any young girls may have good golf games, but do not want their college experience to be defined by a Division I athletic experience. Boy, do I have the school for them!!! Williams College is ranked number one as the best liberal arts college in America. Williams has produced 37 Rhodes Scholars, the most of any liberal arts college in the country. The college ranked fifth (after Harvard, Yale, Princeton, and Stanford) in a 2004 Wall Street Journal survey of the best "feeder schools" to the top fifteen business, law, and medical programs in the country.

It is nestled in the Berkshire Hills of Massachusetts. This prestigious school has an exquisite 450-acre campus that houses 2,112 undergraduate and 49 graduate students. Located in western Massachusetts, it is equidistant between New York City and Boston.

Williams boasts an amazing number of firsts including: the first college in America to have students wear caps and gowns at commencement; the first college catalog printed in 1795; and the first alma mater written by an undergraduate in 1859.
One of the distinctive features of a Williams’ education is the tutorial method of learning. Classes are capped at 10 students who are paired for the semester. Unlike traditional American colleges where the professor lectures to the class, each week one of a pair writes and presents a paper while the other critiques it. The following week, the pair reverse roles. In this way, the students take an active part in their own educations, with the professor functioning as an advisor, meeting separately for one hour every week to discuss topics and provide guidance.

Additionally, the housing system is extremely unique. Each incoming freshman class is divided into entries, groups of 20–30 students, who live in a dorm together with their Junior Advisors. Matriculating students are sent a short questionnaire before their interviews and interviews. A college rich in traditions with watchful toasts and banquets, the Williams College lively dining hall is beloved by all. I had the incredible opportunity to visit the Williams Dining Hall. I sat down in the lively dining hall to interview Coach Herman and several members of her fine team. They were so warm and kind. It was evident that they loved golf, their amazing facility and each other.

I had the incredible opportunity to visit Coach Herman and several members of her fine team. They were so warm and kind. It was evident that they loved golf, their amazing facility and each other.

The team practices at the Taconic Golf Club which is only a ten-minute walk from just about anywhere on campus. The club has been rated one of the top collegiate courses in the United States. Taconic was voted number one in scenic beauty in Massachusetts. And when not on the course, state-of-the-art video equipment allows players and coaches to do swing analysis on a regular basis. In the case of inclement weather, players use three indoor hitting areas on campus.

Williams’ women’s golf program is led by Kris Herman and Fran Vandermeer. The varsity team plays a fall and a spring schedule with competitive practices and tournaments in both seasons. The fall is highlighted by six weeks of invitational play throughout the northeast, while the spring season begins with a playing trip to a warmer climate and ends with the NCAA Championship in May. Five players comprise the team at tournaments, but the roster may be as large as ten to twelve players. Varsity golfers come from all over the country and with various golf experiences, but all are expected to be very serious about competing and representing Williams.

As integral as superior academics are to Williams College, athletics are equally revered with the majority of students participating in varsity, junior varsity or intramural programs. In 2004, 2005, 2006, and 2007, the college achieved #1 rankings in both academics and athletics within its peer groups.

Members of the school’s athletic teams are called Ephs (pronounced eefs), a shortening of the first name of founder Ephraim Williams. They participate in the New England Small College Athletic Conference (NESCAC). With 32 Varsity teams, Williams is ranked first among Division III schools for athletic spending per student.

Williams’ women’s golf program is led by Kris Herman and Fran Vandermeer. The varsity team plays a fall and a spring schedule with competitive practices and tournaments in both seasons. The fall is highlighted by six weeks of invitational play throughout the northeast, while the spring season begins with a playing trip to a warmer climate and ends with the NCAA Championship in May. Five players comprise the team at tournaments, but the roster may be as large as ten to twelve players. Varsity golfers come from all over the country and with various golf experiences, but all are expected to be very serious about competing and representing Williams.

The team practices at the Taconic Golf Club which is only a ten-minute walk from just about anywhere on campus. The club has been rated one of the top collegiate courses in the United States. Taconic was voted number one in scenic beauty in Massachusetts. And when not on the course, state-of-the-art video equipment allows players and coaches to do swing analysis on a regular basis. In the case of inclement weather, players use three indoor hitting areas on campus.

I had the incredible opportunity to visit Coach Herman and several members of her fine team. They were so warm and kind. It was evident that they loved golf, their amazing facility and each other.

I sat down in the lively dining hall to interview some members of the golf team. I hope you enjoy getting to know about this hidden treasure, namely the Williams’ Women’s Golf Team, through Anne O’Leary.
Libby: How to you balance being on the varsity golf team with the extremely challenging academics at Williams?

AIMEE: I think that as long as you are able to allocate your time appropriately, it’s very manageable. You have to know what you need to accomplish, plan it out and get it done!

ANNE: I think that Division III golf is very conducive to having a good academic experience and a good team experience as well. The teachers and the coaches are very understanding of our respective obligations. We all know that school comes first, but we also have an obligation to practice and play for our team. I think it’s really a good balance. We’re very, very competitive, but we are students first and foremost.

KAITLYN: I think that’s helpful to play a sport because it helps you to manage your time. You know that you will have practice every afternoon so there is a routine. I play sports all year long because I am also on the hockey team. There’s a consistency with how I spend my time.

Libby: What was your most memorable moment?

ANNE: For me, it was when we made it to the nationals in the spring. That was really exciting because we did not expect to make it, and we found out in the last week of the season. It was really, really exciting. We had never been to the event, and we finished tenth overall.

Libby: Where are some of the best places that that the team has visited?

KRISTIN: Our trip last year to the NCAA Championships in Florida, where we played two practice rounds and four tournament rounds. We went for about a week with five girls, and it was such an awesome experience to get to play with teams from all over.

Libby: Would you advise those hoping to attend and play for Williams to compete in nationally ranked junior tournaments before coming to the school or will they do okay by sticking to tournaments in their region?

ANNE: I think it is best to play in as many tournaments as you can. It is great to play nationally if you can because the better the competition, the better the preparation.

KAITLYN: I think that playing any competition that you can is good. Playing for fun and playing in tournaments is definitely different. When you get to school, there is a learning curve in terms of playing in a college tournament versus junior tournaments, but the more you play before you get here, the better.

Libby: Has the coach started doing more recruiting or do the girls who want to play golf seek out Williams on their own?

ANNE: We haven’t done formal recruiting in the past, but every year we get better and better. In the past, we did not have cuts, but that may change over the next year or two.

Libby: What do you think differentiates the Williams golf program from those of other colleges?

LAUREN: I think that what you see in the Williams Golf Team is what you see in the general Williams environment. It’s a very tight knit group. There is a lot of support within the community. Varsity sports are very important as are academics. Everyone is a very hard worker, but we also have a play-hard mentality as well. I think that this helps to foster success in whatever you do.

In addition, Coach Kris Herman was a delight to interview. She provided practical insight into what it’s really like to be a member of this amazing team!
Libby: How long have you been coaching golf?

COACH HERMAN: Not very long. About the middle of this summer, we had a coaching change. Coach Vandermeer and I are the new coaches. We are both full time faculty, and this is the first year that we have had full time faculty as coaches for golf.

Libby: What is a typical day and week like for the players?

COACH HERMAN: One of the best things about Williams’ golf is the course. Not only is it amazing and beautiful, but it is also very close to the campus. It is actually only about 500 yards from where we are right now. It is essentially on campus and has eighteen holes. That makes practicing a lot easier.

The season starts right away. We don’t have any real pre-season. College golf tournaments are eighteen holes on Saturday followed by eighteen holes on Sunday. It is a full weekend of golf. That being said, we take Mondays off. Sunday is typically a big study day at Williams, but college golfers do not get this luxury. So, we give the players time to regroup on Monday. Tuesday through Thursday, we practice and try to fit in eighteen holes where we can. We do short game drills, and we go to a golf range. We mix and match our practices, but we really do try to play a lot of golf, whether it’s a qualifying match or just getting out on the course to hit. Often, we will do some short game drills then go out and play three holes. We sometimes work with the Assistant Coach, Josh Hillman. He is an unbelievable golfer and a great teacher. In general, the weeks really do vary quite a bit. We really do feel that the best way to get ready for tournament golf is to play a lot of golf.

Libby: I know that the team was able to travel to Florida for the Division III National Championships, how was that?

COACH HERMAN: It was a wonderful experience for our team. Especially since this is just our third year of being a Varsity program. Twenty teams earn the opportunity to go to the tournament, and we finished right in the middle at 10th. It was four days of eighteen holes. Therefore, it was much more challenging and demanding, both physically and mentally, than what we were used to. The girls played really well. We improved for the most part every day, and it was just a great opportunity for us to take the next step. Williams is such a competitive athletic environment in general. Many of our teams go to national championships and often win them. It’s such a big part of culture at Williams so this was a big step for the Women’s Golf Team.

Libby: Do you feel that being on the golf team provides an opportunity to make good friends?

COACH HERMAN: Oh, absolutely. As a matter of fact, our last tournament was last weekend, and I was thinking about that in the van on the way home. All of the girls have a common passion for golf, but they also have such diverse other interests. Their backgrounds are also quite diverse. Some have played extensive junior golf, some have played locally, some have gone to golf schools, and some have just sort of picked up the game. Right now they are a very close group. We currently have four freshman and four sophomores. They are all close in age, and they spend a lot of time together.

Libby: What are some of the strategies that your players use to balance the

**At each Commencement, a watch is dropped from the 80-foot spire of the college chapel. If the watch breaks, tradition now holds that the class will be lucky.**

*Hopkins-Man Administration Building. The tradition began in 1916.

*Source: Williams College homepage www.williams.edu/home/traditions*
high academic load with the requirement of being a Varsity athlete?

COACH HERMAN: It certainly is a challenge, and it’s a challenge shared by many students at Williams with close to half being Varsity athletes. Time management is the key for places like Williams. Looking at your six weeks of the fall golf season and taking your syllabi and figuring out which weeks will be the most intensive. As coaches, we get involved as well. I know that the past weekend was important as we have are getting ready for a lot of mid-terms and term papers. So, we scale back and do things like play nine holes versus eighteen holes. We certainly are still practicing every day, and we expect students to make a full commitment to the program. Getting up early in the morning is one of the strategies that many of the students use. Even if you don’t have early classes, you still need to get up early and get to work. It is also important to learn how to get work done while you are traveling on the road. We go away for a whole weekend, but there is a lot of downtime. There is only about 6-7 hours per day at the golf course, but there are 24 hours in the day. Sometimes, a nice quiet hotel room is better than some of the other options here at school. It is important to get enough sleep and to take care of your self physically.

Libby: Because of the huge number of students doing sports here at Williams, are the teachers more lenient or flexible with the students?

COACH HERMAN: They are not more lenient, but they get it. They truly understand what the students are going through. No, you can’t be late. No, you can’t miss getting the work done. You have to attend class. They understand that students have passions for things outside of class. For example, if there is a movie that all of the students have to watch on Sunday night, the golfers will usually have to miss the movie. However, the professors will understand. They will try to figure out a way for them to see the movie at another time. Every student here is amazing. Therefore, we don’t usually have a trade-off situation. It’s more like, “Okay. Here’s the work that needs to get done,” and the golf team member figures how to do it. The professors are very supportive. As a coach, we get it too. We realize that academics are important. But, like the professors, we are also very demanding. If you need to miss practice because there is a lab taking place, then that is okay. If you have a paper that is due, then it is up to you to figure out how to manage your time to get it done.

Libby: What do you think differentiates high school golf from college golf?

COACH HERMAN: The team piece is more important. I think the ability level of the players is closer. We always practice together. The camaraderie is a huge piece off the puzzle. The biggest difference is probably the passion for golf. To make the commitment to play golf in college is such that you would only do it if you really have a passion.

Libby: What do you think differentiates golf at Williams vs. other colleges?

COACH HERMAN: I don’t really know too much about the other programs, but my sense is that the Williams commitment to athleticism is really woven into the fabric of the college. What sets us apart is that just about everyone is an athlete. It’s like everyone here knows what is going on with each others’ teams. We are on the phone on Sunday nights, seeing how the soccer, field hockey or football teams have done. Being an athlete here is a great experience and everyone here really wants to be here. For 90% of our students, this was their number one choice of schools.

If you ever meet a Williams’ alumnus, you’ll probably find them to be over the top with how they rave about their experience here!