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OPENING SHOT

Dave Silbar

Spring is the most anticipated time of the year for us golfers living in the Midwest. Not only does it mark the opening of our favorite season, but features the masterpiece that is The Masters, the most anticipated golf tournament of the year. And with LIV golf now in the mix, it gets even more interesting

Heads up: there is a golf superstar in our midst and her name is Rose Zhang. The sophomore from Stanford completed her amateur golf trophy room this month by capturing the coveted Augusta Women's Amateur. Zhang has been the most dominating amateur woman golfer in the world the last three years, winning the 2020 U.S. Women's Amateur, 2021 U.S. Girls Junior, and the NCAAs last year. Rose trains during the offseason with her coach at GOLFTEC in Boca Raton, Florida. GOLFTEC also has centers spread all across Chicago and the suburbs.

Speaking of instruction, Butterfield Country Club's Mike Carbray discusses the proper position when it comes to five of the most important parts of the swing and how you can work on these to immediately improve your game. Improve on just one of these parts of the swing and be more consistent with your ball-striking this season.

Writer Joe Aguilar introduces us to one of the most popular amateur golf tours in the nation, the Golfweek Amateur Tour, providing an opportunity for golfers of all ages and abilities to create meaningful memories.

This month, we really loaded our pages with a host of profiles. Among them includes our old friend Pine Meadow in north suburban Mundelein. It's withstood the test of time since opening as *Golf Digest's* Best New Public Course in the U.S. in 1986, and has one of the best back nine layouts in all of Chicagoland. We'll also introduce readers to the new look of a Lake Geneva treasure, Abbey Springs, and later on learn that the legendary DuPage County layout that is/was Downers Grove Golf Club has returned to its roots, changing its name back to Belmont Golf Club. We'll also stop and visit Erin Hills, Gaylord, Michigan's incredible array of courses, and Klein Creek in West Chicago.

Writer Todd Mowrice stops and visits with On Par Engraving just north of the border, sharing how you can step up your golf artwork and memorabilia game by working with owner/founder Andy Bartell. A cartographer by trade, consider your search for a professional map maker now over. Bartell produces oil and gas maps for geologists and has a passion for woodworking and loves the game of golf. Put it all together and he can make your mancave the envy of all your golfing pals.

So cheers to Rose Zhang and this year's Masters winner. See you on the course.



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THE GOOD STUFF



Golf Forever Swing Trainer

You've seen all the ads on social media and television for this weighted club which also serves as a resistance bar that can be used at home or on the course to dramatically improve your mobility and strength in order to hit the ball farther. The package comes with a carry bag, and there's a link to the Swing Trainer website to access a multitude of swing and fitness exercises. **\$199 www.golf forever.com**

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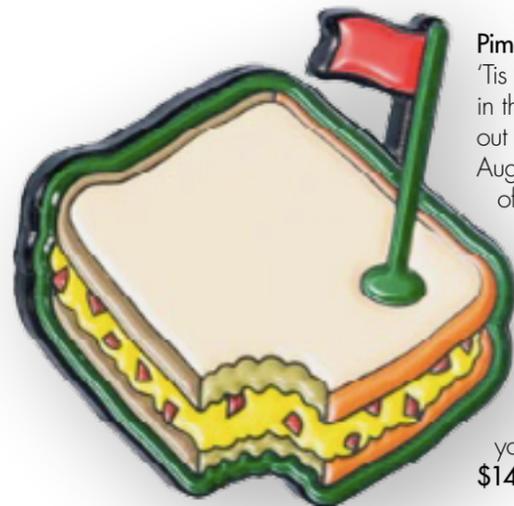
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Pimento Cheese Ball Marker Please

'Tis the Masters season and we're all in the spirit, so celebrate by checking out Pins & Aces Limited Edition '23 Augusta Collection. This assortment of fun accessories is highlighted by our personal favorite, the Pimento Cheese Sandwich Ball Marker. As are all P&A markers, it's made from cast metal and coated in oven cured enamel. They're durable, have weight to them, and look incredibly cool on the green as you're lining up your birdie putt.

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Five Keys to Better Driving

Distance off the tee and keeping the ball in play is one of the main keys to shooting lower scores. Being able to hit the ball father and staying out of trouble takes pressure off other parts of your game. It allows you to use shorter clubs for your second shot, which will give you closer looks at birdie. Power off the tee combined with keeping the ball in play is one of the areas you can work on this season if you want to shoot lower scores and have more fun playing golf. Here are four of my keys to creating more club speed and better center contact for longer and straighter drives.

ADDRESS

Club speed starts from the ground. Getting into a balanced setup position will allow you to pivot your body and shift pressure into the ground correctly. A proper set up will allow you to deliver the club with more speed in the correct sequence on the downswing. Here are four things to look for in the set up:



A. Ball is Forward Make sure to tee the ball up in line with your inside left heel and the outside of your lead shoulder. This ball position will allow you to hit the ball on the upward part of the swing arc. Launching the ball with a positive angle of attack gives you more carry distance and less backspin which will have the ball roll out more when it lands.

B. Stance Width Much Wider Than Hips Your driver stance is the widest of any other club in the bag. Place your feet wider than the width of your shoulders and flair both of your feet. This will open your hips and allow you to make a bigger and deeper backswing.

C. Start With 60% of Your Weight in Your Trail Foot and Tilt Away from the Target from Your Ribcage This set up will allow your lead shoulder to be higher than your trail shoulder, again making an upward swing into the back of the ball at contact.

Your body will look like a backwards "K" in the correct set up.

D. Grip the Club Somewhat Tightly in Your Hands While Keeping Your Arms and Shoulders Relaxed Don't let tension from your hands seep into your arms. This is a trait that all long-drive golfers have.

BACKSWING

In the backswing we need to do two main things—shift your pressure early into your trail heel and pivot your shoulders (upper body) and your pelvis (lower body/hips) to allow for a full arm swing. The shift in pressure starts early in the takeaway with a micro bump into the trail leg that loads pressure into the trail heel—we will use this power to push off to start the downswing. Feel like you are squishing the water out of a wet sponge under your trail heel as the club comes back. After the initial bump, you will turn your chest back away from the target, trying to get your lead shoulder behind the golf ball. The more you can turn your chest, the more you can keep your lead arm stretched out and away from your body. This will build a big turn and a loaded up feeling in your trail leg.

DOWNSWING

The transition from the backswing to the downswing is an important part of a good drive. The transition starts from the ground and works its way up the body parts, eventually transferring the energy to the hands and club. The downswing will begin with a push off the trail foot and a small slide towards the target with your hips into the lead leg. The more you can load



in the backswing, the more force you will have to push off in the downswing. Once the pressure is pushed laterally towards the target, the lower body will start to unwind, starting with the knee then the hips. You want to feel like your back stays looking at the target as long as you can. This will put a stretch into the lower and upper body parts producing not only more speed, but an in-to-out club path that will produce a draw ball flight. The downswing sequence would be close to the sequence of throwing a pitch or a ball. It starts in the legs, then hips, then chest, then out to the arm and hand. The poorest drivers do the downswing sequence in reverse and hit short slicing drives.

FOLLOW THROUGH

A huge differentiator of skill is that the best players in the world never let their elbows separate at impact and into the follow through (when the club and your belly button should both be pointed down the target line). Film yourself from an area where you can clearly see whether you are keeping your elbows squeezed together. Equally as important is shoulder tilt in the follow through. Pretend that you have water in your right ear (for right-handed golfers) and the only way to get that water out is to tilt your head, having your right shoulder pointed down toward the tee just after impact. Finally, try and bend your shoulders as far backwards as possible, keeping your weight firmly on your front leg and straightening both legs as much as possible.

FINISH

Stick the finish. If you can finish with your weight balanced on your lead leg and your body turned past the target (left of the target for a right-handed golf-



er) you will know you made a full finish. Your trail foot will be light and on your toe. Shoulders will be left of the target and your sternum will be pointed to the sky. You want your hands over your lead shoulder as well. If you cannot finish in balance—your sequence of transition is off. You will need to make practice swings to get the sequence right and balance at the end of the swing.

For more information or help with your golf game contact:

Mike Carbray, PGA Director of Instruction
Butterfield Country Club

www.mikecarbraygolf.com

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On Par Engraving Helps Up Your Golf Art Game

Ben Hogan's 1-iron picture? Seen it. Caddyshack quote? A bit dated. Your picture with Jeff Maggert from the 1995 Western Open? We can do better.

It's time to step up our golf art game. If you're tired of the same old, same old (like I am), you should check out On Par Engraving. Whether you're shopping for the perfect gift, a unique piece for your mancave, or an eye-catching item for your golf shop, this Sheboygan, Wisc., operation has what you're searching for.

Andy Bartell is the owner/founder of On Par Engraving and is responsible for every step of his custom-engraved golf maps which are even more stunning the closer you get to them. The best part? We're not just talking maps of Pebble Beach and Augusta National (although he has those), but you can bring him any course in the world and he'll engrave it in wood, stain it, and even hand paint every last detail. From the local muni you grew up playing, to a track that no longer exists, Bartell leaves no detail behind.

What led Bartell down this path of creating golf art has a few answers. For starters, he is a cartographer by trade. To save you the time of Googling, that is a person who draws maps. Specifically, he produces oil and gas maps for geologists. In addition, he has a passion for woodworking and loves the game of golf. Put it all together and he seems to have a labor of love that is gaining steam with every person who sees his work.

"Three years ago a buddy and I were trying to find a golf gift and didn't like what was out there," said Bartell. "I had been into 3D lake art and he asked me if I could laser a golf course. The first one was awful," he added with a laugh. "Today, though, the products are world-class and On Par Engraving is the only company making truly custom engraved maps."

Bartell noted that each piece takes a minimum of six hours to produce, but with added customization, it's closer to 10 hours.

"I hand paint each golf course at my kitchen table," said Bartell. "The entire

process allows me to connect with people from the time they receive their free quote all the way to it heading out the door."

Speaking of, if you're worried about shipping costs, it's free. Can't beat that.

When asked about some of his favorite projects to date, Bartell had two that immediately came to mind. First, he produced 10, 36" round table tops for Racine Country Club. Each with a different famous course from around the world. As an Appleton native, Bartell loves seeing his work in a local establishment. Second, a family commissioned him to create and engrave a map of their late grandfather's golf course. Tricky because it has since turned into a soybean field. With a few pictures, however, the family now has something to remember their grandfather forever.

So if you're looking to get one of the most exceptional golf items we've ever seen, you are highly encouraged to shop on Bartell's Etsy page by searching for "OnParEngraving," or visit On Par Engraving at OnParEngraving.com.



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Fontana's Newly Renovated Abbey Springs

Ask any player who has taken on the terrific 18 holes at Abbey Springs golf course to cite the most memorable experience of the round, and he or she will proudly display a selfie photo taken behind the 13th green. Indeed, this breathtaking view of Geneva Lake's south side is made more stunning by the forested land and the impeccably groomed fairway in the foreground. The panorama, alone, may very well be worth the price of the green fee.



Hole 13



Hole 5

Celebrating its 53rd year, Abbey Springs in Fontana, Wisconsin, has experienced an amazing renaissance complete with redesigned greens, lifted fairways, and overhauled bunkers to evolve from a hidden gem into a stunning, rolling, challenging must-play layout that now ranks among Southern Wisconsin's premier courses.

Originally designed by the esteemed team of Ken Killian and Dick Nugent, the course underwent a massive \$2.5 million renovation in 2021 by Bob Lohmann and Todd Quitno (whose projects over the years have included The Merit Club, in Libertyville and Blackstone Golf Club in Marengo). Some of their work addressed lowland fairways that retained moisture following storms. But the project also involved expanded greens, adjusted bunker placements and enlarged ponds to update the look, feel, and playability of the championship layout.

"Our golf course was always beautiful," said long-time Abbey Springs pro Jack Shoger in a March interview. "But after 50 years of the status quo, our membership wanted the course to compare in beauty, challenge, and conditioning to the best courses across Wisconsin."

One huge advantage Abbey Springs has over most Wisconsin and Illinois courses is rugged topography that takes players up massive hills and down vast dales. While most of the front nine rolls gently from one hole to the next, the back nine dishes out extreme transitions from each tee to each fairway to each green. "The course is located on a really interesting property," said architect Lohmann from his winter headquarters in Arizona. "The dramatic landscape also meant that there were areas where water historically collected. That issue needed to be addressed. On the 9th fairway, alone, we added four feet of soil to lift it above the wetlands."

The end result of the renovation work is a course that maintained the character of the original design but has expanded tee shot landing areas as well as larger green sites and improved quality of the putting surfaces.

Long-time guests of this semi-private club will notice the new look and feel of Abbey Springs on just the first few holes.

Long-time guests of this semi-private club will notice the new look and feel of Abbey Springs on just the first few holes. Resting upon some of the lower parts of the property, the fairways on these holes are in impeccable shape, reflecting the layout's updated drainage system. Following the treacherous 3rd hole that features a lake on the hole's left side all the way to the green, the course travels upwards through tree-lined fairways. The 4th hole is a dramatic par 5 and leads to the property's deceptively long 378-yard 5th hole due to uphill climb.

The departure from the forested land provides an introduction to the property's signature par 3, the 174-yard No. 6. Two pearly white bunkers protect a rolling green. A pond that was formerly lined by thick rough and cattails today sparkles in the sun and is lined by rocks collected from across the property during

construction. While this hole has always been a marquee attraction, the expansion of this elevated green combined with the eye-catching bunkers make this a picture-postcard perfect hole.

"Most everyone agrees that the 6th hole has become a really spectacular hole," said Lohmann. "Besides the improved eye appeal, the playability of the hole was enhanced by eliminating some of the trees that stood just behind the green."

The subtle hills of the front nine give way to the massive topographical changes of the back nine. The difference is obvious immediately. The par-5 No. 10 climbs upwards from the tee shot landing area all the way to a green which is protected on the front left by a bunker and on the back by a steep berm. While it is essential to use enough club on the approach shot to reach the green, don't dare go even slightly over as you'll be faced with

a delicate chip that can easily slide past the hole and never stop rolling.

The charming uphill par 3 leads players to an epic sequence of holes featuring significant elevation changes. The 12th hole is one of two reachable par 4s on the back nine. Launch a drive from this highly elevated tee and enjoy the view of your ball bounding toward the long, lightning-fast putting surface far below. Remember to take two extra clubs on your approach shot to the 13th green. The hole climbs up the ridge just descended. Once you've putted out, yank your cellphone out of your bag to take a photo of the sailboats bobbing up and down on the pristine waters of Lake Geneva far in the distance.

No review of Abbey Springs is complete without mention of the course's famous, towering par-4 No. 17. From a tee perched 98 feet above the Fontana skyline, this hole

dives toward a green protected by a massive bunker on the right side and a bunker and a pond on the left. "We wanted players to have a route to roll their tee shots onto the green," said Lohmann. "The water on the left side combined with the bunkers make that task more difficult. But the severe downslope of the fairway gives a good tee shot a decent chance for a birdie or maybe an eagle." Even if that tee shot is executed flawlessly, birdie on this hole is no cinch as the green was enlarged and allows for a number of treacherous flagstick locations.

"The 17th is a special hole to our members and regular guests," said Shoger. "It's a short, uncomplicated par 4. But that length tempts players to take chances in hopes of making a birdie. We're just pleased that the renovations allowed that hole to play the way it was originally designed."

The dogleg left No. 18 features a tight landing area setting up a dramatic

approach shot to the largest green on the golf course. Most tee shots won't carry far enough to view the entirety of the putting surface. "There's plenty of room on the left to allow for a safe approach shot," said Lohmann. "But there's significant trouble on the right which slopes toward water."

Abbey Springs is a gated beach, boat, and golf community located on the southwestern shores of Geneva Lake. Amenities at the club include pickleball and tennis courts, a rec center, indoor and outdoor pools, a full service marina, and a lake-front beach. While tee times are available to the public, the club also offers public golf memberships with no initiation fees. Membership packages include weekday, twilight, and 9-hole options.

To book a tee time or for more information on Abbey Springs, visit www.abbeysprings.org.



Hole 7



Hole 8



Hole 17

By Dave Silbar

Pine Meadow as Good as Ever

When he began working at Pine Meadow as head golf professional 19 years ago, Dennis Johnsen was tasked with carrying on legendry owner Joe Jemsek's tradition of providing the best golf experience possible.

"We love golfers," says Johnsen, who enters his 49th year as a PGA golf professional.

And boy do golfers love Pine Meadow.

Recognized by *Golf Digest* as the Best New Public Golf Course in the U.S. when it opened in 1986, Pine Meadow has been a staple in the conversation of Lake County's best courses for more than three decades.

Personally, I have wonderful memories of showing up on Sunday mornings, whether to play or just hit range balls and being greeted by Jemsek. No matter how warm the day was, he'd be wearing a suit and tie, white bucket hat, and huge grin. He'd be there every weekend to shake hands, thanking golfers for visiting the course that he loved so much.

In addition to one of the best layouts in all of Chicagoland (especially the back nine), Pine Meadow has a large, two-tiered, world class practice facility.

As the varsity golf coach of Carmel Catholic high school, I am proud to call Pine Meadow the team's home course and know that there are many other schools who Johnsen welcomes with open arms. We all appreciate the opportunity to enjoy not only one of Chicagoland's best golf courses but an immaculate and sprawling practice facility.

"Another Jemsek tradition," chimes in Johnsen. "Junior golf was among the most important things to Joe and his son, Frank. In fact, Pine Meadow hosted the first-ever PGA Junior League match in Illinois. At the time, Cog Hill (another Jemsek course) and Pine Meadow were among a few courses which had a Junior League team. Now, most courses have them."

Pine Meadow doesn't have one boring hole with nary a home bordering the course. Instead, it's 18 holes of pure golf that demand your full attention with plenty of nature and wildlife sprinkled throughout.

Among the toughest holes is No. 3, a 420-yard dog leg left par 4. With a lake

running along most of the left side, the safe tee shot is one pushed to the right. The only problem is that it makes for an even longer approach shot to a large, two-tiered green protected by bunkers on both sides. Take your bogey here and leave happy. Pars and birdies are a rarity on No. 3.

Other stand-out holes on the front are Nos. 6 and 7, back-to-back par 4s which play as different as night and day. No. 6 plays 400 yards with bunkers flanking both sides of the fairway and out of bounds farther to the left. The green slopes back to front, so good luck trying to keep your ball on the putting surface if you catch the devilish front right pin position and your ball is past the pin.

No. 7 is simply a bear, measuring 420-460 yards with a giant bunker front right of the green.

Next is the par-3 8th hole, which plays roughly 150 yards and is guarded by bunkers front and right and a deep valley which locals refer to as the 'devil's a—hole' to the left. I refer to it as 'Death Valley': miss the green here and bogey or much worse can come into play.

The front side finishes with a fun par 4, a manageable 370-yard hole played between a pair of fairway bunkers. Drive the ball straight and you have the best chance for par or better on the entire side.

With the opening nine in the rear-view mirror and a cold beverage in your hand, there's really nothing as special as the back nine at Pine Meadow and now you're about to experience it first-hand.

It starts with the 10th hole, a 380-yard dogleg left with a sizable lake catching any balls that fly errant left of the green. The view from the tee is as beautiful as the drop to the fairway is a sizable one. After the short dogleg right par-4 11th hole comes the sneaky tough par-3 12th hole. A long, narrow, two-tiered green can change the distance of your tee shot by nearly 50 yards. The hole can play anywhere from 150 to 200 yards. Find a front pin and count yourself lucky. Find a back right pin, and just aim for the middle of the green, say a prayer, and try to escape with par.

The back nine not only offers incredible holes, but also outstanding opportuni-

ties to interact with nature. Here you see numerous species of birds and daily sightings of deer prancing along the sides of the course.

The par-5 13th hole is a true three shot experience with your second shot played over a lake and an uphill approach to yet another narrow green sloping heavily back to front.

You don't have long to catch your breath as the 14th hole is a short, slight dogleg right par 4 with water running all along the right side and bunkers protecting the left side of the fairway. Hitting the ball straight here always seems to be tough as the water tends to feel like a magnet on the right. Find the fairway here, and have a short to mid-iron into a large green and give yourself a good chance for par or better.

Although it seems like you've already played several holes that could be considered signature, get ready for the par-5 15th. The hole plays uphill around to the left and features a tee shot over wetlands with out of bounds on the left. Once in the fairway, you'll have a great downhill view of the hole, which should still be about 300 yards away, and a large two-tiered green, surrounded by bunkers. There have been several times



when I've played this hole nearing dusk and I've seen fawns running back and forth playing with one another.

After navigating the par-4 16th and par-3 17th hole, you'll find yourself face to face with one of the best 18th holes in all of Chicagoland. The finisher here plays about

400 yards with your tee shot needing to skirt the left side of the fairway so as not to be blocked out by a grove of trees on the right. A large lake protects the entire front of the green and a narrow stretch of fairway on the left and a bunker offers a safer route for laying up short.

In order to reach the green in regulation, you'll be forced to carry the entire length of the lake and have anywhere from 130 to 200 yards in. Many a match has been decided by finding the watery grave on 18. Make par here and your post round beverage will taste even better.

The Common Man's Golf Tour

By Joe Aguilar

He bashes a white ball and is proud enough of his league that he had its logo inked on his body. Javier Baez, Tigers shortstop and World Series-winning ex-Cub, had "MLB" tattooed on the nape of his neck before he even made his major-league debut almost 10 years ago.

Luke Bohm chose a different fleshy area to add to his modest collection of body art: the inside of his left biceps.

GOLF WEEK

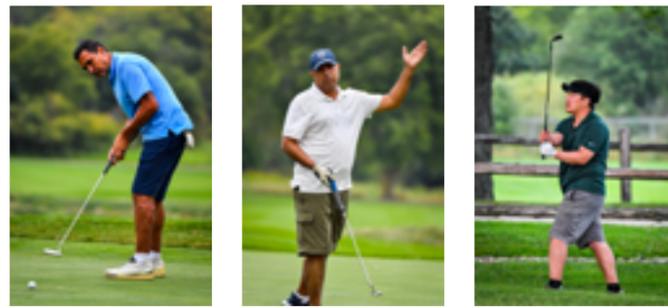
CHICAGO TOUR

SEASON CHAMPION

2022,

Note the comma, which was a conscious decision. Like Baez, Bohm hits bombs and boasts swagger and charisma. A resident of Valparaiso, Indiana, Bohm said it would be a dream to repeat as champion in *Golfweek's* championship flight of its Chicago tour. At 28 years old, Bohm, who ran unsuccessfully for the Indiana State Senate a couple of years ago, is as competitive as ever. He's out to add "2023" to his arm.

"Or '2024,' or whenever," said Bohm, who got his Golfweek tattoo to commemorate his Chicago points championship, draining a 40-foot birdie putt on No. 18 at Grand Geneva in Wisconsin to help secure his title.



"It's definitely not [my] first [tattoo], but it's the most meaningful one."

Established in 1995, the Golfweek Amateur Tour provides the opportunity for golfers of all ages and abilities to create meaningful memories. Tattoos aren't required. "I just want the crystal," Bob Curran, 56, of Schaumburg said, smiling. "It's all about putting those trophies on the shelf in the basement. My kid [Ryan, 27, who played two seasons on the tour] has only two, and I got like seven."

Tournaments are one-day, 18-hole events throughout the year, with an annual national championship held in Hilton Head, South Carolina. According to the Golfweek tour's website, the tournament draws more than 1000 players from around the country.

Dennis McCormac was about 30 years old when he founded the Golfweek tour almost 30 years ago. Having had a passion for golf since he started caddying at a private club in St. Louis as a nine-year-old, McCormac had just moved his wife to Charlotte, North Carolina, from St. Louis, when he got the idea of starting an amateur tour.

"We didn't know anybody, so the only way I met people was playing golf on Saturday," McCormac said. "We had a little club down the street from my house and I got to meet the pro. I talked it over with him, and he thought it was a great idea. That's how it all started."

In that first year in 1995, McCormac hosted six events in the fall, getting 50 guys in the Charlotte area to join and pay \$50. Within a couple of years, McCormac expanded the



tour to upstate South Carolina. The internet explosion a few years later helped the tour continue to grow.

The GolfWeek tour is now in 47 cities across the country, and the Senior Amateur Tour, which has been around since 1999, is in about 25 cities.

McCormac said he anticipates having more than 9,000 members in the two tours combined this year.

The Senior Amateur Tour welcomes golfers who are age 50 and older.

"This is our version of the Champions Tour for amateurs," said Danny Brown, 64, of Buffalo Grove who's competed on the senior tour for the past three years and has almost 10 tournament wins. "It's extremely well run, well organized."

David Bush runs both the Golfweek and Senior tours in the Chicago area, which counts about 400 members. This year marks Bush's fourth year as director. The Homewood resident grew up in Texas but has lived in the south suburbs of Chicago for 17 years, and said his familiarity with the area has served him well.

If there's a nearby golf show or demo day at a local course, there's a good chance you can find him there. That was part of his strategy when he accepted the director position.

"I wouldn't say I reinvented the wheel," said Bush, 38. "I made a few changes. It was just more about somebody being local. Before me, the person running it was running it from out of state."

Bush also had what he called a "distinct advantage" when he took the job, having played on the Golfweek tour for about six years. He had played amateur tournaments around the state and throughout the country, as well.

"So I was able to pick up on some of the stuff that I really enjoyed and thought the other players really enjoyed," Bush said. "I didn't have intentions of running a tour, but when the opportunity came about, I thought, 'Well, I have a good feel for what guys like and what guys don't like.'"

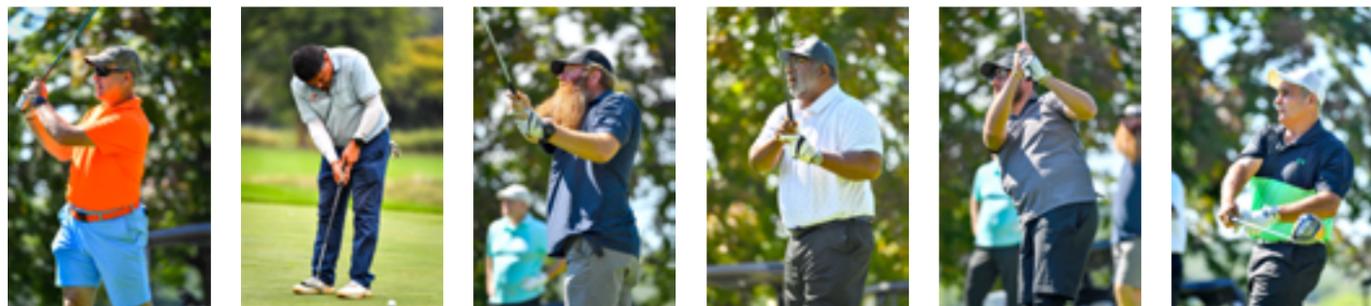
Bush's selection of golf courses, attention to detail, and eagerness to accommodate his golfers has them raving about what he's done for the tour.

"David has done a great job of getting us quality golf courses," Brown said. "The competition is great, and the camaraderie is great. When you got those factors going for you, when you got a well-organized tour on great golf courses, and everybody is playing scratch within the flight, that's a pretty good formula. You can't ask for anything better than that."

Brown loves the format of the two tours. Players are flighted by handicap, championship through D, and play a gross stroke-play format. Golfers who have a handicap index of 0-3.9 are placed in the top flight, followed by A flight (4-8.9), B flight (9-13.9), C flight (14-18.9) and D flight (19 and above).

"We're competing scratch within our flights, which I think is a big plus," said Brown, a scratch player who played on a golf scholarship at Upsala College in East Orange,





New Jersey. “There’s nothing more frustrating than playing in a handicap event and shooting a low score, and then watching somebody with a high handicap get hot and just blow away the field.”

An element that Bohm loves about the tournament is live scoring. One person in the group is designated to input each golfer’s score after each hole.

“It’s nice to know where you stand the entire day,” Bohm said.

As evident by his latest body art, Bohm takes great pride in his 2022 Chicago championship and doesn’t take it for granted. That explains his approach heading into the 2023 season, which in the Chicago area is scheduled to tee off April 15 at Cantigny. The Chicago championship is scheduled to be competed Sept. 23-24 at Harbor Shores Resort in western Michigan.

Courses on the 2023 Chicago schedule also include Thunderhawk, Shepherd’s Crook, Harborside International, Whistling Straits, The Glen Club, Geneva National, Bloomingdale, Arrowhead, Heritage Oaks, Prairie Landing, Whitetail Ridge, and Ravisloe.

Part owner of a car wash and detail shop in St. John, Indiana, Bohm appreciates a good appearance. Bryson DeChambeau isn’t the only golfer who works on his physique to gain an edge on the golf course.

“This is really competitive stuff,” Bohm said. “I really put a lot of work in this off-season on fitness, hitting balls and working on my game. One of the guys [a fellow Golfweek tour golfer] was like, ‘Luke, why are you going

so hard at this?’ I’m like, ‘Because you guys are good. You guys are really freaking good. I got to do something here. I can’t just sit back and expect to win.’ ”

Bohm enjoys taking advantage of the tour’s flexible schedule. Both tours allow members to play in tournaments all over the country. Golfers can find events coast to coast, from Washington state to Washington, D.C., from Kansas to Kentucky, from Michigan to Mississippi, from Denver to Dallas/Fort Worth, from St. Louis to South Florida, and hundreds of cities and golfing communities in between. Already in 2023, Bohm said he’s played in an event in Arizona and before spring starts planned on playing in North Carolina, Cincinnati, Kentucky, and Kansas. The 2-handicapper said he played in 20 events last year in nine states, winning five times in five different states, and this year plans to play 35 to 40 events.

“The continuity of the tournaments [is appealing],” Bohm said. “I can go from an event in Arizona to one in Evansville, Indiana, to one in Myrtle Beach, and there are still great courses. The directors are all fabulous. They all run a wonderful event. Golfweek operates like a real tour does.”

Brown, who’s played in other amateur tours, including the defunct Golf Channel’s Golf AM Tour, most of his life, said he plans to play a full schedule this year. He calls the Senior Amateur Tour “hands down” one of the best he’s experienced and said it complements the Chicago District Golf Association and Illinois PGA events.

Curran, an electrician by day, plays on both tours (B flight).



An 11 handicap, he teed it up in about 25 events combined last year.

“My wife loves me ... or wants to get rid of me so she has the house to herself,” Curran joked. “Last year, they put out the tournament dates and I filled out the whole calendar. My wife, Donna, comes upstairs and says, ‘Can we talk for a second? I noticed every Saturday is filled up from April all the way to September.’ ”

Curran won an event last spring and received a flag from the course as his reward. He placed the flag on his nightstand and “talked” to it, he said, telling the flag that it would receive some company soon, even though it never happened.

Now that’s love.

At least Donna has Sundays with her husband. “All the guys [on the tour] are fun. It’s a blast,” said Curran, who last year finished second on the Senior tour in B flight and ninth on the Golfweek tour. “We’re always getting guys to join up. People don’t really know about it too much. There are a lot of people who are afraid to go into competitive golf. Even I was. Everyone gets the shaky knees, usually, but once you get to know the guys, it calms you down a little bit.”

Even tour director Bush, a 5 handicap, competes in Golfweek events, saying the tour’s national headquarters encourages it so the directors can get to know the players. “Just as a golfer, I love doing this,” Bush said. “You get to make a bunch of golf friends. I told another guy, ‘I always had a few [friends] who golfed, but now with 400 members

[on the tour], on a Tuesday I get off [work] and I know I’ll be able to find a foursome.’ ”

Not that Bush is going full-throttle Bohm and getting inked up with a Golfweek tattoo.

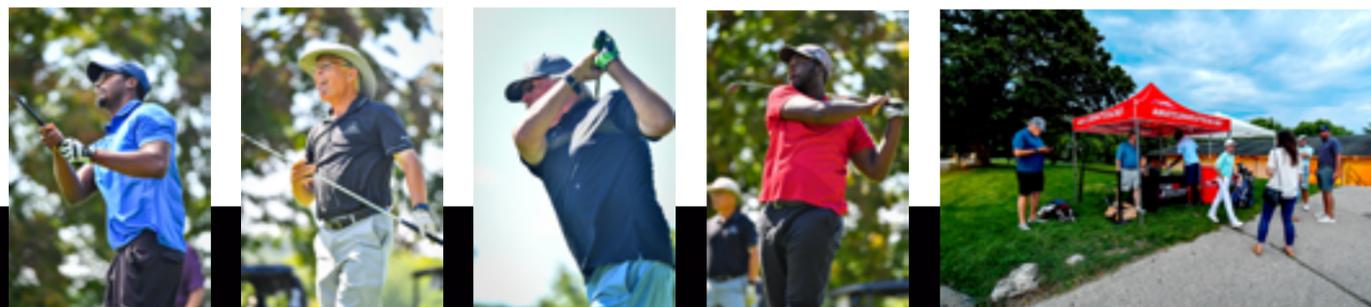
“I couldn’t wait to have him send me a picture of [his tattoo] so I could tell every person that I run across,” Bush said. “Then when he tried peer-pressuring me into doing the same thing, I got real quiet.”

The silence on the green when a player is standing over a pressure putt is real on both tours. But that’s also what can make the experience exhilarating and rewarding.

“It’s all fine and dandy to go play with your buddies and have a couple of Summer Shandy’s and enjoy a day outside,” Bohm said. “But when you get out there and you think to yourself, ‘This two-inch putt actually means something, as much as that drive I just hit,’ that is where it gets addicting.”

McCormac moved the national tournament to Hilton Head in 2006. Hurricane Matthew, which hit the area three weeks before the tourney in 2016, threatened to cancel it that year, but McCormac and his staff managed to pull it off six weeks later.

“We started this whole craze [almost 30 years ago], and there are a lot of other amateur tours out there,” McCormac said. “So our greatest form of flattery is we must have been doing something right 29 years ago because we’ve been copied multiple times. We’re still the biggest and the oldest, and continue to put out what we feel is the best product for our players.”





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The **Golfweek Amateur Tour** is the oldest and largest amateur golf tour in the country! Play is open to all ages and skill levels. The flighted competition is

structured so you're only playing against equally skilled players. You can choose to play any amount of tournaments across the country.

The **Senior Amateur Tour of Chicago** offers the largest payouts and free giveaways throughout the season. You will compete at the best courses at the best prices!

For more information contact David Bush
Chicago@amateurgolftour.net
312-483-7932

 April 15, 2023 Season Opener Cantigny - W/L 1 p.m. 72 players Split Tee Start	 April 29-30, 2023 Shepard's Crook Thunderhawk Noon 72 players	 May 13, 2023 Harborside 1 p.m. 72 players Split Tee Start	 April 22, 2023 Season Opener The Preserve at Oak Meadows 11:00 a.m.	 May 6-7, 2023 Spring Major Bowes Creek & Highlands of Elgin Noon	 May 20, 2023 Ravisloe Country Club 10:00 a.m.
 May 27-28, 2023 Regional Major Whistling Straits 7:30 a.m. Split Tee Start	 June 12, 2023 Golfweek Open "Bring a Guest" 10:00 a.m.	 June 24-25, 2023 Mid Season Major Trevino/Palmer 9 a.m. 60 players	 June 3, 2023 Stonewall Orchard Golf Club 12:30 p.m.	 June 12, 2023 Kemper Lakes Golf Club 9:00 a.m.	 June 17, 2023 Prairie Landing Golf Club 11:00 a.m.
 July 1, 2023 Bloomingdale 8:30 a.m. 72 players	 July 15, 2023 Arrowhead 1 p.m. 72 players	 July 29, 2023 Heritage Oaks 11:30 a.m. 72 players	 July 10-11, 2023 Midwest Regional TPC Deere Run 8:00 a.m.	 July 22, 2023 Chalet Hills Golf Club 8:00 a.m.	 August 5, 2023 Orchard Valley Golf Course 11:00 a.m.
 August 12, 2023 Prairie Landing 12:30 p.m. 72 players	 August 26, 2023 Whitetail Ridge 11 a.m. 72 players	 September 9, 2023 Ravisloe 9 a.m. 72 players	 August 19, 2023 Blackberry Oaks Golf Course 10:00 a.m.	 September 2, 2023 Prairie Isle Golf Course 10:00 a.m.	 September 16, 2023 The Sanctuary Golf Course 11:00 a.m.
 September 23-24th, 2023 Chicago Championship Lake Michigan Hills GC & Harbor Shores Club and Resort	 September 30th & October 1st, 2023 Chicago Senior Am Championship Glenview Park/ The Glen Club				

Time to Put Klein Creek Back on Your Radar

by Todd Mrowice



It's amazing what can be accomplished with the right people in place and a bit of modernization. This is particularly true of today's golf courses. Both public and private facilities across the country are jockeying to update and appeal to the average golfer like never before. While we appreciate a good rate and a plump hotdog at the turn, what keeps us coming back is a well-run course that challenges our golf skills as well as our ability to exit the premises. You never want to leave the good ones.

Klein Creek Golf Club in Winfield is a course that many of our readers have likely played at some point. The club sits 28 miles west of downtown Chicago and has been a popular suburban choice to play since opening in 1994. Before an ownership change in 2019, however, Klein Creek may have fallen off of your radar. We're here to proclaim that not only is Klein Creek a place you should tee it up in 2023, but they've also added the right people and the modernization to keep you coming back.

As club General Manager, Brian Tulk puts it, "If you haven't played Klein Creek lately, you haven't played Klein Creek."

Tulk came on as GM in 2021 along with Klein Creek's new ownership. He had previously held the GM position at Royal Fox Country Club and The Grove for 5 years prior to coming over to Klein Creek. He is one of the main people behind why the implemented changes at the club have people buzzing from not only a golf standpoint but entertainment as well.

"I truly believe we are one of the most improved golf courses in Chicagoland," said Tulk. "After putting \$2 million into the facilities, from carts to the clubhouse, and the course itself, we're very proud of what we have to offer." The public took notice of these changes as they were rated among the most improved golf courses in 2021 by *Golf Advisor*.

THE COURSE

Designed by a man with many golf footprints in the Chicago area, Dick Nugent, Klein Creek opened for business in 1994 and was lauded for being a strategic-type course that required course management and the ability to get around some heavily sloped greens. Thankfully, not much has changed from the original Nugent layout, but the TLC over the past few years has restored Klein Creek to the conditions many were familiar with.

From the tips, Klein Creek plays 6,701 yards with a 72.8 rating and 140 slope (par 72). White, gray, and red tees play in front of those with each presenting its own set of challenges. We hope you don't find it, but water is in view on 14 holes, and when you pair that with some seriously narrow fairways, you have the potential for some big numbers on the scorecard. That's not to say the course isn't playable though. Big hitters can cut corners at Klein Creek to set themselves up for birdie chances. Accurate drivers of the ball (no matter the distance) can easily play to fairways and greens while recording a good score.

As part of the renovations that Brian Tulk detailed, bun-

kers were at the top of the list in 2019-20. "There were a large number of the original Nugent-designed bunkers that were very hard to maintain," said Tulk. "So we eliminated those and turned them into grass and waste bunkers. It makes the course a little more playable and visually appealing."

All of the remaining bunkers were re-contoured, had new drainage installed, and were filled with white Pro Angle sand which is the bright white sand you're used to seeing at any upscale club. The bunker renovation, along with some significant clubhouse renovation, were the first big indicators to Klein Creek loyalists that Tulk and the newly hired course superintendent, Mike Schwartz (formerly with Cantigny GC) were bringing the track back to life.

When you dissect each nine at Klein Creek, on paper the front nine is a bit more difficult. It plays 100 yards longer and you get three difficult holes right out of the gate (handicap holes 9, 3, and 5). Not so fast, though. The back nine can be an absolute wrecking ball if you're not careful.

It's worth noting before you go that you should have a reliable stick or two to hit into long par 3s. From the tips, those distances are 183, 196, 177, and 192 yards.

If you manage to keep it in play on holes 1 through 3, which are all straight, narrow, and watery, you're greeted by what we feel is the Dick Nugent creativity. No. 4 is one of those long par 3s with bunkers lining the front. No. 5 is a par 4 that requires you to carry a creek, but long hitters will probably want to keep their driver holstered. No. 8 is a fun, but long, par 3 that has a mess of trouble front and left. But the crown jewel of the front nine, and perhaps Klein Creek's signature hole, is the 453-yard par-4 9th. A big, sweeping dogleg to the right is sandwiched by bunkers and water from the tee box. Even if you stripe your drive, more water jets in for your approach and you have a long, narrow green to navigate. Hitting the green on No. 9 is one feat, but being near the pin is another.

If you escape No. 9 with bogey or less, you've earned your beverage at the turn. Forging ahead, the back nine has some fun obstacles of its own.

No. 10 opens the back with a tricky par 4 that has water along the left side from tee to green. Quite honestly, there's no shame in playing it down the right side of the hole if you can avoid any nasty punchouts from the trees. No. 11 sneaks in as the longest hole on the course at 546 yards. It's a narrow fairway with a lot of contours, so even some good shots can roll into the rough. 11

and 12 are complimenting par 4s that give you a chance to keep your round intact. No. 14 is a picture hole as it's a forced-carry par 3 that can play significantly longer than 177 yards with wind in your face. No.15 is another fun Nugent snack with water flanking left and right from 100 yards in. Your final stretch feels like everything Nugent had in the design kitchen.

No. 16: A skinny par 5 with little room for error.

No. 17: One of our favorite par 3s in Illinois. 192 yards of carry over water, but the green is surrounded by 360 degrees of sand. Depending on how you're swinging it, this green can feel like you need a miracle to get on in one.

No. 18: Your day at Klein Creek comes to a close with a 417-yard par 4, the second hardest hole on the course. Water splits into two parts, but runs completely along the right side. You'll have another long, narrow green to aim at with bunkers protecting left and right. If you're on the cusp of breaking 80, 90, or 100, this hole makes you earn it.

"In my opinion, the entire course is great but our stretch from 10 to 14 is one of the best in the area," said Tulk. "And 16, 17, and 18 might be the hardest finishing holes around."

GOLF PRICING AND AMENITIES

Klein Creek is a public course and you can tee up any day you choose. A peak summer weekend rate will run \$89 with a cart, but weekdays and twilight rates are a steal if your schedule allows it. The club does offer several different memberships for frequent flyers including a standard membership or one specifically for seniors, juniors, or corporate players. They even have a twilight membership if your favorite time to tee up is after work. Be sure to check out kleincreek.com for more details.

In addition, you can find men's and ladies' leagues as well as junior golf programming throughout the season. If you're looking to improve your game, especially your short game, give Brian Tulk a call to learn more about his instruction for all abilities.

OUTINGS

The course has a great setup for golf outings, whether you're in the planning stages or attending one. Aside from having a course that can accommodate any handicap, Klein Creek recently purchased a new fleet of golf carts and has top-notch banquet facilities and food (more to come on that).

Klein Creek is also proud to host three events each year for Folds of Honor. Lt Col Dan Rooney began Folds of Honor in 2007 and Tulk is proud to have the club help contribute to four scholarships to the spouses and children of America's fallen or disabled military.

PIER 19 RESTAURANT

No matter how your day went on the golf course, you can toast to birdies and bogeys at Pier 19 Restaurant at Klein Creek. It's not often you find a truly great restaurant located at a public course. More often than not, you're stuck with a BLT at best. For us, we prefer the steak, seafood, and small plates that are found at Pier 19 which was part of the clubhouse renovations under new ownership.

We recommend getting started with the New England Seafood Chowda' before wandering over to the main menu. From there you can choose from oysters, shrimp, and crab which are flown in daily. If steak is more your speed, the Filet Mignon Oscar is out of this world. For a side, order the roasted broccolini and thank us later. Whatever you do, don't you dare exit the premises without diving into the key lime pie. The perfect medicine for lipping out to win your Nassau.

Pier 19 also has Sunday Brunch from 10 'til 2 where the menu changes weekly. To make your reservation call (630) 690-0101.

ENTERTAINMENT

What cannot be understated is the length Klein Creek has gone to keep people coming back, whether they're playing golf or not. Case in point, an extensive outdoor patio with plenty of beverage options as well as TVs to enjoy any tournament or big game. On Chicago summer evenings you'll be hard-pressed to find a better spot.

Be sure to check out Klein Creek's calendar for upcoming events. The club has hosted comedy shows and regularly has live music to enjoy.

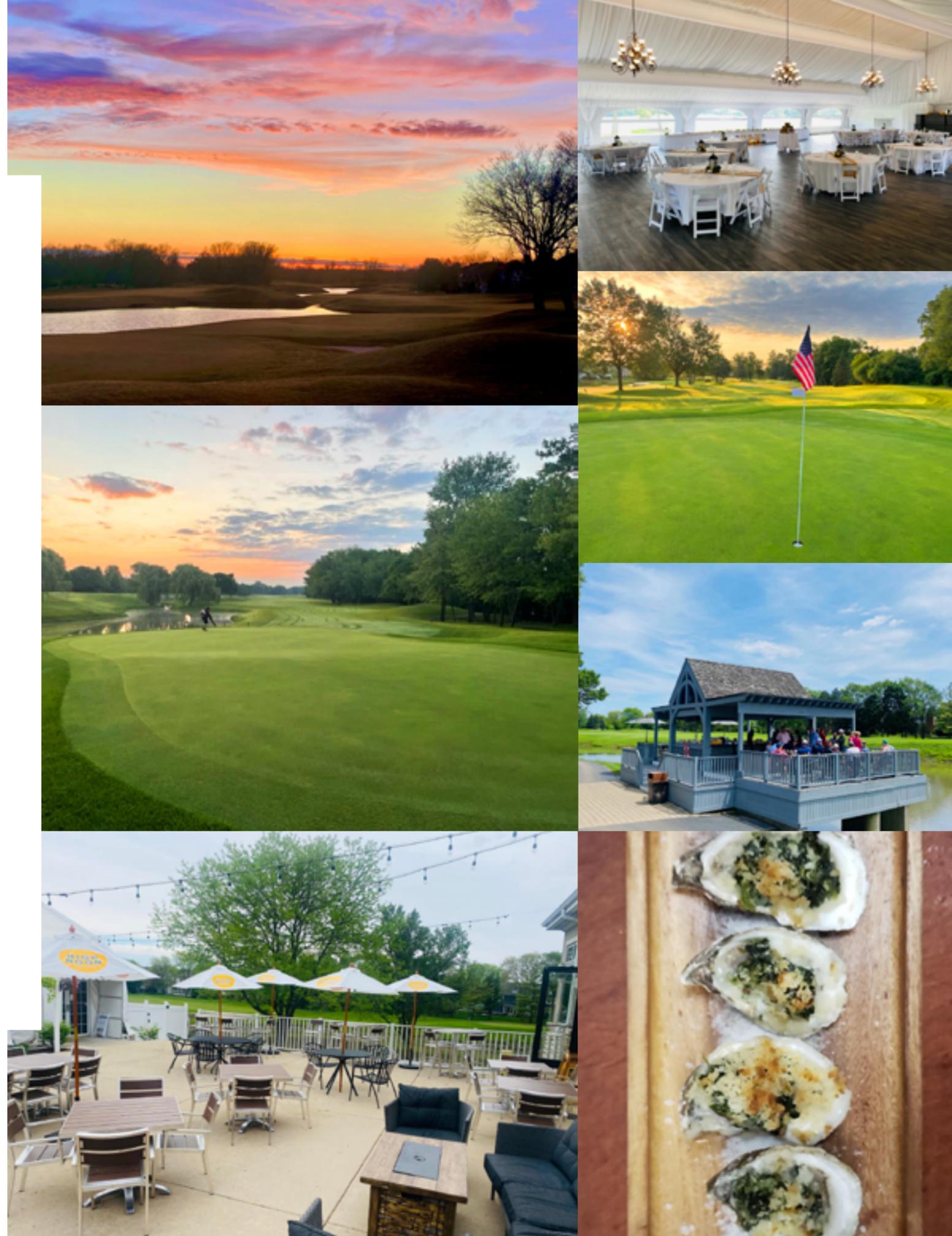
IN CONCLUSION

Klein Creek has done a fantastic job revamping the aspects of the club that needed attention and should be the gold standard for other area courses that need a little shot of energy. Improvements to the golf course and a restaurant to brag about are great, but none of it succeeds without a solid staff. From check-in to the final putt, you're going to feel like a member at Klein Creek. "Our mission is to have a public course that presents like a private course with our staff and amenities, but without the stuffiness of an upscale club."

From our perspective, mission accomplished.

WHEN YOU GO

Klein Creek Golf Club
1N333 Pleasant Hill Road | Winfield, IL 60190
888-Creek18
kleincreek.com



Wisconsin's Spectacular Erin Hills

The short history of Wisconsin's Erin Hills is as fascinating and triumphant as it is unlikely. Only 22 years ago, this golf course located 37 miles northwest of Milwaukee, was merely a theory. The architectural trio of Dr. Michael Hurdzan, Dana Fry, and Ron Whitten was tasked with fashioning 652 acres of pristine, glacially-sculpted prairie into a championship layout carved over, up, down, and around hills, dales, kettles, and eskers. "We had put together 12 to 15 routings," said Hurdzan in an interview with GOLFChicago magazine, "and had a single goal: not to change the natural grade of the land by more than a foot." That self-imposed restriction was put in place for both philosophical and financial purposes—the terrain could be maintained in its natural state while at the same time construction costs could be kept to a minimum to thus allow for competitive green fees.

Only a few years after Erin Hills opened to wide acclaim in 2006, the course was selected by the USGA to host the U.S. Women's Amateur Public Links in 2008, the U.S. Amateur in 2011 and the U.S. Open in 2017. How a new, relatively untested course could so quickly gain such rare distinctions involved a confluence of vision, great timing, exquisite architecture, and, of course, a fantastic parcel of land. Among the attributes cited by the USGA tournament committee upon selecting Erin Hills was its commitment to low-impact irrigation techniques and its capacity to host daily galleries of up to 60,000. The 2017 tournament, won by Brooks Koepka, proved to be a massive success. Jordan Spieth referred to Erin Hills as "an awesome course." Rory McIlroy called himself "a big fan" despite missing the 36-hole cut. In the six years that have since passed, Erin Hills has today become a mainstay as host of national and regional championships. The course hosted the U.S. Mid-Amateur in 2022 and will host the Wisconsin State Amateur in 2023. Then, the U.S. Women's Open visits in 2025.

"Even though the U.S. Women's Open is two years away, we are already pre-

paring for the best female golfers in the world to challenge Erin Hills," said marketing manager Steve Pease in a March interview. "We've seen how the best men players have taken on our course. It will be really interesting to see the strategies the best women will use."

What makes this property relatively unique among all major championship host courses is the fact that since its opening, Erin Hills has maintained its status as a public course. More unique, still, is that it remains a walking-only layout. That feature not only promotes vigorous exercise, it also provides unadulterated views on each hole with no asphalt cart paths anywhere in sight. Bent grass is prominent from tee to green. Knee-high fescue in the second cut of rough makes for amazing views off tees but also exact a heavy price for stray shots. Pease highly recommends employing one of 150 professional caddies to help navigate the property, assist with club selection and receive the full "Erin Hills Experience."

The course can be set up to play as long as 7,735 yards from the back tees to challenge low-handicap and tournament golfers. Guests are encouraged to take on Erin Hills at lengths that suit their ability levels. Green tees play to 6,739 yards. White tees play to 6,230 yards. Gold tees play to 5,032 yards. If none of those lengths suits the group, combination tees allow for multiple alternative options.

From the first tee forward, the course delights the eye and challenges the player's skills. The par-5 1st hole begins from an elevated tee and snakes down into a valley before emerging to an elevated green. On the short par-4 2nd hole, a tee shot to the left side of the fairway leads to a difficult approach shot to a crowned green. Hit your short-iron approach even slightly off target and your ball will trundle off the putting surface to leave a difficult chip shot back to the flagstick. "Strategically, I think it's one of the best holes on the course," said Pease. "The elevated green challenges the player to execute a precise approach shot."

Still another fascinating aspect of the course is that each of the 18 holes is a feast to the eyes. Hurdzan credits that attribute to the three different bunker styles used across the 18 holes. "There are erosion bunkers that are 6" – 8" wide and tail out at the end of other bunkers. Then there are blow-out bunkers that appear as if wind has pushed the sand out of them over time, and a combination of erosion/blow-out bunkers." The end-result is a course that looks decades older than its age—a true modern classic.

That said, No. 14 is a truly spectacular par 5 that encompasses virtually every aspect that makes the course spe-

cial. Wetlands and fescue grasses swirl around the right side of the hole. A four-some of menacing bunkers pinch the tee shot's landing area. Short hitters are at a disadvantage on the second shot as the fairway narrows significantly. Long hitters, on the other hand, have a large target to hit toward around the green but over fescue grasses. The large putting surface—which incorporates a false front—is protected by bunkers to the left and far right. Finish the hole and enjoy the view of your accomplishment looking backwards from the 15th tee.

No visit to Erin Hills is complete without a stop at the elegant Irish country inn

clubhouse which overlooks the course. Dining options are available both inside and on the outdoor patio. The signature drink is the "Fescue Rescue," composed of Jameson whiskey, ginger beer and lemonade. Menu options extend from sliders and cheese curds to pheasant, steaks, and Chilean sea bass.

Post-dinner entertainment options include a rollicking putting adventure on the lighted "Drumlin" putting course just outside the clubhouse. Overnight guests also have access to the "Caddy Barn" which incorporates bar service with billiards and table tennis and a lounging area. This area is available by request.

On-property elegant accommodations are wildly popular and include rooms, suites and four-bedroom cottages. All include antique furnishings, Egyptian linens, Wi-Fi access, and down comforters. "We strongly encourage guests to book well in advance of their visit," said Pease. "In fact, interest in our accommodations has been so great already this year that we've started taking reservations for the 2024 season."

The Erin Hills website is a great tool to plan your trip as it serves up a hole-by-hole video tour of the course, stay & play packages, detailed descriptions of food and accommodations and other amenities offered. Visit www.erinhills.com



Independent Course Members Make Mecca Unique

Sometimes referred to as the independent members of the Gaylord Golf Mecca, six golf courses that are not located at our member golf resorts serve as equal and excellent partners in what is a 36-year success story of cooperative golf destination marketing.

Gaylord Golf Club, The Pines at Michaywe, Lakes of the North Golf Course, Indian River Golf Club, Black Lake Golf Club, and The Natural are central to the quality of golf, quantity of golf, multiple price points, and community cooperation that are the hallmarks of the Mecca effort.

Those successful six courses when added to the five at Treetops Resort, four at Garland Lodge & Golf Resort, and two at Otsego Resort add up to 17 member courses in the Mecca.

"We have fabulous resorts that are a part of us, Treetops, Otsego and Garland, which helps us offer great variety and answer the needs of any and all golfers. But we are more than that because of all our independent members and I think that makes us unique," said Paul Beachnau, executive director of the Gaylord Golf Mecca since its inception.

"Our independent courses are every bit as high quality and maintain the same lofty standards as our resort members. It's what I call 'one plus one makes three' or added value. We are a bonafide golf community that offers the same quality standards across the board. You can take any one of our independent courses and compare them to resort properties anywhere else and they offer as good or most of the time a better golf experience."

Independent or resort, Beachnau's mantra is "a rising tide raises all ships."

"It's the power of working together, which is what the Mecca does best," he said. "In the case of our independent courses, it's especially important they work together but also with our 21 lodging partners." The lodging partners are where golf packaging of groups for the independent courses often starts.

Golfers pick their lodging choice in the area, which can go from shiny new hotel rooms to rustic cabins and then pick the golf courses they want to play. The lodging

partners will then aid in securing lodging and tee times. The golfer shows up and plays.

Of course, that is just one of the options in the Mecca, where options are king. There are loyal groups that return each year, staying with a different one of the 21 lodging partners and playing four different courses among the 17 members each time. The Mecca is all about finding a fresh fit for the golfer.

Gaylord Golf Club

JT Aude, the head golf professional at Gaylord Golf Club, said the lodging partner involvement is tried and true in the Mecca. "It's worked seamlessly for us for years, especially with the repeat business, and I tell people who call sometimes because they have heard of us to book through a lodging partner because then they can play other Mecca courses too," he said. "We work together. We don't expect them to play our course three straight days or whatever. They can if they want – some people love our smooth, perfect greens here and can play it every day – but they can do so much more because we are part of the Mecca."

The Pines at Michaywe

Judy Mason, the head golf professional at The Pines at Michaywe, said being part of the Mecca helps keep The Pines a vibrant golf property.

"We have this wonderful golf course that is a little bit off the beaten track out here in Michaywe, which is essentially a large residential community," she said. "When we market with the Mecca though, we are also a part of this wonderful destination for golfers. With our partners we offer a unique group of courses, a wide variety of experiences and a great variety of pricing. The Pines is a parkland style course, traditional and yet with the many tee options we have, anybody of any age and any skill level can play, be challenged and enjoy."

Lakes of the North Golf Course

Rob Diroff, the head PGA golf professional at Lakes of the North Golf Course, said being part of the Mecca allows him to reach his goals for the facility, "I want as many people as possible to play here, experience our course, see our community and find that get-away-from-it-all feeling."

Lakes of the North, at Diroff's urging, rejoined the Gaylord Golf Mecca cooperative marketing group four years ago. The course was a founding Mecca member 35 years ago but had dropped membership.

"Being part of the Mecca has been great for us," he said. "It's been fantastic actually. We saw results instantly when we joined in 2020. There was an almost instant uptick in rounds played, and we continue to get new visitors each season from other places coming to play golf here because of the tie to the Mecca."

Indian River Golf Club

Corey Crowell, a PGA professional and the general manager at Indian River Golf Club, loves the history showcased at the course that takes the name of the community where it resides some 25 miles north of Gaylord. The original nine holes were first built in the 1920s by Wilfrid Reid, a legendary member of the Michigan Golf Hall of Fame, and Warner Bowen added the other nine in the 1980s. When Corey came to Indian River, he prompted the public/private facility to join the Gaylord Golf Mecca marketing cooperative.

"It only made sense," he said. "The Gaylord area has built this amazing reputation as a place for golf, so we needed to get the word out and this is just such a great area for tourism. It all made sense. Being part of the Mecca has been a win-win. They let people know about us, and we added a classic-style course to their great group of courses."

Black Lake Golf Club

Black Lake Golf Club General Manager Nick Aune realizes the course in Onaway, about an hour drive from Gaylord, has to be worth the drive. And Black Lake delivers. It is 18 miles from the Indian River exit off northbound I-75 and features the award-winning golf course architect Rees Jones designed for the UAW Black Lake Conference Center in 2000.

"We feel we have one of the best courses in Michigan, public, private, or resort, and we strive to make sure our guests feel the same way after they play," he said. "We keep getting great reviews, great comments and returning golfers and we continually look for ways to be even better."

Black Lake, Gaylord Golf Club, and The Pines also work in conjunction on what they call the Tour Golf Package.

"It's easily the most popular offering we engage in," he said. "Being part of the Mecca just makes great sense in that way. It gives us an identity as part of this perfect summer destination for golfers, and the Mecca works together in a lot of ways to bring golfers up here."

The Natural

Kevin Henley, the general manager and course superintendent at The Natural,

considers the course one of the independents in the Mecca even though it is on the Beaver Creek Resort property.

"We're operated that way, we are the only course on this property, and we're the only course in the Mecca that doesn't have membership categories," he said. "We are truly dependent on the public golfer, the visiting golfer, and the destination golfer. We work with all the partners in the Mecca and by being part of it we find new golfers to discover us."

The Jerry Matthews-designed course west of Otsego Lake fits all the descriptions of pure Northern Michigan golf – tree-lined, visually appealing, playable, enjoyable, isolated, a sanctuary for wildlife, and more.

"We offer a little something different, all the members offer something a little different and that is part of what makes the Mecca work," he said. "We all bring good things to the table to make this a true destination with great variety, great pricing, everything golfers could want."



Gaylord Golf Club



The Pines at Michaywe



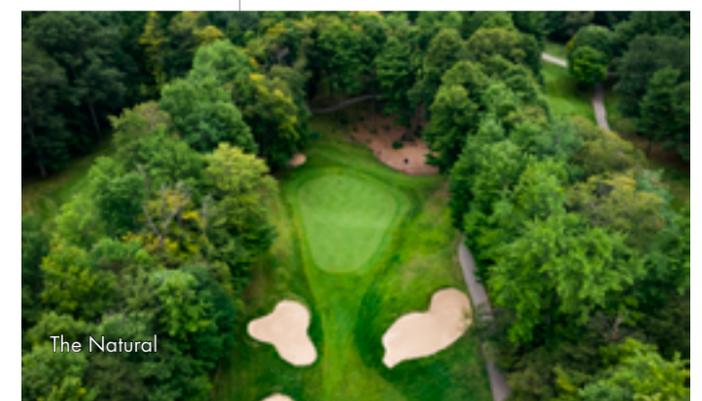
Lakes of the North Golf Course



Indian River Golf Club



Black Lake Golf Club



The Natural



GOLFTEC's T.J. Sullivan Named One of Best Young Teachers in America

Five years ago, Downers Grove native T.J. Sullivan became one of the nation's youngest instructors to earn the title of PGA Master Teaching Professional. At the time, the 33-year-old had already been working for 10 years as a certified personal coach for GOLFTEC, with thousands of lessons under his belt. This January, Sullivan was named one of the Best Young Teachers in America (2023-24) by *Golf Digest* for the second time. The recent recognition follows two prior *Golf Digest* honors as Sullivan being among Illinois' "Best in State" top instructors.

Today, T.J. serves as a regional manager for GOLFTEC and resides in Wheaton with his wife and two children. While still providing instruction and overseeing the GOLFTEC center in Oak Brook, he remains as humble as ever while incredibly appreciative of all the attention he has received.

"Personally, I used to look at that list and say, wow, these are the people I look up to and want to aspire to be like," says Sullivan. "I remember looking at that list and thinking, my gosh, there's some really great instructors on there. Now, just to be in that

same conversation as them is very special. Professionally, it adds to the credibility that GOLFTEC already has, not only here in the Chicago market but on a national scale."

Teaching nearly 30,000 individual lessons takes a lot of passion, not to mention patience, and Sullivan seems to have plenty of both when it comes to working with players of all ages and skill levels.

"Honestly, I'd rather have someone get the ball airborne for the first time than me go out and shoot a career low or a really great round of golf," he says. "I'm motivated by other people's success. When I talk about having passion for what I do, I'm referring to the fact that I just love the sound of a well struck golf ball. If that shot is coming from my student and makes them happy, then it's almost like if I hit a good golf shot, a real win-win. I get excited when my student gets excited. So, if I can be a part of that process, then that's fantastic."



U.S. Adaptive Golf Association Fundraiser April 16 at TopGolf Naperville

The United States Adaptive Golf Association's Junior Board will host a fundraising event at TopGolf Naperville on Sunday, April 16. The event will include an afternoon of golf, including two rounds of a TopContender Tournament, live leaderboard, buffet, and silent auction. The event is open to all skill levels. For more information, contact Jonathan Snyder at jsnyder@usaga.org or visit www.usaga.org/junior-board-topgolf-fundraiser.

USAGA is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization dedicated to bringing inclusion to the special needs community through the game of golf. We deliver real world, evidence based, live golf training to all people with disability, regardless of current health, physical, mental, sensory coping, and well-being status. USAGA consists of 40 member organizations throughout the United States helping spread adaptive golf to the 20 million disabled interested in learning. USAGA's consortium includes 40 member organizations across the United States and provides adaptive golf to 40,000 individuals annually, of which 26% are combat-wounded veterans.



Pepsi Little People's Tournament Marks 50 Years this Summer

The Pepsi Little People's Golf Championships, an international golf tournament for boys and girls ages 3 through 18, will celebrate 50 years June 19-21, 2023. The tourney started in 1974 when founder Nan Ryan was playing in the Quincy City Golf Championship. A local news reporter commented, "it's a shame there's no junior golf tournament in the Midwest like there is in Florida." Nan's reply, "I think I'll start one!"

Refreshment Services Pepsi has served as primary and title sponsor since the event's inception. "I didn't realize that during these past 49 years I would see thousands of junior golfers, many of whom have gone on to star on high school and college teams, teach or coach golf, play amateur events, turn professional, or become involved in the world of golf in some manner," said Ryan.

Ryan's four-year-old daughter, Kathleen, named the tournament. Kathleen holds the record for finishing in the top three in her division nine consecutive years. The first event in June 1974 drew 174 players from 13 states and Canada. Entries grew, and in 2000 the tournament hosted a record 922 players on six golf courses in the Quincy, Illinois, area.

Today, annual entries hold at about 250. Players have come from every state and some 39 countries and provinces.

Little People is a fun yet competitive event, and is one of the few junior tournaments in the world to host 3 to 5 year old boys and girls. One rule for this age group is that the caddy can carry the player if necessary. Boys and girls ages 3 to 7 are allowed 12 strokes per hole, including whiffs.

The lengthy list of alumni includes former players now in the professional ranks including Rory McIlroy, Scottie Scheffler, Annie Park, and Mariah Stackhouse.

Little People's is a qualifier for the AJGA, IMG, FCG, Notah Begay, GOLF Canada, Sagarin/GolfWeek, and Global Junior Golf Rankings. "We estimate that we have seen some 24,000 junior golfers in the past 49 years," said Ryan.

Little People's has two scholarship programs and has donated \$75,000 to Transitions of Western Illinois and \$300,000 to various charities and scholarships through its "Kids Helping Kids" programs.

The 50th Pepsi Little People's will be June 19-21, 2023, at the KC Par-3 Golf Course and 27-hole Westview Golf Course in Quincy, IL. More information and entry forms at www.littlepeoplesgolf.com.

Illinois Youths Headed to Augusta National for Drive, Chip & Putt Finals

Smiles were ear to ear on a chilly day in early March as four young players from across Northern Illinois took practice swings at the Medinah Country Club Learning Center. The four were tweaking their swings in preparation for the National Drive, Chip & Putt Competition held at Augusta National just prior to The Masters.

Each player (from four age divisions) made it through three rounds of regional qualifying to become one of 80 boys and girls invited for the national competition. "I'm excited to go to Augusta," said Hinsdale's William Comiskey, who will compete in the 10 to 11-year-old division. An avid golfer, William plays at various public and private clubs across Chicagoland and is a regular participant in junior tournaments.

Emory Munoz from Lockport will represent the 7 - 9 age division, earning his ticket to Augusta National through qualifying at Aldeen Golf Club in Rockford, Cantigny Golf Club in Wheaton, and Medinah.

Ben Patel is from North Aurora and will represent the 12 to 13-year-old division. He is an avid participant in junior tournaments and can't wait to be able to tee it up one day as a high school golfer.

Last but certainly not least is Martha Kuwahara, an aspiring actress as well as an outstanding golfer. She participated in last year's finals at Augusta National and looks forward to improving upon her tie for 9th place in 2022.

The Drive, Chip & Putt Competition is free and part of the nationwide youth golf development program conducted in partnership with the USGA, The Masters, and PGA of America.

Cog Hill's Kevin Weeks Named 2023 PGA Teacher & Coach of the Year

Have fun.

It's the one thing that 2023 PGA Teacher of the Year Kevin Weeks wishes every golfer would do.

"I recall when speaking with a PGA Tour winner who won the Puerto Rico Open several years back and asked how many good shots he hit that week," recalled Weeks. "He said that through the course of 72 holes he only hit three good shots. Imagine that. Yet, every day we see amateur golfers slamming their clubs on the ground and getting very upset after hitting a less than perfect shot. Golf is a hard game and one where we hit more poor shots than great ones. Amateur golfers need to understand that it's about having fun."

Operating out of Cog Hill's Learning Center for the past 20 years, Weeks has worked with many professionals during his career, but it's the mark he has made on the area's junior golf program which he is most proud of. In fact, many years ago he made the decision to move away from working with PGA Tour players and instead focus his attention on juniors.

In January, the PGA of America announced that Weeks was given its prestigious honor as Teacher & Coach of the Year. "It's an incredible accomplishment to stand out as an honoree among nearly 28,000 PGA Professionals, as they are celebrated for furthering the business and game of golf," said PGA President John Lindert.

"Professionally, it's nice to be recognized and very humbling because there's so many great teachers out there that don't get recognized," said Weeks. "I love what I do and have worked a lot of hours to get to where I am today. It's rewarding anytime your peers recognize what you've done. It's also a validation of all the hours and research, along with helping grow the junior league here at Cog Hill."

It was back in 2013 when Weeks made the decision to focus on the Cog Hill PGA Junior League program rather than working with PGA Tour players. With a wife and two young kids at home, he decided that he wanted to specialize in teaching junior golfers, passing along his expertise and information learned from his years working the professional tours.

"Teaching juniors and developing players is what I've always enjoyed doing. And it really wasn't that hard of a decision because I love teaching the kids and watching their games grow. The travel with the pro players was tough. I mean, yes, it's very glamorous out there teaching on tour, but after 10 years the traveling just got to be too much."

Weeks also knows how much time away from his family his profession has cost him. "Personally, I'm glad for my family. This award is really a big thank you to them. They've sacrificed so much for me to do this [job]. I've missed ice skating shows and other important life milestones. Whether it's hopping on a plane flight last minute because a PGA Tour player needs you or simply a junior league event that runs long and your wife holds dinner."

As far as the most rewarding aspect of the job? "Helping my students achieve their goals," Weeks says without blinking an eye. "Finding out what their goals are and helping to achieve their goals—whether it's making the high school team, making it to the IHSA State Finals, playing golf in college, or just helping them achieve their goals whatever they may be. The most fun: helping someone achieve their goals that they didn't think they could reach."



Belmont Golf Club in Downers Grove Celebrates Course's Historic Origins



One of the most endearing aspects of golf is the history that comes with it. Once called Belmont Golf Club, Chicago Golf, and Downers Grove Golf Club, now the 9-hole treasure in Chicago's western suburbs is reverting back to its original name Belmont Golf Club.

While the Scottish origins of golf trace back hundreds of years to the 15th century, the game took a few extra centuries to migrate to the United States. In 1893, Charles Blair Macdonald found a suitable piece of Illinois property to complement his original 9-hole course design from a year earlier. Located on Belmont Road in Downers Grove, the Chicago Golf Club would one day be recognized as the first golf course west of the Allegheny Mountain range as well as the first 18-hole golf course in all of the United States. Ken McCormick the General Manager of Belmont Golf Club said this about the 4th hole, one of his favorite holes on the undulating layout, "This is a blind dogleg left. The approach shot to the green on this hole may be

one of the best views on the course with the green being dramatically downhill and surrounded by trees. From the high spot on the fairway you can really see all of the rolling hills and why this site was chosen as the first 18-hole course in the United States."

By 1895, the course's popularity was such that club members purchased 200 acres of land in nearby Wheaton to build a new 18-hole course. While the members took the Chicago Golf Club name with them, some of the original property left behind was repurposed into a new 9-hole course in 1899. The layout was named after its street address: Belmont Golf Club.

Over the years and decades since its humble beginnings, the golf course underwent a number of ownership changes as well as a few name adjustments, including the Illinois Golf Club and Downers Grove Country Club. When the course was purchased by the Downers Grove Park District in 1968, the nine was renamed Downers Grove Golf Club. Even after

several designers were recruited by the property over the years to revise and upgrade the course, legend has it that at least some of the holes dating back to the property's origins remain essentially intact. Holes 1, 2, 4, 7, 8, and 9 are known as the Original Six.

In 2022, the park district decided to recognize this historic property's roots by restoring the course's Belmont Golf Club name. Even the course's logo, a large "B" for Belmont was inspired by the logo found on an archival scorecard.

Ken McCormick added, "I love the name change and what it is going to do to highlight the history of the property. There are a large number of golfers that play this course every year and have no idea about the history of the course. By renaming the course back to Belmont Golf Club we get to highlight its place in history dating back to 1899 when Belmont Golf Club was founded. Also over the years the park district has made significant investments back into the

property in all areas with the addition of the driving range shelter and private lesson area, a newly renovated clubhouse, continued renovations of the bunkering throughout the course, and continued focus on the quality of the greens and tees. It is the perfect time to rebrand the course as the whole experience has improved from what it was years ago.

As long-time locals can attest, the course itself is a special experience. The walk to the first tee instantly harkens players back to another time. Wetlands, sand bunkers, and softly rolling fairways mark each hole. To increase the challenge, most of the holes are divided by large, mature trees. While many people turn another cheek at 9-hole courses, Belmont is a true treasure from its intelligent varied design, with meticulous conditioning that lasts all season long.

Our publisher, Dave Weretka, took some of his first swings as a young teenager here. "I have fond memories of being introduced to the game of golf by



my grandfather. It was here that I was smitten by the game when a shot was well struck in the center of the clubface. Even though I'm a lefty, grandpa put me in an old set of right-handed sticks. "It makes sense, you want your strong arm to pull the club through and around your body". I didn't question it as I was new to the game. Left-handed clubs were not as abundant back then and gramps probably couldn't justify purchasing clubs for a young lad that may not like the game. Only time would tell..... being a natural lefty in all things, there was nothing natural about swinging a golf club opposite handed. Reflections of those rounds with my grandfather are seared into my memory as we walked those fairways together in the early '80s. Every time I step onto that first tee, I'm transported to those special times. Memories that I cherish and a heartfelt thanks for introducing me to a game that has brought so much joy over the past four decades."

Lastly Ken McCormick had this to say, "The overall experience when you step on the property is really special. I am a golfer who needs to warm up before they play and having a large driving range and practice putting green is almost a requirement for me. I feel that this course is exactly what golfers like myself are looking for with limited time to play because

of work and family obligations. The course provides premium conditions with undulating fairways and greens. This is by no means your normal 9-hole municipal course. We also do things like 10-minute tee time intervals to space out the groups ensuring golfers have a good pace of play. It is a course that you never get tired of playing. I describe this course as the best 9 holes of any 18-hole course in the area."

The term "hidden gem" is often overused in today's golf world, but Belmont Golf Club is just that, tucked into the tree-lined splendor of Downers Grove. The course is ideal for all types of players with a par of 36 at nearly 3,300 yards from the tips, and about 2,450 yards from the front tees. It's an ideal place to tee it up for so many reasons and also because it only takes a couple of hours to play.

The character and the rolling terrain are what truly sets this course apart from many of the courses around Chicago. The history shines through here where you can still see and feel C.B. MacDonald's brilliant architectural touch. Do yourself a favor and check out all that Belmont Golf Club has to offer. We guarantee a fulfilling timeless experience that makes you love the game of golf even more than you already do.

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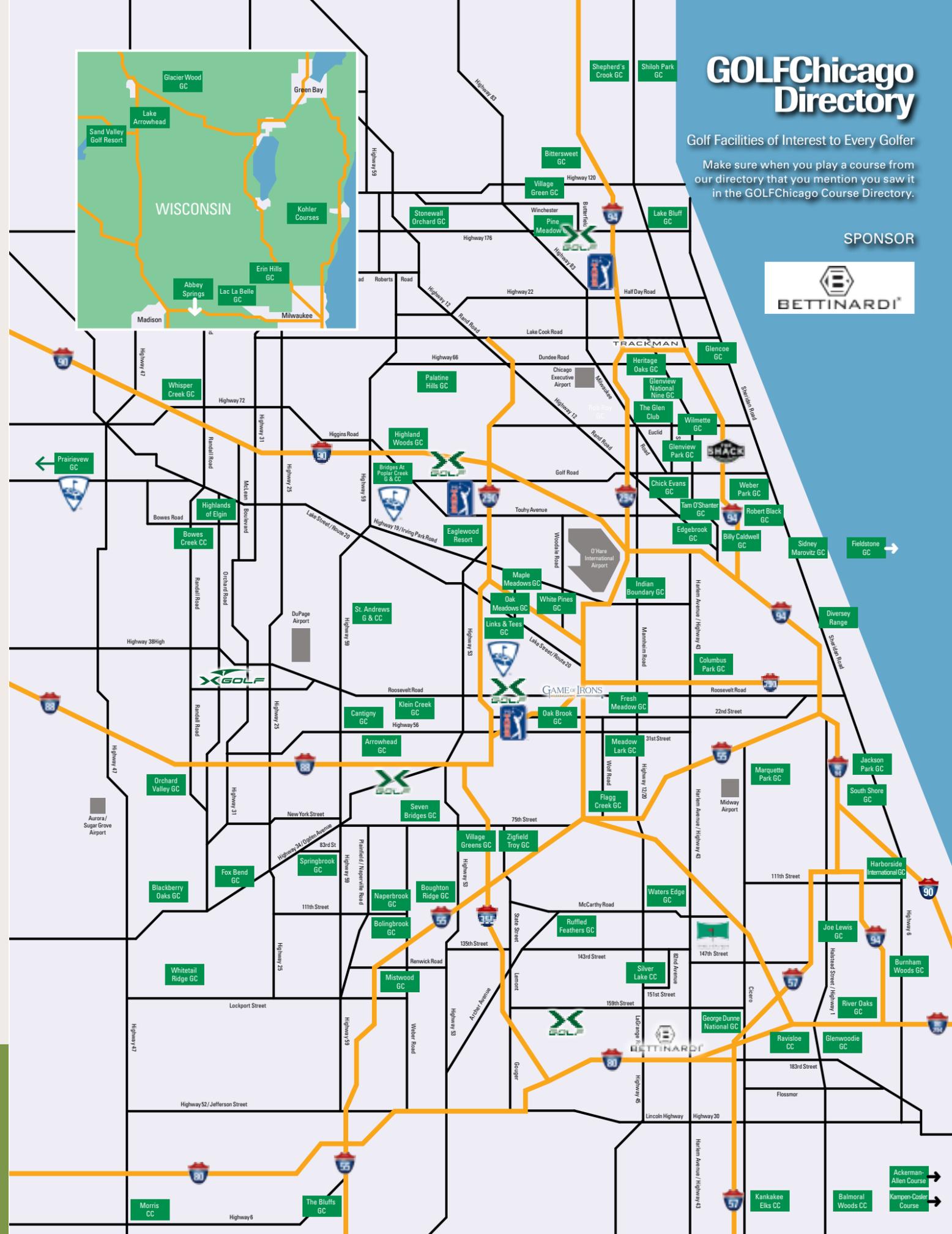
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Belmont Golf Club

630-963-1306
2420 Haddow Ave.
Downers Grove, IL 60515
belmontgolfclub.org/

The historic Belmont Golf Club is a scenic 9-hole par 36 course featuring mature trees, natural areas, elevation and water hazards. A driving range with 24 hitting stations, a practice putting green, sand trap, and chipping area includes a 10-station covered shelter.



Abbey Springs

262-275-6113
One Country Club Dr.
Fontana, WI 53125
abbeysprings.org

Abbey Springs has been rated 4.5 Stars by *Golf Digest*. With spectacular views of Geneva Lake, Abbey Springs underwent a major green renovation in 2021, featuring state of the art "007 bent grass on all greens. Make your reservation at the web site above.



Bettinardi Golf

708-802-7400
Studio B
7800 Graphics Drive
Tinley Park, IL 60477
bettinardi.com/pages/studio-b-putter-fitting

Studio B is Bettinardi Golf's high-tech putter fitting facility located above the factory floor. During your one-hour fitting, our certified fitter will assess your stroke and determine what Bettinardi putter, length, loft, and lie would be best suited for your stroke.



Arrowhead Golf Club

630-653-5800
26W151 Butterfield Rd.
Wheaton, IL 60189
arrowheadgolfclub.org

Arrowhead Golf Club is recognized for its beautifully maintained course and inviting atmosphere.

Arrowhead is a public course which offers impeccable golfing conditions at affordable rates on three separate par-72 18-hole layouts surrounded by forest preserve. The West, East, and South Courses feature new bunker renovations and enhancements. The practice area includes a lighted driving range, putting green, and chipping green. Group and individual golf lessons are available.



The Bluffs Public Golf Club

815-467-7888
24355 W. Bluff Rd.
Channahon, IL 60410
heritagebluffs.com

18 Holes: Par 72
Yardage: 5,035 - 7,171
Located near the intersection of Interstates 80 and 55 just south of Joliet, Heritage Bluffs is the pride of the Channahon Park District. The tranquil surroundings make a day playing golf fun and relaxing.

Along with our award-winning course we also feature a large all-grass practice range, along with a large putting green and a separate chipping green and bunker. After your round you can relax in our Grille Room or out on the patio, enjoying a full menu of delicious food and beverage choices.



Balmoral Woods Golf Club

708-672-7448
26732 S. Balmoral
Woods Dr.
Crete, IL 60417
balmoralwoods.com

Balmoral Woods offers a demanding, superbly conditioned, magnificent round of golf.

Laid out over 280 acres of wooded, rolling hills, the course will test the skill of golfers with its 6700-yard, 72.6 rated, 133-slope layout. It is a public 18-hole golf course, has hosted many local and state events and tournaments, and is the annual home of the Will County Amateur Championship. Check out our website for new rates, reservations, and more information. Follow us on Instagram for the latest updates and events.



Bowes Creek Country Club

847-214-5880
1250 Bowes Creek Blvd.
Elgin, IL 60124
bowescreekcc.com

Ranked as *Golfweek's* Best Courses You Can Play, Bowes Creek Country Club gives you every option to play your ideal round of golf. Along with annual memberships, we offer a "member for a day" pass, allowing you the privilege to play unlimited golf with cart as well as full use of the practice facility. If playing a quick round of nine or eighteen holes suits your game better, we offer that as well. Bowes Creek provides the public golfer a private-club experience, without an annual membership.



Cantigny Golf

630-668-8463
27w270 Mack Rd.
Wheaton, IL 60189
cantignygolf.com

Designed by Roger Packard, and five-time host of the Illinois State Amateur, Cantigny features 27 challenging holes on beautiful, rolling terrain covering 300 acres. Cantigny Golf Academy offers junior clinics, private lessons, club fitting, grass practice tees, and climate-controlled hitting bays. Cantigny Youth Links is a 9-hole, par-3 course for ages 8 to 15.

2021 awards:

- Best in State: *Golf Digest*
- GRAA Top 50 Public Range in the Nation
- NGOAA Player Development Award



The Preserve at Oak Meadows

630-595-0071
900 N. Wood Dale Rd.
Addison, IL 60101
dupagegolf.com

After extensive renovations, The Preserve is a new 288-acre world-class 18-hole course, practice facility, and environmental haven—designed by Greg Martin.

- *Golf Digest* Green Star Award
- *Golf Inc.* Renovation of the Year
- *Golf Digest* Best Courses You Can Play
- ASGCA Design Excellence Award

The Preserve's location features easy access from O'Hare, I-290, I-355, I-294, and Route 83.

Find our best specials and promotions at www.DuPageGolf.com.



Cog Hill Golf & Country Club

866-264-4455
12294 Archer Ave.
Palos Park, IL 60439
coghillgolf.com

Cog Hill Golf & Country Club, a Jemsek Golf Facility, is a historic 72-hole public golf facility located 30 miles southwest of Chicago. The year-round facility includes a driving range equipped with lights and heated Toptracer stalls, two golf shops, patio dining, and a pavilion for events, along with a 280-seat banquet hall.

- Rated in "America's 100 Greatest Public Golf Courses" by *Golf Digest*
- 2020 GRAA Top 50 Public Range in the Nation



Fox Bend Golf Course

866-772-4769
7169 County Road O
Erin, WI 53027
erinhills.com/

Erin Hills is a course like none other — routed over the kettle moraine areas left by glaciers, surrounded by wetlands and a river, with ground that consists of glacial till of varied composition of sand and small rock. In an unconventional decision for a course in Wisconsin, the architects routed the fairways around contours of the property and provided a firm playing surface that plays shorter than its length on the scorecard.



Green Meadows Golf Club

630-810-5330
18 W. 201 W. 63rd St.
Westmont, IL 60559
dupagegolf.com

Green Meadows is a fun nine-hole gem that offers quality conditions in a traditional parkland setting.

Featuring three par 4s and six par 3s, the Green Meadows layout is the perfect blend of challenge, enjoyment, and value for all skill levels!

Senior discounts are available every day, and DuPage Golf Discount Card holders save on every round.

Look for Green Meadows behind the Westmont water tower on 63rd St.

Find our best specials and promotions at www.DuPageGolf.com.



Fox Bend Golf Course

248-370-9354
1984 Taylor Road
Auburn Hills, MI 48326
fieldstonegolfclub.com

Amidst over 170 local golf courses, Fieldstone is consistently hailed as one of the top daily fee facilities in Southeast Michigan. We present an exceptional variety of hole designs by the renowned architect Arthur Hills that mesh the diverse landscape and wetlands with gently rolling fairways through majestic hardwoods. Add our unparalleled maintenance and dedicated staff of professionals for an experience that many private clubs try, but often fail to emulate.



Maple Meadows Golf Club

630-616-8424
272 Addison Rd.
Wood Dale, IL 60191
dupagegolf.com

Maple Meadow's Championship "West 18" features a modern prairie design, and is honored to be a qualifying site for the Illinois Open and the host course for the DuPage Junior Classic.

Choose from four sets of tees and enjoy immaculate bent grass fairways and greens.

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Find our best specials and promotions at www.DuPageGolf.com.



Fox Bend Golf Course

630-554-3939
3516 Route 34
Oswego, IL 60543
foxbendgolfcourse.com

Fox Bend Golf Course, Oswego's own welcoming and challenging public course, boasts plush fairways, mature trees, and challenging greens. This 6,890-yard, par-72 course tests skills of all levels with 34 well-positioned bunkers and water in play on 11 holes. Fox Bend has hosted three Illinois Opens, the 2010 & 2011 USGA Qualifiers, and the 2012, 2015, 2018, 2021, and 2023 Illinois State Amateur Qualifiers. Visit Christina's Pub & Grill before or after your round of golf to enjoy spacious outdoor seating with gorgeous views and American fare done right!





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708-758-1212
19301 S State St.
Glenwood, IL 60425
glenwoodiegolf.com

Glenwoodie, just 25 minutes from Chicago, has been a favorite championship course for serious and recreational golfers in Chicago and North-west Indiana for over 90 years. Consistently ranked in the top 35 public courses, the 18-hole, par-72, 6902-yard course features bent-grass fairways and large rolling greens surrounded by groves of majestic oaks.

- 14,000 sq. ft. Clubhouse and Community Center with fully-stocked Golf Shop
- Full Service Bar and Grille, and Outdoor Patio
- Electric Cart Fleet
- Lighted Practice Range
- PGA Professional Staff



Game of Irons

630-303-9454
3041 Butterfield Rd.
Suite 104
Oak Brook, IL 60523
gameofirons.com

Game of Irons is Chicagoland's most exciting virtual golf experience! Be transported to over 200 world-famous courses in the comfort of a premium indoor facility with 16 hitting bays in over 18,000 sq. ft. - perfect for corporate events, parties, and club meetings. We offer a full bar with craft cocktails and amazing food. We invite you to try out our #1 rated simulators with moving floors that adjust to the course contours, auto ball tee and multiple turf types (fairway, rough and bunker).



Glacier Wood Golf Club

715-445-3831
604 Water St.
Iola, WI 54945
glacierwoodiola.com

Glacier Wood Golf Club is an 18-hole public facility centrally located in the state, two hours north of Madison. Ranked as the #2 golf course in the state of Wisconsin through Golfpass.com, as well as #17 in the nation for value, Glacier Wood Golf Club is worth the drive. With four sets of tees, the golf course is fair for players of all skill levels, and offers a driving range equipped with four target greens and a 19,000 sq. ft. natural grass hitting area, as well as two practice greens used for putting and chipping. With tree-lined fairways, undulating green complexes, and a wide array of natural wildlife, Glacier Wood Golf Club is a must play.



Glencoe Golf Club

847-835-0250
621 Westley Rd.
Glencoe, IL 60022
glencoeclub.com

The Glencoe Golf Club features an 18-hole, par-72 course located 30 minutes from Chicago on the beautiful North Shore. The course is an Audubon Certified, tree-lined classic that offers a great escape from the city. The GGC boasts finely manicured greens, a new cart fleet with GPS, an all-grass tee practice range, and beverage cart service.

- Best greens on the North Shore
- Full-service restaurant with craft beers, specialty cocktails and outdoor seating
- Senior Discount Program, Monday - Thursday, NO residency restrictions, 60 and up.



The Highlands of Elgin

847-931-5950
875 Sports Way
Elgin, IL 60123
highlandsofelgin.com

The Highlands of Elgin has become a premier destination for thousands of golfers throughout the region. Nine new holes reclaim an old stone quarry, and take maximum advantage of the unique and dramatic landforms that were left behind, including a twelve-acre quarry lake. Four holes hug the top of the bluff thirty to forty feet above the water, providing golfers with incredible views and numerous shot options on each hole. The prairie-style clubhouse features an expanded golf shop, locker rooms, event rooms, and a full-scale food and beverage operation.



Kankakee Elks Country Club

815-937-9547
2283 Bittersweet Dr.
Saint Anne, IL 60964
elksclub627.com

The Kankakee Elks Country Club is an 18-hole par-72 course. It is one of Illinois' premier Langford @ Moreau design courses, featuring some of the best green complexes in Illinois, 40 miles south of Chicago along the beautiful Kankakee River with very affordable rates.

Chose from one of our four tees to accommodate all levels of play.

Driving range, chipping area, and putting green with newly remodeled bar and snack shop.



Klein Creek Golf Club

630-690-0101
1N333 Pleasant Hill Rd.
Winfield, IL 60190
kleincreek.com

Klein Creek Golf Club is an 18-hole public golf course located one mile south of North Avenue and easily accessible from I-355. Designed by Dick Nugent, the layout features an open design in which water is present on 15 holes. Trees frame the layout's gentle doglegs, and tall prairie grasses border the fairways. Contoured mounding frames the fairways and greens, allowing a variety of approach options and great risk-reward opportunities.



The Club at Lac La Belle

262-567-7833
6996 Pennsylvania St.
Oconomowoc, WI 53066
clubatlaclabelle.com

The newly renovated Club at Lac La Belle is now open for public play! If the club's original founders and its legendary Scottish golf professionals were alive today, our hope is that they would recognize our new course as fun "sporting" golf, which was a fundamental part of the game in 1896. We invite you to come see why Lac La Belle is the birthplace of the Wisconsin Golf Trail



Harborside International Golf Club

312-782-7837
11001 S. Doty Ave. East
Chicago, IL 60628
harborsidegolf.com

Harborside International Golf Center, home to the Port & Starboard Courses, is Chicago's home for golf. Located minutes from Chicago's Loop, Harborside offers a premier golf experience in the Chicagoland area. Harborside is the only facility with two of *Golfweek's* "Best Courses You Can Play in Illinois" and is home to an expansive practice facility. Harborside is owned by the Illinois International Port District and managed by KemperSports.



The Haven Indoor Golf

708-671-8052
12317 S. Harlem Ave.
Palos Heights, IL 60463
thehavenindoorgolf.com

The Haven Indoor Golf & Bar is the only indoor facility in the Southwest Suburbs using Foresight GC Hawks! Our simulators are true game improvement simulators making us the premier facility in the Southwest suburbs.

Foresight Sports launch monitors use exact photometric measurements and image processing taken with a clear, direct view of the critical ball launch condition and club head into impact. The result? Our launch monitors measure - not estimate - club head data based on the club's triangulated face plane, delivering vastly more accurate results.



Heritage Oaks Golf Club

847-291-2351
3535 Dundee Rd.
Northbrook, IL 600623
heritageoaksgc.com

Conveniently located between the Edens Expressway and Interstate 294, 30 minutes north of Chicago. Featuring 27 holes of tree-lined golf, a practice range equipped with TrackMan® technology, our golf academy, and indoor golf simulators, Heritage Oaks offers something for everyone. With the elevated Acorn Grill + Terrace overlooking courses certified by the National Audubon Society, Heritage Oaks Golf Club welcomes you for golf, for a meal, or for a timeless experience.



Lake Arrowhead

715-325-2929
1195 Apache Lane
Nekoosa, WI 54457
lakearrowheadgolf.com

Located in the heart of Central Wisconsin, Lake Arrowhead boasts two of the Midwest's elite 18-hole golf courses. Here you have the rare opportunity to enjoy not just one, but two 4½ star championship golf courses in one incredible experience.



Naperbrook Golf Course

630-378-4215
22204 W. 111th St. / Hassert Blvd.
Plainfield, IL 60585
golfnaperville.org

Located in Plainfield, scenic Naperbrook Golf Course is a "links style" course that features rolling hills and wide fairways. Challenges in the way of ponds, a double green, and hidden bunkers await golfers of all levels. Additional amenities include a recently updated and expanded practice area featuring a one-acre turf range tee, large practice green, and practice bunker. Enjoy post-game refreshments on the picturesque patio. Naperbrook also offers lessons, outings, a well-stocked golf shop, and much more.



Pine Meadow Golf Club

847-566-4653
1 Pine Meadow Ln.
Mundelein, IL 60060
pinemeadowgc.com

Pine Meadow Golf Club is known for our beautiful 220 acres of fairways, greens, pine trees, and meadow areas.

Golfers of all abilities and ages enjoy the serene setting and fun playable design of the "Pine."

The Pine, due to its challenging design, has been host to all types of competitive events ranging from PGA Jr. League, to Men's and Women's State Ams, to Illinois PGA Championships.

This is truly a golf facility for everyone.



Wilmette Golf Club

630-208-7600
2325 Longest Dr.
West Chicago, IL 60185
prairielanding.com

Prairie Landing Golf Course is a prairie links style 18-hole course designed by Robert Trent Jones, Jr. The course has been rated 4.5 Stars by *Golf Digest* for "Best Places to Play." Prairie Landing Golf Club prides itself on offering the quintessential golf experience of the Chicagoland Area.





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PUTTERS,
AND
SO MUCH
MORE!



Sand Valley
888-398-8671
1697 Leopold Way
Nekoosa, WI 54457
sandvalley.com

Sand Valley is known for its three award-winning golf courses, Sand Valley, Mammoth Dunes, and the Sandbox, which were modeled after the great heathland courses of London. Enjoy dramatic views, a magnitude of strategic playing options, modern lodging, and a culinary experience to match.



PrairieView Golf Club
815-234-4653
6734 N. German Church Rd.
Byron, IL 61010
prairieviewgolf.com

Recognized by many suburban golfers as a hidden gem, PrairieView Golf Club boasts beautiful views of restored dolomite prairie land that is well worth a short drive west out to Byron, Ill. (south of Rockford). With challenging greens, dramatic bunkering, and supreme conditioning, the course will test the skills and nerves of every golfer. PrairieView is also home to PrairieFire Golf & Grill, a year-round Toptracer Range® with heated bays, lounge seating, and great food and drink selections.



The Shack Indoor Golf
847-904-2905
1717 Chestnut Ave
Glenview IL, 60025
theshackgolfclub.com

The Shack Indoor Golf Club features TrackMan simulator technology for an immersive golf experience. Enjoy delicious food and drinks from our full bar while practicing your swing. Perfect for socializing or improving your game, come and tee off at our state-of-the-art facility.



Purdue's Ackerman-Allen Course
765-494-3139
West Lafayette, IN
purduegolf.com

The Ackerman-Allen Course, a Pete Dye design, is an 18-hole, parkland-style, par-72 championship golf course featuring large bent-grass greens, fairways and tees. The layout presents a challenge for golfers of all abilities with rolling hills, tree-lined fairways, white sand bunkers, and minimal water hazards. Ackerman-Allen offers five sets of tees with the championship tees playing over 7,500 yards and the forward tees playing at 5,300 yards.



Springbrook Golf Course
630-848-5060
2220 W. 83rd St.
Naperville, IL 60564
golfnaperville.org

Springbrook GC commands some of the finest views of Naperville's open space and trails. This 18-hole parkland-style championship course was renovated in 2022, and is expected to reopen in mid-year of 2023 with exciting updates including new tees and bunkers. Work on your swing at the one-acre turf practice tee, or fine tune your short game at the large practice putting green or two short-game practice greens with bunkers. Enjoy post-game refreshments on the expansive patio with great views of the course. Springbrook also offers lessons, outings, a well-stocked golf shop, and more.



Purdue's Kampen-Cosler Course
765-494-3139
West Lafayette, IN
purduegolf.com

The Kampen-Cosler Course, a Pete Dye design, is an 18-hole, links-style, par-72 championship course features large bent-grass greens, fairways, and tees. The layout is a challenge for golfers of all abilities with vast sand bunkers, native grasslands, ponds, and a natural celery bog. There are five sets of tees with the championship tees playing over 7,400 yards and the forward tees at 5,300 yards.

Kampen-Cosler, one of the top collegiate courses in the nation, has been awarded 4.5 stars on *Golf Digest's* "Places to Play." It receives high marks as one of the most difficult golf courses in Indiana.



Stonewall Orchard Golf Club
847-740-4890
25675 W. Highway 60
Grayslake, IL 60030
stonewallorchard.com

Cutting through hundred-year-old oak and pine trees, Stonewall Orchard Golf Club has quickly become one of Chicago's most prolific public golf courses.

Since opening in 1999, the Arthur Hills-designed gem located in northwest suburban Grayslake has served as Final Stage Qualifying site for the U.S. Open, and currently sits in rotation with Olympia Fields and Medinah Country Club as host site for the Illinois PGA Section Championship held every fall.



Tam O'Shanter Golf Course & Learning Center
847-965-2344
6700 W. Howard St.
Niles, IL 60714
golftam.com

One of the most important courses in popularizing the game of golf in America is located right here in Niles. In 1953, Tam O'Shanter Country Club hosted the first-ever nationally televised golf tournament.

Today, a public 9-hole par-33 course remains, maintained with the goal of providing playing conditions reminiscent of those Hogan, Palmer, and Nicklaus enjoyed years ago. Swing out for a scenic round and walk in the footsteps of legends at Tam O'Shanter!

Year-round instruction available!



X-Golf Kildeer
847-847-1723
20771 N Rand Rd Suite I-4,
Kildeer, IL 60047
xgolfkildeer.com

XGolf Kildeer offers an upscale indoor golf experience. State-of-the-art golf simulators, full bar, private and semi-private rooms, and wide open floor plan!



White Pines Golf Club
630-766-0304
500 W. Jefferson
Bensenville, IL 60106
whitepinesgolf.com

The White Pines Golf Club's two 18-hole championship courses, situated on more than 260 acres, have been a favorite among Chicago area golfers since 1928. The public course, owned and operated by the Bensenville Park District, is an excellent choice for players of all skill levels. Whether it's an evening at the lighted driving range, a casual round with friends, an outing or special event, White Pines Golf Club offers the perfect setting to get "away from it all." Enjoy food and drink at 37 Bar & Grill. Take advantage of Monday-Thursday tee time specials and book online.



X-Golf Libertyville
224-504-2940
1177 S. Milwaukee Ave.
Libertyville, IL 60048
xgolf-libertyville.com

We spent 15 years engineering, learning from golf experts, and creating a simulator of unparalleled accuracy. The result? A completely new experience that lets golfers play on the world's top courses, compete in a wide variety of game formats, and of course – enjoy some of the best golf they've ever played in a high-energy indoor entertainment facility.

Whether a tee time or PGA Professional lesson, X-Golf has it all: a full bar with beer and cocktails, shareable appetizers, and courses designed for all ages and levels from amateurs to professionals.



Whitetail Ridge Golf Club
630-882-8988
7671 Clubhouse Dr. Yorkville,
IL 60560
whitetailridgegc.com

Experience a "tail" of two Nines at Whitetail Ridge Golf Club. Our Front Nine flows through a beautiful valley featuring a creek that splits through its relatively flat landscape. Our Back Nine begins on #10 with a climb up the slopes and follows the rolling hills into some towering trees. Finish your day in The Persimmon Room. This newly renovated space features an indoor/outdoor dining area with shareable dishes, scratch-made entrees, an extensive list of bourbons and whiskey, and the most spectacular sunsets around!



X-Golf Orland Park
708-966-0486
15876 S. LaGrange Rd.
Orland Park, IL 60462
xgolforlandpark.com

We offer eight state-of-the-art simulators which are designed for golfers at all stages of their game. Whether you want to sharpen your game to gain that competitive edge or are just starting out and want to learn new skills without battling the outdoors, this is the place for you. The simulators can give you data about your swing and ball striking to improve your game and along with that, we can help you take your game to the next level by having a PGA-qualified Professional on our team.



Wilmette Golf Club
847-256-9777
3900 Fairway Dr.
Wilmette, IL 60091
golfwilmette.com

Wilmette Golf Club is the closest 18-hole facility north of Chicago. This par-70 course will test all skill levels with the purest greens on the North Shore. A 30-station driving range and large putting green are available for working on your game. Enjoy a drink or dinner on the patio overlooking the 18th green at The Lawn. Contact us directly to book your next outing or special event. Take advantage of tee time specials by booking online at golfwilmette.com.



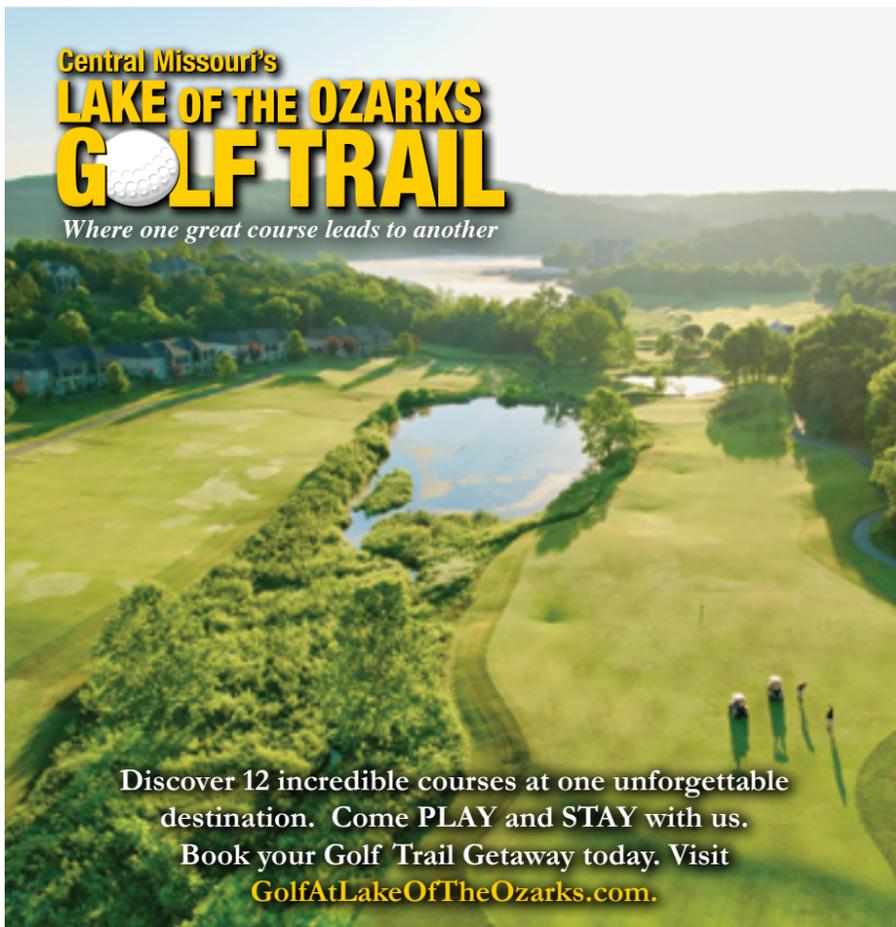
X-Golf Schaumburg
847-380-1848
1100 American Ln.
Schaumburg, IL 60173
xgolfschaumburg.com

We spent 15 years engineering, learning from golf experts, and creating a simulator of unparalleled accuracy. The result? A completely new experience that lets golfers play on the world's top courses, compete in a wide variety of game formats, and of course – enjoy some of the best golf they've ever played in a high-energy indoor entertainment facility.

Whether a tee time or PGA Professional lesson, X-Golf has it all: a full bar with beer and cocktails, shareable appetizers, and courses designed for all ages and levels from amateurs to professionals.



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THE BLUFFS
 CHANNAHAN, IL
 EST. 1978

Located right off of Interstate 55 in Channahon, IL, The Bluffs, also known as Heritage Bluffs Golf Club, offers both a challenge and composure across its rolling acres. With scenic beauty unlike most Chicago-area courses, The Bluffs is a Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary and has received a 4-Star rating from Golf Digest magazine.

In addition to an award-winning course The Bluffs also features a large all-grass practice range, putting green, separate chipping green and bunker, and a newly renovated clubhouse.

The clubhouse is open 7 days a week and features a full dining room and bar as well as indoor golf simulators during the winter months for year round fun!




Be sure to tune into the award-winning Golf360 TV show on NBC Sports Chicago for all things golf in The Windy City and beyond.

Former Ms. Missouri Katie Kearney is your host with interviews provided by Chicago Bear longsnapping legend Patrick Mannely.

Additional information as well as airtimes can be found at www.linksvideo.net/golf360tv



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- JOHN STEINBREDER



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