

# 7 Recreation

## Introduction

One of the things that makes a club into a club is that it brings together people with a common interest. Sometimes the common interest is food and beverage, but often it is a recreational activity, of which the most prominent is golf. But there are many other recreational activities that take place at clubs and this chapter will discuss many (though not all) of them. Club activities are many and varied. It is important for students to understand the individual activities, and particularly: (1) who participates; (2) how they are managed; (3) how they interact with other activities/areas of the club; (4) whether they are cost centres or profit centres; and (5) trends and changes affecting these activities and their popularity.

## Golf

Let's begin with one of the longest lived, most celebrated sports and one which has an incredibly rich history. Golf is perhaps the most popular sport at clubs (and is primarily offered at golf clubs and country clubs). It has been played at clubs in Scotland since the 1600s, expanded to England, was later exported to clubs in other Commonwealth countries, as well as the USA, and continues to be popular. To nonplayers, the game of golf is surrounded by a mystique - in addition to its long history, it has had numerous famous players (many of whom are known only by their first names or nicknames such as Tiger, The Golden Bear, and The Shark), and is associated with grand golf courses such as St. Andrews, Pebble Beach, Augusta National, Royal Melbourne Golf Club, etc. It is a truly international game. Exhibit 7.1 profiles golf in Australia.

Golf is a game with its own historic archives, a hall of fame, and its own television channel! It is also a very challenging game to play. Most players who want to learn to play it, take lessons. It is not the sort of sport that one learns how to play in one's backyard or in the neighbourhood playground. For all of these reasons, it is perceived in a certain light. But let's start with the basics of the game.

## Exhibit 7.1: Golf in Australia

Golf is a prominent sport in Australia, having been played there since the 1830s. Some of the oldest clubs in the world were established there. According to *Golf Australia*, there are over 1,300 golf clubs in the country (mostly clustered in New South Wales) and there were an estimated 500,000 players in the late 1990s, when golf participation peaked. Since its peak, however, the number of clubs (and members) has declined, although the number of rounds overall, has increased over the last year. The golf industry in Australia, as elsewhere, is trying to raise the visibility of the game as well as to introduce it to under-represented groups. Several golf-related initiatives have been introduced in recent years including MyGolf (a national junior programme), Swing Fit (for women) and Inclusion (for disabled golfers).

The information in this profile was compiled from the Golf Australia web site ([www.golf.org.au](http://www.golf.org.au)) whose mission is to "... raise the level of interest and participation in the game from grassroots golfers through to the elite levels, spectators, volunteers and associated industry bodies."

### The game of golf

**G**olf is played on either a 9 hole or 18 hole course (although some courses may have 27 or even 36 holes), where a player begins on the 'tee' and ends on the 'green', with the fairway, rough, bunkers (hazards), and perhaps water, in between.

It is generally played (and scored) on an individual basis although it is common to play as part of a foursome. Each hole has a 'par', that is the number of strokes that it should take a player to reach the green (and sink the ball) from the tee. This is based on the expectation that a golfer will require two putts per hole. For instance, a par 4 would include two putts, as would a par 5, etc.

**3**  
PAR 4

**Bear Right:** This dogleg-right par 4 plays from elevated tees to a large landing area. Aim just to the left of the fairway bunkers; long hitters can carry them. Watch for the hidden pond on the left. The moderately uphill, short-iron second shot is to a green with a severe false front.

YARDS

- 366
- 335
- 301
- 276

Figure 7.1: Hole 3, from a guide to the course at Lake Winnepesaukee Golf Club

Pars are also established for 9 hole courses and 18 hole courses, which equal the sum of the individual pars of the holes. In its simplest form, the player with the fewest strokes to play the course is the winner, although ‘handicaps’ are often taken into consideration and there are many different variations on the basic format. Penalties are also invoked under certain situations (which result in the addition of a stroke or strokes to the score).

While every golf course is different, there are several major categories of courses including *parkland* (manicured, lots of trees), *links* (near the coast, fewer trees, grasses), and *desert* courses (as might be found in the American West or the Middle East). The people who design these courses are known as golf course designers or architects and there are several of whom are well known including Donald Ross, Robert Trent Jones, A.W. Tillinghast, and Stanley Thompson. Architects are, rightly, strongly associated with the courses they design. For example, one might hear reference to a ‘Donald Ross course’. Donald Ross (1872 – 1948) was born in Scotland, emigrated to the USA and designed courses in the USA, Canada and Cuba. As with other architects, he had certain signature features and designs, for which he is still known. More recently, former professional golfers such as Bobby Jones, Jack Nicklaus and Arnold Palmer have also designed and developed courses. Often when contemporary architects design a course, it is in conjunction with a full-scale development with a club and includes a real estate component.

Developing a golf course is an expensive undertaking. A typical 18 hole course can require 60 hectares (or about 150 acres) of land and cost a lot of money to build. In *Building A Practical Golf Facility*, by Michael Hurdzan of the American Society of Golf Course Architects, examples of actual courses range from about \$800,000 USD to over \$10 million USD. Factors affecting the total cost include the amount and cost of land, who designs it, and its features.

To understand golf, it is important to know that the golf profession and the rules of golf are overseen by different entities. The United States Golf Association (USGA) and the Royal and Ancient (R & A) oversee the rules of golf, which are updated periodically. There are only 34 major rules in the game but the most recent rulebook runs to 121 pages and does not include decisions (official rulings) or etiquette. Please note that, as we write, the USGA and R & A are proposing major rules changes, to be implemented in 2019. The rules are aimed at a major simplification and update. Information about the new rules can be found at: [www.usga.org/content/usga/home-page/rules-hub/rules-modernization/text/golfs-new-rules-faqs.html](http://www.usga.org/content/usga/home-page/rules-hub/rules-modernization/text/golfs-new-rules-faqs.html)