

Q&A with Former LGPA Tour Player and Prairie Landing Teaching Pro Kathy Williams

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LPGA Teaching Pro Kathy Williams lives and breathes the sport of golf. In addition to offering instruction at Prairie Landing Golf Club in West Chicago, she is associate director of RevelationGolf — a not-for-profit organization that uses golf to enhance the quality of life for veterans, cancer survivors and at-risk girls. A former LPGA tour player and coach for eight years of the women's golf team at the University of Minnesota, Williams has 22 years of experience teaching golf in the western suburbs. An Elk Grove resident, she instructs new and seasoned players alike, helping them fine tune their swing and more fully enjoy the game of golf.



How did you initially get involved in golf?

I started playing golf when I was 8 years old. My uncle had a farm that he sold to a gentleman who built a nine-hole course on it. I would ride my bike there every day in the summer to play.

When did you know you were good enough to play competitively in college and beyond?

I was fourth in the Junior World Tournament when I was 16, and then I was the runner-up in the first USGA Amateur Publiclinks in 1977 when I was 17.

You played on the LPGA Tour for several years — what was that like?

It was an incredible experience to be playing with the best professionals in the world. I remember at my first tournament meeting Nancy Lopez and Kathy Whitworth, two

legends in women's golf who I looked up to as a young player. My locker was right next to Kathy's — a dream come true! I treasure the many wonderful experiences I had during those times. It also taught me a lot about myself and my love for the game of golf.

How has women's golf changed since you first became involved?

There are so many more women playing the game today and using it in their professional lives as well. That is partly because women and young girls now have the opportunity to learn from female golf professionals who can serve as role models and introduce them to a social network they can play the game with. And of course the equipment is much better today!

What are the most common mistakes beginner golfers tend to make?

The biggest mistake new golfers can make is forgoing professional instruction, which leads to poor technique. If you really want to learn the game, take lessons from a professional. Then practice, practice, practice. You can't get better if you don't practice what you learn each week.

You have coached at very high levels. At college and beyond, what are the key instructional aspects you focus on — technical, mental? How do you individualize it?

At the collegiate level, I think it's best to focus on course management, short game skills and the mental aspects of competition. You have to see each player for the gifts and talents they bring to their own game and help them build the skills that will best complement their game.

With your busy teaching schedule, how often are you able to get out and play for your own enjoyment?

I try to play a couple times a month for my own leisure and occasionally in charitable events. I still shoot in the 70s for 18 holes, thanks to a good short game, which I still work on.

Tell us a little about the personal rewards you experienced through your involvement with RevelationGolf and how it is helping cancer survivors, those with disabilities and at-risk youth?

For me the greatest part of my work with RevelationGolf is seeing a veteran, cancer survivor or child pick up a club and make contact with the ball, when they never thought they could do it because of their injuries, illness or physical disability. I just love seeing their smiles and the joy they feel to have the success and sense of accomplishment. Being able to have a hand in changing someone's life through the game I love is a blessing I am grateful for everyday.

What do you like to do when you are not teaching golf?

I enjoy spending time with my family and friends, often playing golf, and I love a good game of Euchre.