



Cottrell Park Golf Resort Press Statement

Embargo: Midday 27th May 2018

Hearing finds no evidence of gender discrimination at leading Welsh Golf Resort

Claims that a leading Welsh Golf Resort, discriminated against a lady golfer have been thrown out by a disciplinary hearing.

Ms Lowri Roberts, had alleged that access to competitive women's golf run by Cottrell Park Members Association, (a golf club run by the members), at Cottrell Park Golf Resort was restrictive.

During a formal disciplinary hearing, the award winning Resort confirmed that:

- The Resort has an active membership of lady golfers
- Competitive golf slots are available to lady golfers every Saturday morning during prime times
- That Ms Roberts regularly plays competitive Saturday morning golf at the Resort during prime times

In the run up to the hearing, unfounded allegations about access to golf for women at one of Wales' busiest golf resorts had been made in social media, reported by the press and even mentioned in the House of Commons by a South Wales MP.

The Resort strenuously denied all allegations made by Ms Roberts.

The finding of the hearing, which took place on Sunday 20 May 2018, dismissed outright the claims of Ms Roberts, that she could not play golf on a Saturday morning during prime times.

The investigation into the allegations found that Lowri Roberts claims' of discrimination did not stand up to any of the relevant rules, guidelines or legislation provided by:

- The Terms and Condition of Membership of Cottrell Park Golf Resort.
- The Equality Act 2010.
- Wales Golf's terms of membership and its rules.
- The Royal & Ancient Rules of Golf.



The hearing found that Ms Roberts had in fact acted in contravention of the Terms and Conditions of Membership of the Resort. This breach of the Resort's Terms and Conditions resulted in a penalty of a month's suspension. Including the period of the investigation, Ms Roberts is entitled to continue playing casual or competitive golf in a single or mixed gender environment from 8 June.

On hearing the outcome of the proceedings, Mr David Johns-Powell, Managing Director of Cottrell Park Ltd, the owner of the Resort, said:

"The formal decision of the hearing is welcomed by the Resort, and should put an end to the confusion and speculation that has been unnecessarily created.

"Ms Roberts has been playing competitive Saturday morning golf at prime times, and we now look forward to drawing a line under these circumstances and welcoming her back to continue enjoying her membership on our two championship courses.

"We're incredibly proud that, thanks to our outstanding customer service and unrivalled facilities, Cottrell Park boasts one of the largest golf memberships in Wales.

"We run our Resort with a welcoming, inclusive approach, and we're always happy for our female and male members to bring their family and friends to visit and explore the facilities on offer – in fact, we strongly encourage it".

The hearing proceedings, which listened to evidence from both Ms Roberts and the Resort, found no evidence to prove that any form of gender-based discrimination had taken place, and that the publicity campaign by the Ms Roberts had served only to bring the good name of the Resort into disrepute.

In fact, when questioning the respondent in the case, the chairman was told that by Ms Roberts that she had been playing competitive golf in the Ladies' competition on Saturday morning's during prime times and that she had even arranged some of those ladies' Saturday competitions herself.

Cottrell Park Members Association Ladies' Captain and former Mayoress of Cowbridge, Mrs Lorraine Pointon-Bell, has since confirmed that the Resort and the Club has an active female membership:

"The ladies section at Cottrell Park has 85 members, 25 of which are full members and eligible to play in our regular weekend competitions.

"Here at Cottrell Park we are always looking to grow the female membership, and have devised Ladies' Golf Coaching for beginners and a Ladies New2Golf Academy Membership. Sessions will vary from being on the Driving Range, to the putting green and the courses, and competitions will run throughout the year."



Members and Visitors to Cottrell Park Golf Resort have a choice of two championship courses on which to play their competitions, both of which have been constructed with USGA specification greens. Spanning 6,091 yards off the yellow tees, the Mackintosh Course is the longer of the two parkland courses. The 5,799 yards Button Gwinnett Course feature 13 lakes spread over 18 holes, and culminates in a fantastic finishing hole in full view of the club house. Both courses can be played by female and male visitors and members of the Resort.

Cottrell Park Members Association Men's Captain, Mr Bob Magee, has also confirmed that there has, and will always be a respectful and professional welcome for lady golfers at the Club and the Resort. He commented:

"We are once again holding a Ladies Open Day on 5 July. Both players and supporters are encouraged to come along and enjoy the high standard of golf in this team stableford competition on the Mackintosh course.

"With a 'longest drive' and two 'nearest the pin' prizes up for grabs, we are looking forward to seeing a high standard of golf from our field of lady golfers".

Cottrell Park Golf Resort is owned and operated by Cottrell Park Ltd. The Resort opened in 1996 and, in addition to its two 18 hole championship golf courses, has other leisure facilities which are accessible to members, guests and visitors of any gender, sexual orientation, colour or creed.

Following the outcome of the disciplinary hearing, Ms Roberts has the right to appeal the decision within 7 days. The Resort's General Manager, however, already has his sights set on a year of casual and competitive golf for the thousands of women and men who visit the Resort each year. Mr Derek Smith said:

"We have over 21 years experience of delivering a family-friendly and inclusive experience for golfers of all ages, genders and abilities. We will be showcasing that stance once again with our annual Mixed Open Day on 2nd September. We are pleased to be able to offer this great day of mixed gender golf, the perfect way for female and male golfing partners to show how gender inclusive golf at Cottrell Park really is".

Cottrell Park Golf Resort has been recognised with a 2018 Trip Advisor Certificate of Excellence, based on the consistently great reviews posted by its female and male visitors on the world's largest travel site.

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For Further Information Please Contact:

David Johns-Powell: david@johns-powell.com 07921211104