	47%	38%
There are women staff at the golf facility	41%	31%
A drink or snack cart comes around frequently	38%	7%
There is dedicated women's merchandise in the golf shop	34%	21%
My clubs are typically cleaned at the conclusion of the round	34%	10%
There is a well appointed and designed women's locker room in the clubhouse including showers and ample toiletries	28%	21%
There is a spa or fitness center at the golf facility	9%	3%

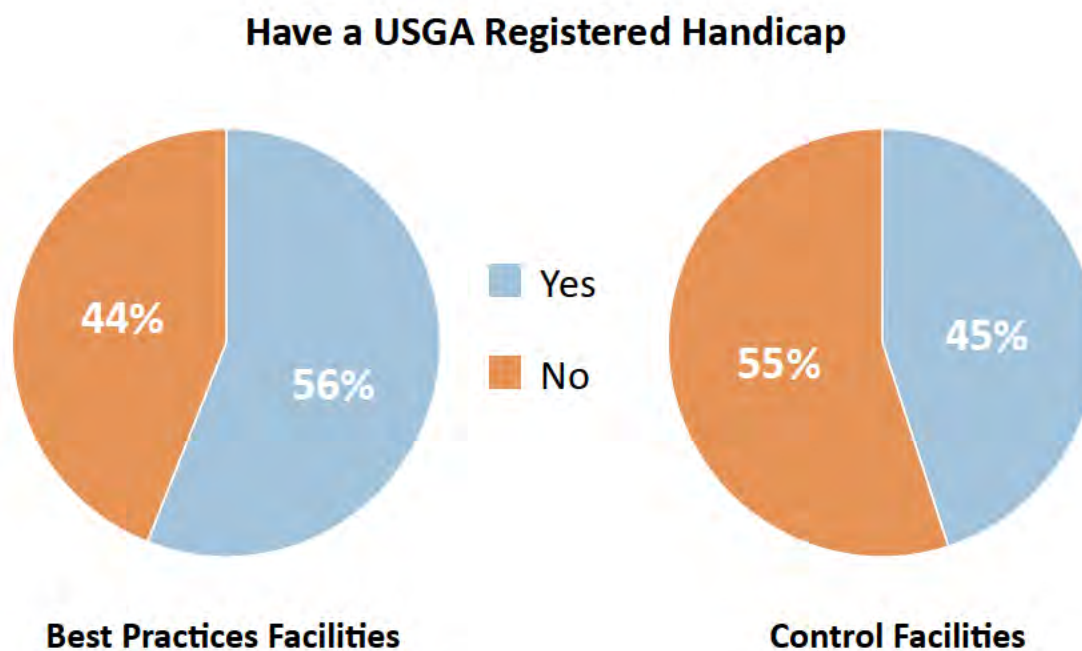
## Women At Best Practices Facilities Played More Golf In 2011 Than Those At Control Facilities





## A More Serious Golfer?

Women From Best Practices Facilities Are More Likely To Have USGA Handicaps



Women at golf facilities with at least one best practices element present, were more likely to have official USGA handicaps than those at control facilities in aggregate

*Note: Directional findings. One year base sizes insufficient to project nationally.*

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APPENDIX A

## REVIEW OF 2009 STUDY

## Methodology of 2009 Study Conducted by SLRG

- Qualitative research phase to generate hypotheses and identify critical issues
  - In depth interviews conducted in Boston, Los Angeles and Dallas
- Quantitative Assessment
  - On-line surveys conducted among 1772 females
    - 999 Current Golfers
    - 773 Lapsed Golfers (less than 8 rounds in past 12 months)
  - Telephone surveys conducted with facility owners at 600 public golf facilities
- Both phases conducted Summer of 2009



## Key 2009 Findings

### **In sum, Key Drivers of Satisfaction are:**

- ▶ Overall Cost/Value
- ▶ Enjoyable partners
- ▶ Comfort Amenities (sufficient restrooms, water, healthy food options, ladies locker room)
- ▶ Mitigation of time demands and conflicting priorities, like child care, that are not integrated into the golf experience.
- ▶ Not getting lost (ample directional signage throughout the facility and other navigational aids)
- ▶ Minimal frustration with the game itself (“how well I play”, ability to reach the green in regulation, enough short holes, a round that doesn’t take too long)
- ▶ Ease of booking/securing tee times
- ▶ A course that’s well maintained, in good condition and aesthetically pleasing

### Key 2009 Findings

#### **What is the “recipe” for success in attracting and retaining women golfers?**

Our analysis suggests that facilities can enhance women’s perceived value of a round of golf by addressing three fundamental issues.

- **Step 1 - Reduce frustration with the game itself**
  - Keep course well-maintained. Aesthetics are important.
  - Re-evaluate tee box placements, so that more women can reach green in regulation
  - Provide more short holes
  - Offer 9-hole play and/or other flex pricing including “pay by the hole.”
- **Step 2 - Eliminate extraneous physical and emotional stressors**
  - Provide ample restroom facilities throughout the course
  - Ensure there is sufficient drinking water available, as well as healthy food options
  - Provide ample directional signage, as well as additional navigational aids (maps, GPS) in carts if possible
  - Ensure there is a well-designed and appointed ladies’ locker room; particularly if one exists for men.
  - Seek opportunities to streamline the tee-time booking process
- **Step 3 - Enhance the “social” aspects for women (especially appealing to Lapsed Golfers)**
  - Increase potential playing partners by offering women’s golf leagues
  - Provide more “off-the-course” or clubhouse social opportunities, such as a sit-down restaurant, special interest events and after hours “socials.”

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## APPENDIX B

# 2011 SEASON LONGITUDINAL TEST APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY



### 2011 Season Longitudinal Test Approach and Methodology

- SLRG approached and recruited 30 public golf facilities across the country (15 “best practices” and 15 “control”) to participate. Each of 27 facilities that completed the program year received a cash incentive and in return agreed to assist us in recruiting women respondents and providing baseline facility performance and financial information, with two separate (pre and post season) waves of depth interviews conducted by telephone.
  - Sample universe obtained through:
    - NGCOA referenced facilities
    - Best practices facilities identified through the 2009 study (universe of 58)
    - Control facilities through NGCOA, PGA and management company relationships
- “Best Practices” facilities were re-screened and qualified as such through their conformity in meeting 80% of the agreed upon best practices as defined in our prior study and joint work with EWGA. In addition, our reporting provides for analysis and reporting of findings based on incidence of specific individual best practices components.

### 2011 Season Longitudinal Test Approach and Methodology (continued)

- Each facility was required to assist in the recruitment of a minimum of 10 women participants to provide their candid feedback and track their golf participation and satisfaction levels throughout the 2011 season. These women provided their feedback through online surveys and communication and were also incentivized with cash for their participation. Over 200 women were recruited and initiated the 2011 study.
- Women's survey results were compared and contrasted in aggregate between women at control vs best practices facilities, as well as cross-tabulated to observe gaps based on the incidence of specific individual best practices components at their host facility.
- 2011 study timeline initiated in March and data collection/tracking was ongoing through November.

## Summary of Key Areas for Analysis

- Each of the facility specific best practices criteria were considered as independent variables for the initial phase of the longitudinal test. Ie..our analysis seeks to identify the contribution that these best practices elements in aggregate and in isolation have on a set of dependent variables.
- For the participating women, these dependent variables included specific measures of:
  - Overall golf participation (rounds played)
  - Loyalty measures (ie rounds played at the “host facility” in aggregate and as a percentage of total rounds played)
  - Variation in participation levels and rationale for increased or decreased participation versus the prior year
  - The ability of pace of play to meet or exceed desired time expectations for a round of golf
  - Various attitudinal statements pertaining to overall satisfaction with one’s golf experience



## Summary of Key Areas for Analysis (continued)

- For the participating golf facilities, dependent variables included specific performance measures including:
  - Variance in performance across a variety of revenue centers and overall revenue achievement per round
  - Variance in facility traffic as measured in rounds played per available day

### Directional Caveats and Cautions on Projectability to the Population

- The 2011 study findings are drawn from a small sample size. While these results show directional support for the findings of the “Right Invitation” study conducted in 2009, the sample size for this study is insufficient to project nationally to representative populations of women golfers or U.S. public golf facilities.
- Subsequent years of longitudinal study at these and additional facilities will increase the observational window as well as the individual data points and conditional circumstances that can be analyzed to render greater stability and projectability of these findings across a variety of conditions. Additional data points will also provide for an ability to conduct further analytics similar to the multi-variate analyses performed on the 2009 study data. However, the 2011 data is directionally consistent with those 2009 findings and thus adds meaningful insight and affirmation to the conclusions derived in our prior work.