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NATIONAL GOLF FOUNDATION

Beginner Golfers 2026

Includes U.S.-Based 2025 Year-End Numbers

More than 3 million Americans have played golf on a course for the first time in each of the past six years, an unprecedented stretch of introductions in the game's history. The average annual number of beginner golfers during the post-Covid era – 3.2 million – is 33% higher than when Tiger Woods was at his peak about 2 ½ decades ago. The top end of golf's participation funnel is bigger today than ever, thanks in part to more off-course forms of golf that provide a comfortable, non-intimidating introduction to the game. Survey data indicates the rise in off-course forms of participation is correlative to the increase in green-grass beginners.

Trend in Beginning On-Course Golfers



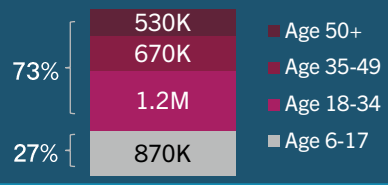
Key Comparisons, vs overall golfer population

HH income	$97K	vs	$110K
Rounds/yr	10.4	vs	18.9
Females	36%	vs	28%
People of Color	40%	vs	26%

Rounds

Total	**34M**
Males	24.5M
Females	9.5M

Age breakdown



Featured Facts

~ 75% Almost three-quarters of beginners play fewer than 8 rounds a year, making them "occasional" golfers.

73% More than 70% of beginning golfers are adults even though most introductory programs in the industry are geared toward juniors.

67% About two-thirds of 'green-grass' beginners come to the game with off-course experience

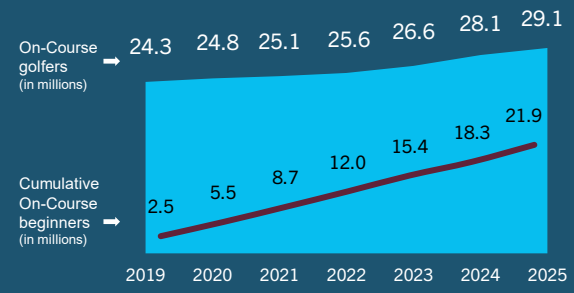
54% of annual participant "inflow" is comprised of beginners over the past decade, vs 46% for returning golfers. The only year returners outnumbered beginners was 2020.

37% Just under 40% of beginners in 2024 were young adults, with many taking up the game after college or after involvement in other team sports slows.

~ 25% Only about ¼ of beginners are converted into committed golfers, a sign of the game's underlying retention issue.

Newcomer Growth vs Overall Participation

While there have been almost 22M beginners in the U.S. from 2019 to 2025, there's been a net gain of just under 5 million on-course golfers. This speaks to the importance of industry efforts to convert beginners to committed golfers and take advantage of the near record number of trials.



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