

Back in 1907, urban designer Daniel Burnham famously articulated his philosophy to “make no little plans.” One hundred and six years later, area golf course owner Jim McWethy appears to have fully embraced this decree as he continues to enhance and expand the offerings at his Mistwood Golf Club in Romeoville. After undertaking a \$6 million renovation project of the property’s 18-hole championship course that was unveiled last year, McWethy oversaw the construction of a 5,000-square-foot performance center that redefines the term “practice range.”

The year-round facility features a golfer’s virtual toy chest of amenities, including hitting bays, target greens, multiple practice putting greens, Trackman ball flight analysis, SAM Putt Lab, and Quintec ball-motion putting analysis, along with a club-fitting and repair shop. All of these offerings are served up in an elegantly appointed building featuring a full-service sports bar and snack shop.

Director of Golf Dan Phillips says that from the outset, the goal was to provide a unique learning experience for golfers. “We wanted our guests to have every option at their disposal for improving their games. They can come just to hit golf

balls if they like, but they can also consider taking a lesson or receive an analysis of their putting stroke or explore what clubs or golf balls work best for their individual swings.”

The huge practice area serves up 32 hitting stations, 11 of which are climate-controlled from the cement floors to the hitting mats for winter use. Two of these bays are ear-marked for instructional use by one of the club’s pros. This team consists of Phillips, head professional Visanu Tongwarin, Performance Center Director Mike Baldwin, Chris Ioriatti, and the recent addition of swing gurus John Platt and Dr. Jim Suttie. Platt, the 2011 Illinois PGA’s Teacher of the Year, and

Suttie, the acclaimed golf instructor who has worked with touring professionals for decades, join what has become one of the strongest teaching staffs in the country.

“We really like how everything turned out,” says McWethy. “The Performance Center has always been one of the foundations of our master plan for Mistwood Golf Club. After the renovation of the club, we considered building both the learning facility and a new clubhouse at the same time. But we prioritized the Performance Center. We wanted our guests to enjoy an experience above and beyond what [even] most private country clubs offer.”

# Performance Center Unveiled at Mistwood Golf Club

By Neal Kotlarek  
Photos by Brian Walters





Indeed, the complete overhaul of the property over the past two years has vaulted Mistwood Golf Club to new status as one of the midwest's premier golf complexes. Unveiled to great acclaim last June, the renovated golf course now features 19 sod-faced bunkers placed in devils places around the course. Combined with new bridges and stone embankments, the effect is an impeccably groomed layout that is as beautiful as it is challenging.

Michigan designer Ray Hearn (who also designed Yarrow Golf & Conference Resort featured in this issue) was provided the rare opportunity to re-work the origi-

nal golf course that he built in the late 1990s. "We listened to club members and guests who enjoyed the Scottish links-type feel of Mistwood. Those conversations led us to consider adding the sod-faced bunkers to enhance that experience. I'm pretty certain that anyone who liked the first version of the course will fall in love with the new version!"

Longtime home of the Illinois Women's Open, the 7,028-yard course winds across pristine prairie land as well as over and around lakes, streams and wetlands. Along with the new bunkers, the par-5 No. 3 has been signifi-

cantly altered. The green was relocated and the creek that was formerly in front of the green now snakes behind it.

The property's signature bunker lurks in front of No. 12. A relatively short par 4, the hole seems from the tee to offer up a birdie opportunity. But the short-iron approach shot must overcome a pit over 10 feet deep that calls upon its victims to hit a creative blast somewhere in the direction of a flagstick that can't be seen. If it's any consolation, the sand inside all of the Mistwood greenside bunkers was specially selected to prevent fried egg lies while promoting ease of extraction.

The third and final phase of Mistwood will be the construction of a 32,000 sq. ft. clubhouse featuring Scottish castle accents to complement the Scottish themes seen on the golf course and the performance center. The complex will include dining and banquet facilities among other amenities.

Golfers can only imagine what those amenities will include as it's apparent by now that Jim McWethy makes no little plans.

For tee times and more information on Mistwood Golf Club, visit the property's website at [www.mistwoodgolf.com](http://www.mistwoodgolf.com).

