



aboutGOLF®

HOW AN INDOOR GOLF SIMULATOR RAISED THE BAR AT UNION COLLEGE

WOMEN'S GOLF PROGRAM

Mary Ellen Burt has one of the most winning track records as a head coach at Union College in her 25-year run as the women's basketball coach. In 2010, she decided to combine her passion for golf and love of coaching, proposing that Union College establish a women's golf program. She received the green light in 2011 and built the program from the ground up.

THE CHALLENGE

Coach Burt knew that recruiting and climate would be her main barriers to getting the program off the ground. "I started by convincing students with a history of golfing at the college and women from my basketball team who were natural athletes to sign up. We established our home course at the Mohawk Club, which is 3 miles from campus. Then I realized we're in Upstate New York, and the weather is brutal. What am I going to do to help these kids in the winter?"

The athletic director gave Coach Burt the use of a racquetball court. "For almost two years, we were hitting a lot of indoor balls," she said. "I took the indoor carpet from the training center, and I made chipping areas. I made a putting green from an old carpet. I would hit balls into the wall and just kept trying to go from there."

After talking to coaches and fellow golfers in indoor golf leagues, Coach Burt obtained funding from the athletic department for a golf simulator.

QUESTIONS?

Contact sales@aboutgolf.com or call 800-445-GOLF for more information.





“A lot of people had launch monitors, but we wanted something very accurate for the short game. Once I tried the aboutGOLF simulator, it was so obvious you could hit balls and get a feel. You could see your shot and the data to go with it.”

- Mary Ellen Burt, Head Coach at Union College

WHY AG?

“I didn’t really know anything about golf simulators,” said Coach Burt. “There weren’t a lot of schools in our conference that had them, so I couldn’t get a referral from a colleague. A lot of people had launch monitors, but we wanted something very accurate for the short game. Once I tried the aboutGOLF simulator, it was so obvious you could hit balls and get a feel. You could see your shot and the data to go with it.”

“Ken was my salesperson, and he just talked to me about golf. I talked about different things we were trying to do at Union, and he showed me how to run drills to complement our goals. It all came down to the love of golf, the love of kids, and trying to coach better. Yes, the sales office was in my backyard, but even when I had situations where I had to talk to the support staff, it was easy to learn what I needed to know.

“The kids’ eyes lit up when they came back to school in September. It was awesome.”

QUESTIONS?

Contact sales@aboutgolf.com or call 800-445-GOLF for more information.





THE RESULTS

Mary Ellen Burt has led the Dutchwomen to near-continuous improvement during her tenure. In 2018-19, the team shaved nearly ten strokes per round off the previous single-season record and recorded seven of the ten best single-round scores in school history throughout the year.

“When we first started the program, we were really bad. Every year we got better, and a lot of that had to do with the ability to recruit better players,” said Coach Burt. She found that demoing the simulator to potential recruits and their parents was a real draw. Not only do potential team members see they can practice year-round—Coach Burt has developed innovative teaching techniques using the simulator. Parents are particularly impressed by the way she teaches course management.

Pin seeking is a destructive habit that Coach Burt approaches through iterative teaching. She allows the player to approach the shot how they want and then uses the mulligan button to reset the shot and try a different technique. More often than not, the player sees the value in changing their behavior when they experience success.

QUESTIONS?

Contact sales@aboutgolf.com or call 800-445-GOLF for more information.





“After establishing a space for them, the young women really committed to being a part of a team. We’d have our meetings in the sim room and spend a lot of time together. It motivated people to work harder when they felt like they were part of a team. They know other people are relying on them at a tournament.”

- Mary Ellen Burt, Head Coach at Union College

“They internalize these lessons and practice the same techniques on the course,” said Coach Burt. “They understand their job is to find a target. After time on the golf simulator, the kids understand what I mean when I say, ‘Hey, watch the slope on the fairway. It’s headed to the left. Try to get a target line.’ The golf simulator has tremendously helped with our course management skills.”

Union College installed a door with a code to access the golf simulator so the team can practice whenever it’s convenient for them, whether between classes or at 9 PM. Creating a space for her team to meet and talk golf was about more than having a practice area.

“After establishing a space for them, the young women really committed to being a part of a team. We’d have our meetings in the sim room and spend a lot of time together. It motivated people to work harder when they felt like they were part of a team. They know other people are relying on them at a tournament.”

Coach Burt adapts her instruction style to what the situation demands. “Because I said so’ is no longer an acceptable answer when kids ask why we’re doing something. Besides, I don’t think it’s an effective way to coach. If you can get kids to understand ‘why’ you’re doing something, they learn so much faster. They need to see the outcomes we’re hoping for and what we’re trying to do. It’s so much easier to illustrate they ‘Why’ in the golf simulator.”

QUESTIONS?

Contact sales@aboutgolf.com or call 800-445-GOLF for more information.

