

Golf courses use gimmicks to lure younger players



Korbel has a cork popping competition at the celebrity golf tournament in Tahoe.
Photo/LTN file

By Bill Pennington, New York Times

GREENSBORO, Ga. – Golf holes the size of pizzas. Soccer balls on the back nine. A mulligan on every hole.

These are some of the measures – some would say gimmicks – that golf courses across the country have experimented with to stop people from quitting the game.

Golf has always reveled in its standards and rich tradition. But increasingly a victim of its own image and hidebound ways, golf has lost five million players in the last decade, according to the National Golf Foundation, with 20 percent of the existing 25 million golfers apt to quit in the next few years.

People under 35 have especially spurned the game, saying it takes too long to play, is too difficult to learn and has too many tiresome rules.

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