

# **The Development of Women's Golf in Saskatoon**

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Researching the history of women's golf in Saskatchewan is the first of three phases of a Sport History Project funded by the Saskatchewan Sports Hall of Fame. The history will be written in phase two, and published in phase three (1997). The Hall has published 11 histories of sport in Saskatchewan so far, and has 18 in progress. Funding is provided by Saskatchewan LOTTERIES.

This presentation of slides and accompanying comment was followed by personal experiences related about women's golf. The slides showed women playing golf from the late 1890s through to 1967 when the Canadian Amateur Championships were held at Saskatoon's Riverside Golf Club and Irene MacKenzie was President of the CLGA.

The presentation shows several aspects of the development of women's involvement in the game. Golf spread as the rail and road systems developed throughout the province. Women were playing and organizing their own competitions as early as 1911, but were also expected to completely prepare the clubhouse before the season began. The courses were very rough: the fairways were unwatered, there were few trees, and sand greens were common.

The presentation highlights a number of individuals. Margaret Esson, (a legend of the Saskatchewan game), who in 1936 at just 15 years of age was (and still is) the youngest woman ever to win a Provincial Ladies' Golf Championship in Canada. Other notable pioneer golfers include Mrs. Rideout, Regina, the first Provincial President, Rene Robbins, Mabel Palko, Eileen Price, Phyllis Barclay, Eleanor Van Impe and Joanne Goulet.

In the second part of the presentation, Joanne Goulet spoke about the significance of golf in the rural areas of the province, including the common six and nine hole municipal courses, and sand greens. Eleanor Reid recounted her experiences of the Ladies' Section of Prince Albert, Saskatchewan club.

Women have been pioneers in opening up the Canadian west, and also in playing and organizing the game of golf. Their achievements will be honoured through publications of a history of women's golf in Saskatchewan.