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**THE WOMEN'S GOLF  
NO-NONSENSE DICTIONARY**

**FINALLY, GOLF TERMS  
EXPLAINED IN PLAIN ENGLISH**

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## Introduction

Welcome to **The Women's Golf No-Nonsense Dictionary**. Finally, golf terms explained in plain English," brought to you by WomensGolf.com. This straightforward guide is designed to demystify the world of golf for beginners and serve as a handy reference for players of all levels.

Golf, with its rich history and unique terminology, can often feel like a foreign language to newcomers. This book aims to bridge that gap, providing clear, concise explanations for over 100 essential golf terms and concepts. From the basics of the game to the intricacies of play on various parts of the course and even extending to the social aspects in the clubhouse, we've got you covered.

Each term is presented with a simple definition, practical context for when you're likely to use it, and common misunderstandings to avoid. This no-nonsense approach ensures that you'll not only understand the words but also know how to apply them correctly in real golfing situations.

There are deliberate duplications where the same term is commonly used in more than one part of the game. We're grouped the terms for easy reading access and you can search the dictionary as a PDF document.

Whether you're stepping onto the course for the first time, looking to improve your game, or simply want to feel more confident in golf conversations, this dictionary is an invaluable resource. It's perfect for new players seeking to navigate the golf world with confidence, experienced golfers aiming to refine their understanding, or even non-players who want to better follow the sport.

So, grab your clubs, flip through these pages, and get ready to speak the language of golf with confidence!

## Section One: Golf Basics

**Term:** Ace

**Definition:** A hole-in-one; getting the ball in the hole with your first shot from the tee.

**When You'll Use It:** Celebrating a rare and amazing shot!

**Common Misunderstanding:** Confusing it with a birdie.

**Term:** Birdie

**Definition:** One stroke under par on a hole.

**When You'll Use It:** Discussing your score after a good hole.

**Common Misunderstanding:** Thinking it's a hole-in-one (that's an ace!).

**Term:** Bogey

**Definition:** One stroke over par on a hole.

**When You'll Use It:** Describing a less-than-ideal hole.

**Common Misunderstanding:** Thinking it's always a bad score (it's relative to par).

**Term:** Divot

**Definition:** A piece of turf dug up by a club during a swing.

**When You'll Use It:** Replacing your divots on the fairway is good etiquette.

**Common Misunderstanding:** Thinking you should replace divots in the rough.

**Term:** Fore

**Definition:** A warning shout when a ball is hit towards someone.

**When You'll Use It:** Whenever your shot might hit someone.

**Common Misunderstanding:** Not yelling it when you should.

**Term:** Grip

**Definition:** The part of the club you hold.

**When You'll Use It:** Talking about club maintenance or your swing technique.

**Common Misunderstanding:** Confusing it with the clubhead.

**Term:** Handicap

**Definition:** A numerical measure of a golfer's skill.

**When You'll Use It:** When entering tournaments or friendly competitions.

**Common Misunderstanding:** Thinking a lower handicap is worse (it's better!).

**Term:** Par

**Definition:** The expected number of strokes for a hole or a round.

**When You'll Use It:** Talking about your score in relation to par.

**Common Misunderstanding:** Thinking par is the average score (it's the expected score for a skilled player).

**Term:** Round

**Definition:** Playing 18 holes of golf.

**When You'll Use It:** Planning a tee time or discussing your golf day.

**Common Misunderstanding:** Thinking 9 holes is a "round" (that's a half-round).

**Term:** Scorecard

**Definition:** A card used to record your scores.

**When You'll Use It:** After each hole, and to calculate your final score.

**Common Misunderstanding:** Not knowing how to properly mark your score.

**Term:** Stroke

**Definition:** A swing intended to hit the golf ball.

**When You'll Use It:** Counting your strokes on each hole.

**Common Misunderstanding:** Confusing it with a putt (a putt is a type of stroke).

**Term:** Tee Box

**Definition:** The starting area for each hole where you take your first shot.

**When You'll Use It:** When starting play on each hole or discussing where to begin your shot.

**Common Misunderstanding:** Many new golfers think the "tee box" refers only to the small wooden or plastic peg you put your ball on, rather than the entire starting area.

**Term:** Wedge

**Definition:** A type of golf club used for short shots, often around the green.

**When You'll Use It:** Approaching the green or hitting out of the rough.

**Common Misunderstanding:** Thinking all wedges are the same (they have different lofts).

**Term:** Wood

**Definition:** A type of golf club with a large head, used for long-distance shots.

**When You'll Use It:** Off the tee or for long fairway shots.

**Common Misunderstanding:** Thinking all woods are for beginners (everyone uses them!).

**Term:** Yardage

**Definition:** The distance to the hole.

**When You'll Use It:** Choosing the right club for your shot.

**Common Misunderstanding:** Not knowing how to use the yardage markers on the course.

## Section Two: On the Tee

**Term:** Tee Box

**Definition:** The starting area for each hole where you take your first shot.

**When You'll Use It:** When starting play on each hole or discussing where to begin your shot.

**Common Misunderstanding:** Many new golfers think the "tee box" refers only to the small wooden or plastic peg you put your ball on, rather than the entire starting area.

**Term:** Driver

**Definition:** The longest club in your bag, designed for hitting the ball maximum distance from the tee.

**When You'll Use It:** When discussing or selecting your club for long-distance shots, typically from the tee.

**Common Misunderstanding:** Some think a "driver" is any club used from the tee box, when actually it's a specific club that can be used anywhere on the course.

**Term:** Fairway

**Definition:** The short-grass area between the tee box and the green, the ideal place for your ball to land.

**When You'll Use It:** When describing where your ball landed or when planning your next shot.

**Common Misunderstanding:** Some new golfers think the fairway is the entire grassy area of the hole, not realizing it's specifically the closely mowed strip.

**Term:** Rough

**Definition:** The longer grass areas bordering the fairway.

**When You'll Use It:** When describing where your ball landed or when discussing the challenges of a particular shot.

**Common Misunderstanding:** Some players think the "rough" refers to any area that's not the fairway, including sand traps or wooded areas.

**Term:** Bunker

**Definition:** A hazard filled with sand, also called a sand trap.

**When You'll Use It:** When your ball lands in one or when discussing course features.

**Common Misunderstanding:** Many newcomers think all bunkers are the same, not realizing there are different types (fairway bunkers, greenside bunkers) that may require different techniques.

**Term:** Hazard

**Definition:** Any area of the course designed to make play more challenging, including water, bunkers, and marked penalty areas.

**When You'll Use It:** When planning shots around trouble areas or when taking relief from them.

**Common Misunderstanding:** Some golfers think hazards only refer to water features, not realizing that bunkers and other marked areas are also considered hazards.

**Term:** Par

**Definition:** The number of strokes a skilled golfer should take to complete a hole.

**When You'll Use It:** To understand the difficulty of each hole and keep score.

**Common Misunderstanding:** Many new golfers think par is an average score, when it's actually the expected score for a very skilled player.

**Term:** Stroke

**Definition:** Any attempt to hit the ball, whether you make contact or not.

**When You'll Use It:** When counting your score or discussing the rules of play.

**Common Misunderstanding:** Some beginners think a stroke only counts if you hit the ball, not realizing that a swing and a miss still counts as a stroke.

**Term:** Fore

**Definition:** A warning shout to alert other golfers that your ball might be heading their way.

**When You'll Use It:** Immediately when you realize your ball might go near other players.

**Common Misunderstanding:** Some new players think "fore" is short for "forward" or "before," when it's actually derived from the military term "beware before."

**Term:** Slice

**Definition:** A shot that curves dramatically from left to right (for right-handed golfers).

**When You'll Use It:** When describing the path of your ball or discussing common swing problems.

**Common Misunderstanding:** Many beginners think a slice is any shot that goes to the right, not realizing it specifically refers to a curving ball flight.

**Term:** Hook

**Definition:** A shot that curves dramatically from right to left (for right-handed golfers).

**When You'll Use It:** When describing the path of your ball or discussing swing mechanics.

**Common Misunderstanding:** Some golfers confuse a hook with a draw, not realizing a hook is a more severe and usually unintentional curve.

**Term:** Mulligan



**Definition:** An informal practice of taking a second shot without penalty, usually only on the first tee.

**When You'll Use It:** When offered a chance to retake your first shot in a casual game.

**Common Misunderstanding:** Many new golfers think mulligans are an official rule in golf, when they're actually just an informal practice not allowed in tournament play.

## Section Three: On the Green

**Term:** Green

**Definition:** The closely mown area surrounding the hole where players putt.

**When You'll Use It:** When discussing the final part of the hole or describing where your ball has landed.

**Common Misunderstanding:** Some beginners think the entire area around the hole is the green, not realizing it has a specific boundary.

**Term:** Putt

**Definition:** A gentle, rolling shot used to get the ball into the hole when on the green.

**When You'll Use It:** When you're on the green and trying to get the ball in the hole.

**Common Misunderstanding:** New players sometimes think any short shot is a putt, even if it's not on the green.

**Term:** Putter

**Definition:** A specialized club with a flat face, designed for rolling the ball on the green.

**When You'll Use It:** When selecting a club for putting or discussing equipment.

**Common Misunderstanding:** Some golfers think putters can only be used on the green, when they can actually be used from anywhere on the course.

**Term:** Flag or Flagstick

**Definition:** The tall, removable pole with a flag that marks the location of the hole on the green.

**When You'll Use It:** When discussing the target for your shots or deciding whether to remove it for putting.

**Common Misunderstanding:** Some new players think the flag must always be removed before putting, which is no longer required by the rules.

**Term:** Cup

**Definition:** The actual hole on the green where the ball should end up.

**When You'll Use It:** When describing the final destination of your putt or the hole location.

**Common Misunderstanding:** Some beginners don't realize the cup has a standard size and think it varies from hole to hole.

**Term:** Lip

**Definition:** The edge of the cup where the hole meets the surface of the green.

**When You'll Use It:** When describing how close a putt came to going in or discussing missed putts.

**Common Misunderstanding:** Many new golfers don't realize the lip can affect how a ball falls into or misses the hole.

**Term:** Break

**Definition:** The amount a putt will curve due to the slope of the green.

**When You'll Use It:** When reading the green and planning your putt.

**Common Misunderstanding:** Some beginners think break only refers to left or right movement, not realizing it also includes uphill and downhill slopes.

**Term:** Read

**Definition:** The process of analyzing the green to determine how your putt will break.

**When You'll Use It:** When preparing to putt or discussing strategy on the green.

**Common Misunderstanding:** New players often think reading a green is just about left and right breaks, not considering speed and subtle contours.

**Term:** Line

**Definition:** The intended path of your putt from the ball to the hole.

**When You'll Use It:** When discussing or planning your putting strategy.

**Common Misunderstanding:** Some golfers think the line is always straight to the hole, not accounting for break.

**Term:** Grain

**Definition:** The direction in which the grass on the green is growing, which can affect ball roll.

**When You'll Use It:** When reading the green or discussing factors that influence putting.

**Common Misunderstanding:** Many beginners aren't aware that grain exists or how it can impact their putts.

**Term:** Stimpmeter

**Definition:** A device used to measure the speed of a green.

**When You'll Use It:** When discussing course conditions or comparing green speeds between different courses.

**Common Misunderstanding:** Some golfers think a higher stimpmeter reading always means a better green, not realizing it's just a measure of speed.

**Term:** Approach

**Definition:** A shot played to the green, typically from the fairway or rough.

**When You'll Use It:** When discussing or planning your shot to reach the green.

**Common Misunderstanding:** Some new players think an approach is only the shot right before reaching the green, when it can be from various distances.

## Section Four: Scoring and Play

**Term:** Birdie

**Definition:** A score of one stroke under par on a hole.

**When You'll Use It:** When celebrating a good score or discussing your performance on a hole.

**Common Misunderstanding:** Some beginners think a birdie is always three strokes, not realizing it depends on the par of the hole.

**Term:** Bogey

**Definition:** A score of one stroke over par on a hole.

**When You'll Use It:** When describing your score or discussing your performance.

**Common Misunderstanding:** New players sometimes think a bogey is always a bad score, not realizing it can be acceptable for many skill levels.

**Term:** Eagle

**Definition:** A score of two strokes under par on a hole.

**When You'll Use It:** When celebrating an exceptional score or discussing rare achievements.

**Common Misunderstanding:** Some golfers think eagles are only possible on par-5 holes, when they can occur on any hole longer than a par-3.

**Term:** Ace or Hole-in-One

**Definition:** Holing the ball directly from the tee shot.

**When You'll Use It:** When describing or celebrating this rare and exciting achievement.

**Common Misunderstanding:** Some beginners think hole-in-ones are more common than they actually are.

**Term:** Handicap

**Definition:** A numerical measure of a golfer's potential ability, used to level the playing field between players of different skill levels.

**When You'll Use It:** When discussing your skill level or calculating scores in handicap-adjusted competitions.

**Common Misunderstanding:** Many new golfers think a high handicap is better, when it actually indicates a less skilled player.

**Term:** Stroke Play

**Definition:** A scoring method where the total number of strokes taken over the entire round determines the winner.

**When You'll Use It:** When discussing or participating in most standard golf competitions.

**Common Misunderstanding:** Some beginners don't realize that stroke play counts every shot, including penalties.

**Term:** Match Play

**Definition:** A scoring method where players compete hole-by-hole, with the player winning the most holes winning the match.

**When You'll Use It:** When participating in or discussing certain types of golf competitions.

**Common Misunderstanding:** Some golfers think the total number of strokes matters in match play, when it's actually about winning individual holes.

**Term:** Scramble

**Definition:** A team format where all players hit from the best ball position after each shot.

**When You'll Use It:** When participating in or discussing casual or charity golf events.

**Common Misunderstanding:** Some players think scrambles are an official competitive format, when they're typically used for fun or fundraising events.

**Term:** Foursome

**Definition:** A group of four players, or a type of match where two teams of two players alternate shots.

**When You'll Use It:** When organizing a game or discussing different play formats.

**Common Misunderstanding:** Some golfers confuse a foursome (alternating shots) with four-ball (each player plays their own ball).

**Term:** Stableford

**Definition:** A point-based scoring system where higher scores are better, based on performance relative to par.

**When You'll Use It:** When participating in or discussing this specific type of competition.

**Common Misunderstanding:** Many golfers unfamiliar with Stableford don't realize that higher scores are better in this format.

**Term:** Gimme

**Definition:** An informal agreement to count a very short putt as holed without actually putting it.

**When You'll Use It:** In casual games when a putt is considered too short to miss.

**Common Misunderstanding:** Some new players think gimmes are part of the official rules, when they're actually only used in casual play.

**Term:** Penalty Stroke

**Definition:** An additional stroke added to a player's score for violating certain rules or taking relief from hazards.

**When You'll Use It:** When discussing rules infractions or playing from difficult situations.

**Common Misunderstanding:** Some beginners don't realize that penalty strokes are added in addition to the stroke actually played.

## Section Five: Course Features

**Term:** Dogleg

**Definition:** A hole that bends left or right, often requiring strategy in shot placement.

**When You'll Use It:** When describing hole layouts or planning your tee shot strategy.

**Common Misunderstanding:** Some new golfers think doglegs always bend at a sharp angle, when they can be more subtle curves.

**Term:** Water Hazard

**Definition:** Any sea, lake, pond, river, ditch, or other open water on the course.

**When You'll Use It:** When discussing course obstacles or planning shots to avoid water.

**Common Misunderstanding:** Some players think all water on a course is treated the same, not realizing there are different rules for different types of water hazards.

**Term:** Out of Bounds

**Definition:** Areas outside the course boundaries where play is not allowed.

**When You'll Use It:** When discussing course limits or dealing with balls hit beyond the course boundaries.

**Common Misunderstanding:** Many beginners don't realize that out of bounds carries a stricter penalty than other hazards.

**Term:** Cart Path

**Definition:** A paved or prepared surface for golf carts to travel on.

**When You'll Use It:** When discussing course navigation or taking relief from cart paths.

**Common Misunderstanding:** Some golfers think you always get free relief from cart paths, not realizing it depends on the specific situation.

**Term:** Clubhouse

**Definition:** The main building at a golf course, often containing locker rooms, pro shop, and dining facilities.

**When You'll Use It:** When referring to the central meeting point or facilities at a golf course.

**Common Misunderstanding:** New players sometimes think the clubhouse is only for members, when many are open to all golfers.

**Term:** Driving Range

**Definition:** A practice area for hitting full shots, usually with measured distance markers.

**When You'll Use It:** When discussing practice routines or warming up before a round.

**Common Misunderstanding:** Some beginners think the driving range is only for using drivers, when it's for practicing all types of full swings.

**Term:** Putting Green

**Definition:** A practice area with multiple holes for working on your putting.

**When You'll Use It:** When talking about pre-round warm-up or specific putting practice.

**Common Misunderstanding:** New golfers sometimes confuse the practice putting green with the actual greens on the course.

**Term:** Fringe

**Definition:** The closely mown area immediately surrounding the green, slightly longer than the green itself.

**When You'll Use It:** When describing ball position or discussing shot options near the green.

**Common Misunderstanding:** Some players think the fringe is part of the green, when it's actually a separate area with different playing characteristics.

**Term:** Apron

**Definition:** Another term for the fringe or the area of short grass immediately surrounding the green.

**When You'll Use It:** When discussing the area around the green or planning approach shots.

**Common Misunderstanding:** Many golfers use "apron" and "fringe" interchangeably, not realizing some courses distinguish between them.

**Term:** Pin Position

**Definition:** The specific location of the hole on the green.

**When You'll Use It:** When discussing the day's course setup or planning approach shots.

**Common Misunderstanding:** Some beginners think pin positions are always in the center of the green, not realizing they change regularly.

**Term:** Yardage Marker

**Definition:** On-course indicators showing the distance to the center of the green.

**When You'll Use It:** When determining the distance for your next shot.

**Common Misunderstanding:** New players sometimes think yardage markers show distance to the pin, not realizing they typically indicate distance to the center of the green.

**Term:** Drop Zone



**Definition:** A designated area where players can drop their ball after certain penalties, especially near hazards.

**When You'll Use It:** When taking relief from hazards or discussing course rules.

**Common Misunderstanding:** Some golfers think drop zones are always available, when they're actually only present on certain holes or courses.

## Section Six: Golf Etiquette

**Term:** Fore

**Definition:** A warning shout used when a ball might be heading toward other players.

**When You'll Use It:** Immediately after hitting a shot that could potentially endanger others.

**Common Misunderstanding:** Some new players are hesitant to yell "fore," not realizing it's a crucial safety measure.

**Term:** Ready Golf

**Definition:** A practice where players hit when ready, rather than strictly adhering to honors (furthest from hole hits first).

**When You'll Use It:** During casual rounds or when trying to maintain a good pace of play.

**Common Misunderstanding:** Some golfers think ready golf is always appropriate, not realizing formal competitions may still use traditional order of play.

**Term:** Divot

**Definition:** A piece of turf removed when striking the ball, which should be replaced or filled with provided sand/seed mix.

**When You'll Use It:** When discussing course care or repairing the course after shots.

**Common Misunderstanding:** New players sometimes think leaving divots is acceptable, not realizing the importance of repairing them.

**Term:** Ball Mark

**Definition:** An indentation on the green caused by a ball landing, which should be repaired.

**When You'll Use It:** When maintaining the green or discussing course care responsibilities.

**Common Misunderstanding:** Some beginners don't realize they should repair their ball marks, or don't know how to do it properly.

**Term:** Honors

**Definition:** The right to play first from the tee, traditionally given to the player with the lowest score on the previous hole.

**When You'll Use It:** When determining order of play, especially in more formal settings.

**Common Misunderstanding:** Many casual golfers aren't aware of the honors system, especially when playing ready golf.

**Term:** Away

**Definition:** Describes the ball furthest from the hole, which traditionally should be played first.

**When You'll Use It:** When determining order of play during a hole.

**Common Misunderstanding:** Some players always wait for the person furthest away, not realizing ready golf is often more efficient.

**Term:** Gimme

**Definition:** A very short putt that players agree can be counted as holed without actually putting it.

**When You'll Use It:** In casual games to speed up play on very short putts.

**Common Misunderstanding:** Some new players think gimmes are part of the official rules, when they're actually only for informal play.

**Term:** Slow Play

**Definition:** Taking an excessive amount of time to play, often holding up groups behind.

**When You'll Use It:** When discussing pace of play or course management issues.

**Common Misunderstanding:** Some golfers don't realize how their slow play affects others on the course.

**Term:** Let Through

**Definition:** Allowing a faster group to play through and go ahead of your group.

**When You'll Use It:** When a quicker group is waiting behind you and there's space ahead.

**Common Misunderstanding:** Some players are reluctant to let groups through, not realizing it's proper etiquette and can improve everyone's experience.

**Term:** Pitch Mark Tool

**Definition:** A small tool used to repair ball marks on the green.

**When You'll Use It:** When fixing indentations on the green caused by landing balls.

**Common Misunderstanding:** Some new golfers don't carry a pitch mark tool, not realizing it's an essential part of golf etiquette.

**Term:** Quiet on the Tee

**Definition:** A request for silence and stillness when a player is preparing to hit, especially on the tee.

**When You'll Use It:** When someone in your group is about to take a shot, particularly off the tee.

**Common Misunderstanding:** Some beginners don't realize how important quiet and stillness are for a player's concentration.

**Term:** Playing Through

**Definition:** The act of a faster group passing a slower group on the course.

**When You'll Use It:** When discussing or engaging in the process of letting a quicker group go ahead.

**Common Misunderstanding:** Some players think playing through is rude, when it's actually a normal and often necessary part of maintaining good pace of play.

## Section Seven: In the Clubhouse

**Term:** 19th Hole

**Definition:** Informal name for the clubhouse bar or restaurant.

**When You'll Use It:** When discussing post-round activities or socializing.

**Common Misunderstanding:** Some new golfers don't realize this is a common part of golf culture, not just a place to eat or drink.

**Term:** Handicap

**Definition:** A number representing a golfer's ability, used to level the playing field in competitions.

**When You'll Use It:** When discussing scores, tournaments, or player abilities.

**Common Misunderstanding:** Many beginners think a high handicap is good, when it actually represents a less skilled player.

**Term:** Scorecard

**Definition:** A card used to record scores for each hole during a round.

**When You'll Use It:** Throughout the round and when submitting scores after play.

**Common Misunderstanding:** Some new players don't realize the importance of accurate scorekeeping for handicap purposes.

**Term:** Pro Shop

**Definition:** The retail store at a golf course selling equipment, apparel, and accessories.

**When You'll Use It:** When discussing where to buy golf gear or book lessons.

**Common Misunderstanding:** Some golfers think pro shops are only for professionals, when they're open to all players.

**Term:** Spike Bar

**Definition:** An area of the clubhouse where golfers can enter wearing golf shoes with spikes.

**When You'll Use It:** When discussing clubhouse areas or changing shoes after a round.

**Common Misunderstanding:** Some players don't realize certain areas of the clubhouse may be off-limits while wearing spiked shoes.

**Term:** Locker Room

**Definition:** An area for changing clothes and storing personal items.

**When You'll Use It:** Before or after a round, or when discussing clubhouse facilities.

**Common Misunderstanding:** Some new golfers don't realize locker rooms often have unwritten etiquette rules.

**Term:** Golf Simulator

**Definition:** A computerized system that allows indoor golf practice or play.

**When You'll Use It:** When discussing practice options, especially during bad weather.

**Common Misunderstanding:** Some players think simulators are just for fun, not realizing they can be valuable training tools.

**Term:** Stroke Index

**Definition:** A number on the scorecard indicating the difficulty of each hole, used for handicap calculations.

**When You'll Use It:** When calculating handicap strokes or discussing hole difficulty.

**Common Misunderstanding:** Many new golfers confuse stroke index with the number of strokes they should take on a hole.

**Term:** Members' Area

**Definition:** A part of the clubhouse reserved for club members.

**When You'll Use It:** When discussing club facilities or membership benefits.

**Common Misunderstanding:** Some visitors don't realize certain areas may be off-limits to non-members.

**Term:** Dress Code

**Definition:** Rules about appropriate attire on the course and in the clubhouse.

**When You'll Use It:** When preparing for a round or visiting a new course.

**Common Misunderstanding:** Some new golfers don't realize dress codes can vary significantly between courses.