



# Woodstock Community Unit School District 200

**For Immediate Release**

June 18, 2024

**Contact:** Kevin Lyons

815.337.3071

## District 200 ladies take a swing at team golf

Coach Casey Rhode has put the ball on the tee for the first ever Woodstock/Woodstock North co-op girls golf team that will hit the links this fall.

While girls have been allowed to play on the boys team, there hasn't been a standalone girls team, although some other schools in the Kishwaukee River Conference have had them..

The new team will make a big difference for WHS senior Hailey Peterson who's played in Junior PGA events and with her dad, a local golf pro, since she was very young.

"I was really excited because I like playing golf, and I was just kind of hesitant about doing a coed team especially since not many girls played on it," Peterson said.

Rhode, a special education teacher at Woodstock High School, said starting a girls team has been a passion for her for the last few years.

"I went to the camp for the boys golf team last summer and saw that three girls planned on playing, but on such a big team they wouldn't get the amount of attention they needed to hone in on the raw talent that I was seeing. Throughout the entire year, I started asking what it would take for a girls team to begin. The girls deserved something they could call their own."

Rhode said WHS Athletic Director Al Baker has been very supportive helping her navigate through the hurdles of starting a team. "We have a good model for this change with the addition of girls wrestling last year. In both cases, the credit goes to great coaches who advocated for positive change. Casey's enthusiasm for this was just impossible to say no to," Baker said..

One big step forward is the summer girls golf camp Rhode and her father, Jim, are hosting at Woodstock Country Club.

Girls have been allowed to play on the boys teams, but they were required to hit from the men's tees. Some girls who enjoy golf haven't felt comfortable joining mostly male teams for a variety of reasons, which Rhode, who played on a coed team in high school, understands.

“A girls team provides not only a level of comfort, but specifically at the high school age, it allows the girls to try out a new sport and make mistakes and not be judged by anyone but themselves,” Rhode said.

Hannah Tran, an incoming Woodstock North freshman, said she’s enjoyed golfing with her father at local clubs and Top Golf. She plans to also play tennis but is looking forward to the opportunity to golf competitively.

“I thought it was really exciting. I wanted to join so I could learn new things,” Tran said.

Rhode had seven girls in camp this summer and hopes to add a few more for the fall season.

“I love this game and everything it has taught me on and off the course. It truly is a sport that I’ve been able to and will continue to do for the rest of my life, and a sport I hope these girls continue with through their lives as well,” Rhode said.