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OPENING SHOT

DAVE AND TIM

Long ago, TV weatherman P.J. Hoff invented a cartoon character he named "the vice president in charge of looking out the window." P.J.'s creation would have pulled the window shade down this winter and said "no mas." It was brutal at the start, with occasional reasonably mild days still much fewer in number than we Eskimos could have hoped for. Why is there a feeling that a sucker punch is yet to be delivered?

The only reliable way to warm up, aside from sticking our feet in the furnace, is to think about golf, that most reliable indicator of spring.

It's coming - spring, that is, if our seance with P.J. was accurate - but golf is already here, in the form of the golf show. These go back to at least the 1920s - there was a National Golf Show at Chicago's American Exposition Palace in April of 1926 - indicating a need



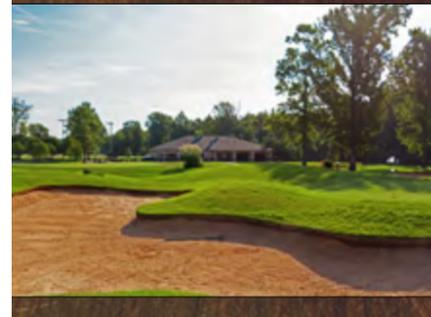
"Do me a favor, next time you want to go golfing in the city, count me out."

for the frozen to venture toward the warmth, if in mind only, and if only for a few hours. There are three shows in the immediate Chicago area this year, as well as in Milwaukee and Kalamazoo, should one be inclined to hitch the horses to the wagon for a longer jaunt. There was but one, the long-running soiree in Rosemont first held in one hotel meeting room in

Itasca in 1984, until a few years ago. We take the growth as a sign that the business end of the game is finally bouncing back.

Of this, we are sure. Those of us who love the game love it more than ever. We'll have new places in the Midwest to tee it up this year - including the much-anticipated grand openings of Sand Valley in Wisconsin and The Loop in Michigan - and the renamed and re-envisioned course formerly known as Oak Meadows in Addison. Throw in a slew of tournaments to watch, and 2017 shapes up as one of the best years for Chicago-area golf and golfers in a while.

If the snow melts. What's the outlook, P.J.?



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Go Big with P2

The trend on the short grass, from Tuesday night golf leagues to the PGA Tour, is a thicker handle on your flat stick. For most golfers, if you are still putting with a standard grip, then you are not helping your scorecard. P2 Putter Grips unveiled its Tour range of grips for the 2017 season. The dual, flat-sided model prevents wrist action when rolling a putt. P2's new Tour models are 50% lighter and still feature a tacky texture to encourage gentle hands on the handle. An off-center shaft design raises the hands (at set-up) to position golfers for more consistent contact with the sweet spot. The comfort and engineering of P2 Tour grips could bring new life to your putter! \$35 www.P2grips.com



Gliding on the Rails

Cobra's new F7 fairway woods and King F7 hybrids revisit the company's Baffler Rail System to promote an ideal interaction with the club and the turf. The F7 family, unlike the original Baffler from the 1970s, optimizes front-to-back weighting and adjustability to encourage more distance and control from a variety of lies. Cobra's MyFly8 adjustable loft and trajectory system adds custom playability to the entire F7 series. The rails on the F7 fairways are progressive throughout the set. The 3/4 woods offer shallow rails, while the 5/6 and 7/8 woods are designed with thicker rails to glide through tougher lies. Available in men's and women's (shown) models, with the women's offering two color schemes. The King F7 hybrids (shown) deliver a high moment of inertia with a 13-gram back weight and have a thin face to send balls screaming off the hot face. The F7 fairways and hybrids are paired with Fujikura Pro shafts. \$239 (fairways) \$199 (hybrids) www.cobragolf.com

Unshakeable Distance

A shaking hand can render the game's most accurate laser yardage finders useless. Nikon's Coolshot 80i VR laser rangefinders are the world's first golf rangefinders to compensate for distance yips when golfers try to zero in on their target's distance. The new VR (vibration reduction) Technology, also used in Nikon lenses, stabilizes nearly 80 percent of the shakes that users experience as they attempt to still the target in the viewfinder's crosshairs. The VR function is activated as soon as users turn the unit on—there is no need to toggle between the settings. Once locked in on a target, measurements are delivered in less than a second with Nikon's HYPER Read technology.

With accurate distances reaching 1,000 yards, Coolshot 80i VR measures the longest par 5s from the tee box, not to mention the distance to the beverage cart. This lightweight rangefinder presents a 6x monocular with a bright and uncluttered display. Nikon just made it easier to club your next shot without the worries of shaking technology's usefulness. \$449.95 www.nikon.com



Iron Clad Performance

TaylorMade Golf's new M2 Irons are re-tooled for more forgiveness and controlled distance. Taking the technologies from RocketBladez (Speed Pocket) and RSi irons (low center of gravity), the M2s are the result of several years of testing TaylorMade's best technologies to create a synergy of distance, consistency, and sensory feedback. Tuned for more feel and sound, the M2s employ a new "Geocoustic" engineering technique. Using 3D dampening, the M2s produce an ear-pleasing sound and an ideal feel. The new M2 irons are offered in 4-iron through LW with a choice of the REAX HL 88 by FST steel shafts (S, R) or the M2 REAX graphite shafts (75-45g / S, R, A, L). \$799 (steel) \$899 (graphite) www.taylormadegolf.com

Lube Your Game

If Jason Day is drinking something on the course, then we should all take a sip and try to emulate the OWGR No. 1 golfer. Day drinks swingOil as part of his daily routine. A golfer's supplement drink, swingOil supplies nutrients to increase focus and flexibility. Glucosamine and chondroitin are the lube for your joints, while turmeric eases inflammation. Other key ingredients include taurine and citrulline malate to give your game a boost of energy, ginseng extract to improve focus, and rhodiola rosea extract to reduce stress and anxiety.

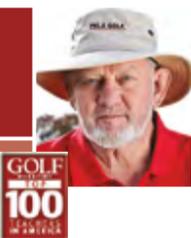
Available in three flavors (lemon-lime, orange, and strawberry-banana) that taste better than most energy drinks, a convenient three-ounce pouch of swingOil could be a game changer. \$29.50 (12-pack) www.swingoil.com



Fore all Seasons

Antigua's Arctic Pullover is just what Chicagoland's golfers want in a mid-layer jacket. With two unique fabric constructions, this subtle design is intentionally understated to be a versatile goro pullover on and off the course. The Arctic Pullover's front body panel is double knit into a quilted diamond pattern and is pieced together with singularly knit jersey heather sleeves and back fabric. The fabrics are overayed in deep hues and shades. This half-zip, long-sleeve pullover is a performance and lifestyle garment that can complement golf wear, dining out, and a faded pair of blue jeans. \$83 www.shop.antigua.com





Putt With Great Rhythm (And Success)

To consistently produce a repeatable putting stroke, you must first understand where the power comes from, and where it *should not* come from. Many golfers power their putts with the small muscles of their hands and wrists. Because these muscles are strong, quick and sensitive to adrenaline, players using them find it difficult to putt well under pressure. Even worse, when the trailing hand overpowers the lead hand through impact, the lead wrist collapses, creating the classic “wristy stroke” we’ve all seen. This stroke is very inconsistent, truly the opposite of repeatable.

In truth, golfers would putt better with bricks for wrists so they couldn’t hinge.

The power source of your stroke affects your ability to control the speed of your putts, which has a major influence on your putting success. A putt’s speed affects how much it breaks, the line it rolls on, and whether or not it stays in the hole if it hits it. So how you supply power and speed is important.

Try This Test

Take your normal grip and putt until you make a 10-foot putt at a good speed. Hold your finish and notice where your lead arm

finishes relative to your lead leg (the one that is nearer the hole). Now, take your normal grip again, then put your trailing hand in your pocket and stroke the same putt at the same speed with just your lead hand. Notice how far your lead arm swings past your front leg. If your normal stroke is shorter than your lead-arm-only stroke, it means your trailing hand and wrist added power to make up the difference. We’ll need to work to take that “wristiness” out of your stroke.

Your putting follow-through should be 10 to 20 percent longer than your backswing to provide stability through impact. To further emphasize the correct, stable feel, try a lead-hand-low stroke. This stroke can make perfect “pendulum motions” without using the small muscles of the hands and wrists. The advantage of pendulum putting is its simplicity, which promotes a consistent face angle at impact and better putting touch for speed and distance. Notice how easy it is to control the putter with your lead hand lower than your trailing hand!

You may find you like lead-hand-low so much that you put it into play. No matter which putting style you use, the goal is to set the putter into a pure swinging motion, with the hands, arms, and putter moving together.

Your putter should always swing at the same rhythm back and through, no matter how long the putt. You can find this rhythm with a metronome app on your smart phone. Simply find the pace that you normally walk. One step should equal one beep or tone on the metronome. Once you find the pace that matches your length between steps, you’ve found your natural rhythm (represented in beats-per-minute reading on the metronome). Putting in that same natural rhythm (one beep back, one beep through) eliminates any question of how hard to hit putts. You don’t hit putts hard or easy, you simply make different-length strokes. Controlling power is simple with the pendulum stroke. The length of the stroke equals the length of the putt. Long strokes for long putts, short strokes for short putts. The rhythm never varies.



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Three Hints for Openers

In the last several years, Mistwood Golf Club in Romeoville has assembled one of the most impressive professional staffs in the country. Here are mini-lessons from three of their professionals, each designed to improve your game.

Create the Squeaky Heel

John Platt, PGA

One of the most common errors I encounter with golfers from juniors to seniors is lifting their left heel off the ground from the downswing thru impact. Many factors can cause this problem including, but not excluded to, being too steep on the downswing, over swinging, or hanging back on their trail foot.

I like to do a simple drill that requires borrowing a toy that squeaks from your family pet. From the address position, I have my student move the front heel two to three inches off the ground (picture 1)

with the squeaky toy you pinched from Lassie placed under the heel. Then make your backswing, and immediately on your downswing make a shift and slam your heel into the toy (picture 2) to make it squeak, then try to maintain that foot on the ground through the finish.

Start this drill at about 50 percent speed and work your way up to 100 percent based on your success. If you practice this drill in the winter, you will have much better weight shift and balance come golf season.

Get on the Stick

Brian Brodell, PGA

Having control and feel of your club face is essential to playing your best golf. My advice is to start small. I believe that making three-foot putts using only your trailing hand is beneficial for learning your face angle at impact.

Start by taking a yardstick or piece of wood that is level and flat, line it up on your line of putt and place the ball on the stick.

Line up your forearm and the shaft of your putter.

When you make a stroke does the ball stay on the stick the entire length?

If it falls off to the left "for a right-handed player" your face is closed to the target line at impact. If it falls off to the right, your face is open to the target line. If it travels the entire length of the stick, welcome to great golf.

As my old boss once said, "patience, my little grasshopper."

Go to the Toolbox

Chris Ioriatti, PGA

Now is the time to check your equipment. Our custom club fitting centers at McQ's Golf Dome and Mistwood Golf Club uti-

lize Trackman, the best launch monitor in the industry. Trackman has a feature called Optimization that measures several data points and provides an analysis of the distance and accuracy generated by your equipment. That's right ... it might not be your fault, the problem might actually be in your equipment!

We also have club heads and shafts from every major manufacturer, so we can easily experiment with different head and shaft combinations to see if changing equipment is a wise investment for you. The proper fix might also be as simple as adjusting the lie or loft of the club you are currently using.

We have the tools, knowledge, equipment, and technology to let you evaluate your needs. Come visit us at McQ's this winter, or at Mistwood Golf Club this season to get the answers you need!



Photo 1



Photo 2



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Sweet Home Chicago

Jackson Park Redevelopment Not Without Hurdles

If the city builds it, will golfers come?

A \$30 million gamble may answer that question.

It has also raised other questions, the first being, why spend so much money to replace the current Jackson Park and South Shore municipally-owned golf courses with a new layout?

In the words of the city's news release announcing the plan, because it would "create an economic and recreational asset for the South Side of Chicago."

The brainchild of NBC and Golf Channel on-course announcer Mark Roling, a native of DeKalb, the rebuilt course would complement the new Obama Presidential Library, to be located in Jackson Park across from Hyde Park Academy High School, close to Jackson Park's current first tee.



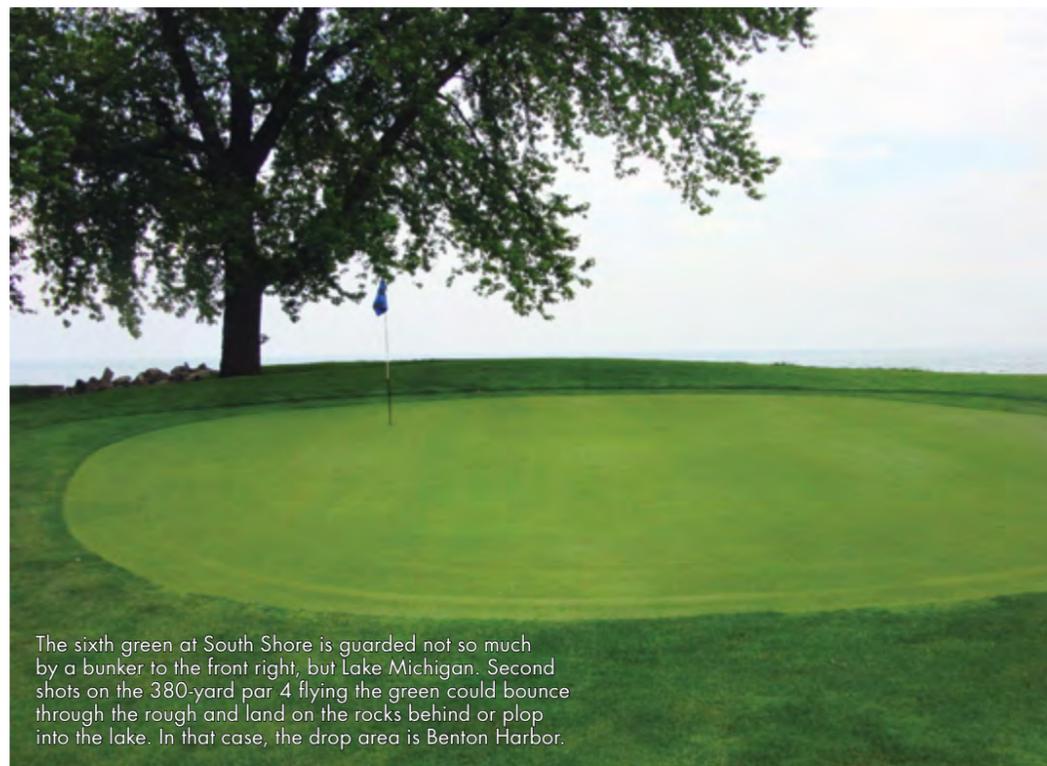
Pat Harper of the Jackson Park Women's Golf League (left) questions Chicago Park District superintendent Mike Kelly during a January 9 meeting in the packed Jackson Park Fieldhouse. (Tim Cronin)

If the timetable advanced by Chicago Park District superintendent Mike Kelly holds, Jackson Park would remain open this year, with work beginning on South Shore Golf Course as a demonstration to PGA Tour players and officials of what is to come.

"I would love to break ground in spring," Kelly told an overflow crowd of more than 150 in the Jackson Park Fieldhouse's meeting room on Jan. 9. "But I haven't raised a nickel yet." Two days later, the park district board approved a \$1.1 million two-year contract with SmithGroupJJR, a Detroit company with a Chicago office, for an engineering and design feasibility study covering both courses.

SmithGroupJJR had created a framework plan for Jackson Park in 2000, which Kelly referred to at the public meeting as an indication that this wasn't coming out of nowhere.

Roling's interest in pushing the project came from his trips to the University of Chicago Medical Center for treatment of his salivary gland cancer in 2015. He had been past Jackson Park, the century-plus old municipal course, three years earlier. He saw what existed and wondered, why not something better. Now, while not being doted on by doctors and nurses, he looked at the course again and took time to think his idea through.

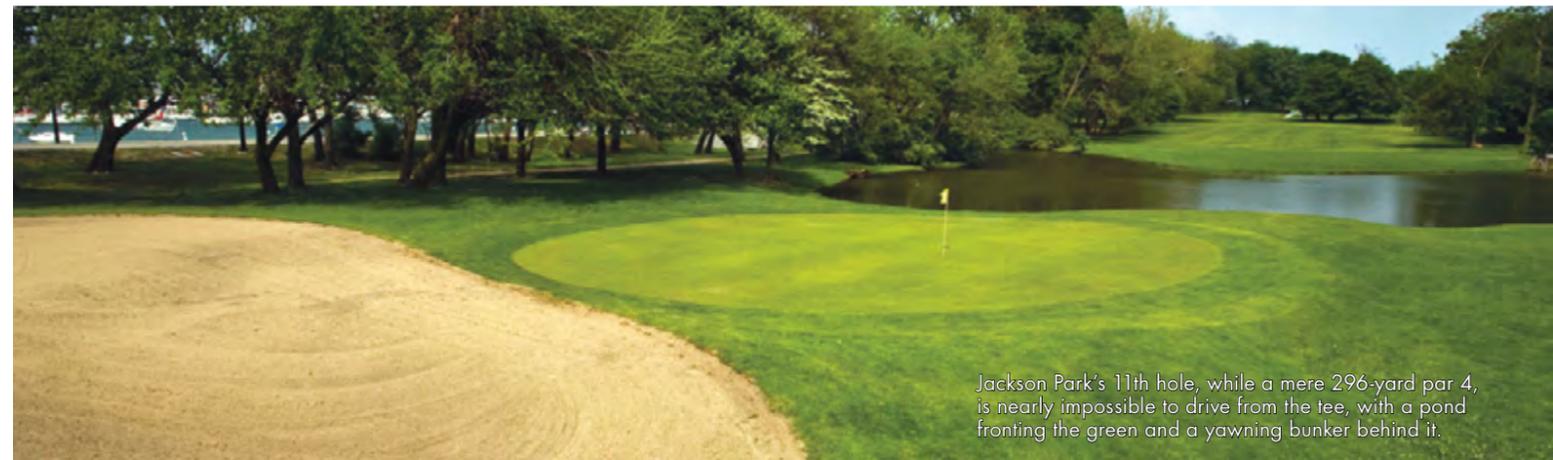


The sixth green at South Shore is guarded not so much by a bunker to the front right, but Lake Michigan. Second shots on the 380-yard par 4 flying the green could bounce through the rough and land on the rocks behind or plop into the lake. In that case, the drop area is Benton Harbor.

"When I drove past Jackson Park, I couldn't help but notice that the course really needed some work," Roling said a few days after the December announcement. "Chicago is a great golf city and there is no reason why residents should have to travel 45 minutes out of town to play the game."

Roling went to the Chicago Park District and was awarded a \$90,000 consulting contract to see if his dream was feasible. He reported back that it was.

To Roling, the impetus for the rebuilding isn't so much the potential of a pro tournament there – though the timetable's target date for completion is 2020, a year before the



Jackson Park's 11th hole, while a mere 296-yard par 4, is nearly impossible to drive from the tee, with a pond fronting the green and a yawning bunker behind it.

now-biennial stop of the Western Golf Association's BMW Championship in the Chicago area – but where the game is headed.

"There are three reasons why golf is not connecting with our youth," Roling said. "First, the game is too difficult; second, it costs too much to play; and third, it takes too long to play. So everyone needs to come up with a plan to address all of those challenges."

He believes a new Jackson Park-South Shore course can do that. The proposed course would play to various lengths dependent upon handicap and age. The plan is for it to be highly affordable for youngsters and city residents.

"Alister MacKenzie imagined a golf course with six different three-hole loops," Roling said. "That idea always interested me as it addresses the needs of golfers who just can't afford to spend four hours away from their work or family."

City and Chicago Park District officials were intrigued enough by the plan to bite on Roling's carrot, and appear to have filled his plate with work. Without a word to or advice from the surrounding community, they

created the Chicago Parks Golf Alliance, headed by Roling, and charged it with raising the bulk of the money, at least \$24 million of the proposed \$30 million total. The city and park district would be on the hook for \$6 million.

The announcement of the plan and the dollar figure was the first of several raised eyebrows.

A second was for the scope. Talk of remodeling Jackson Park goes back years, but a complete remake including South Shore, with a so-called "short course for the entire family," was beyond previous speculation. It took the neighborhood, including the leaders of the community-centric Jackson Park Watch, by surprise. It also came in the wake

of the approval of Project 120, a plan for a music pavilion in the park and a recently-installed sculpture by Yoko Ono, without public hearings, as well as the plan for the library to be built on park grounds.

A third was for the complexity. Jackson Park and South Shore, the old country club nine nestled around the South Shore Cultural Center clubhouse made famous in "The Blues Brothers," share an intersection but no common land. Kelly said a pair of tunnels for both golfers and the general public would have to be built under existing streets to get people from one property to the other. Any intrusion into the lake would mean other agencies, starting with the Army Corps of Engineers, joining the process.

A fourth was for the necessity. Both courses currently cater to a local clientele, with Jackson Park accessible for about \$30 for city residents using the Advantage Card, and South Shore half that. The price tag to play a revamped course is expected to be in three figures, though the Dec. 18 announcement from Mayor Rahm Emanuel's office quoted him saying "neighborhood golfers who have been hitting the links here for years will be able to continue to access and enjoy it at a reduced rate."

A fifth was the involvement of Tiger Woods, or at least his design company. It was selected to redesign the layout. Roling said Woods was all in.

"As we rode along the property Tiger just kept on commenting, 'Where are the kids?' over and over again," Roling said of an Aug. 11 visit, adding that Woods was won over by his vision that the complex would become a center for youth programs.

The timing of the announcement was also interesting. Rather than have a news conference with Roling, Emanuel, Kelly and perhaps Woods to detail all aspects of the plan, a 12-paragraph news release was issued 15 minutes before the Bears and Green Bay Packers kicked off at Soldier Field.

Months earlier, Kelly e-mailed Emanuel urging that the mayor get the Obama Foundation, which will operate the presidential library, behind the project, and find a way to convince community leaders to endorse it.

"It is critical for YOU that this project has the support of the Obama Foundation and the surrounding community," Kelly wrote Emanuel in an Aug. 3 e-mail disclosed after

Emanuel lost a court fight to keep them secret. "Furthermore, the community should initiate the request to improve the golf course. ... Still we must be very cautious as this community typically weighs in loudly on any capital project that makes change."

Kelly's concept for community initiation was not followed, and his reception to the project at the Jan. 9 meeting was mixed. Some were in favor regardless, and some questioned the need and the financing.

Wilson Rebounds from Triton Tempest

It seemed like a great idea at the time.

Don't just roll out a new driver to relaunch your equipment line. Turn it into a version of this century's attention-generator, the reality television show.

Chicago-based Wilson Golf did just that with "Driver vs. Driver," a multi-episode show that Golf Channel screened in the fall. It attracted the requisite attention as rivals clashed over the nitty-gritty of the details, with the Triton driver, created by Eric Sillies, a design architecture expert from Cincinnati, winning the favor of the judges. Sillies cashed in to the tune of a cool half-million bucks. The ads followed, touting Kevin Streelman saying, "It's in my bag, and it should be in yours."

Then it attracted more attention when the USGA ruled all the original models non-conforming. The soleplate wasn't as traditional as the USGA would have liked, and the adjustable weight inside could cause the face of the club to be more springy than allowed.

Whoops. That stunning news was tantamount to getting a scarlet letter in the Colonial era. Many stores moved their

Rolfing told *GOLFChicago*, "We want to put the first shovel in the ground in the project in April."

According to Kelly's Aug. 3 e-mail, the April start is to get three holes built on the South Shore property to show to PGA Tour players and officials in September, when the BMW Championship is held at Conway Farms.

If the plan is followed to that point, what the pro tourists think could be the biggest roll of the dice.

– Tim Cronin and Neal Kotlarek

Tritons off the floor and into the storeroom. The combination of late tweaks, the secrecy involved in the television show, and a later-than-usual submission to the USGA partly because of that secrecy, all combined to give Wilson, once the drivers were found non-conforming, a black eye.

Happily for the reputation of the company, just before Christmas Wilson received good news from the USGA. Its 9- and 10.5-degree Triton models were ruled conforming. The bad news was, few were in stores and for sale, because of the time needed to produce in mass quantities. The 12-degree model was still being retooled prior to resubmission to the USGA for scrutiny.

As this issue lands in your hands, the lower lofts are more widely available, Wilson having reintroduced the Triton, now with a DVD marking on the sole indicating the conforming version, prior to the PGA Show. Additionally, the Triton is the first club for which Wilson offers factory customization. However, the snafu meant the holiday sales season, when eager golfers drop hints to their spouses about what they would like to see under the Christmas tree, was, like a missed three-footer, irrevocably lost, never to be regained.



Down Memory Lane

Letts' 1917 Victory at Flossmoor Created the Two-sport Athlete

Long before Babe Zaharias, who dazzled the world on the track at the 1932 Olympics before taking up golf, another woman proved it was possible to excel at one sport and then be even better at another.

Ever hear of Marjorie Dodd Letts?

She was America's – and likely the world's – first great two-sport athlete, and reached the acme of her success a century ago.



A tennis champion in the early 1910s, she captured the Cincinnati Open singles title twice and a pair of doubles crowns to boot as Marjorie Dodd. In 1915, this 21-year-old lass traveled to Midlothian Country Club and entered the Women's Western Amateur. She qualified for match play with a 6-over-par 79 and advanced to the quarterfinals before Elizabeth Allen knocked her out in a match that went to the 20th hole.

Here Come the Ladies

When the PGA of America took over the running of the LPGA Championship, the idea was to do more than just play golf.

When the third iteration of the renamed Women's PGA Championship is played at Olympia Fields Country Club beginning on June 29, that idea will be on display.

KMPG, the corporate sponsor that has affixed its name to the tournament, is making sure of that. The KMPG Women's Leadership Summit will precede, and for some attendees, be more important than, the golf.

The lineup of speakers for the full-day get-together wasn't set at press time, but last year's summit at Sahalee Country Club near Seattle featured former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, retired star player Annika Sorenstam, and a coterie of corporation heavyweights representing, among others, Intel, Facebook, Microsoft, and KMPG.

A similarly stout group is expected this year for the conference that will be attended by KMPG partners and clients,

Dodd would be back in 1916, when the Women's Western Am was played at Kent Country Club in Kalamazoo, Mich., but under a different name. Now the newspapers were referring to her as Mrs. F.C. Letts Jr. The F was for Fred, but occasionally, clarity won out and it was noted that Mrs. Letts was "the former Marjorie Dodd."

Her opponents knew exactly who she was. This smooth swinger from Cincinnati Golf Club survived another 20-hole test – this one against Ethel Chatfield in the Round of 16 – then beat defender Elaine Rosenthal in the semifinals and won the title by beating Laurie Kaiser in the title match.

Rosenthal won three Women's Western titles, but Letts beat her twice, most memorably in the 1917 championship match at Flossmoor Country Club. By now playing out of Indian Hill Club, Letts scored a 5 and 4 victory over Rosenthal only a couple of miles from Ravisloe, Elaine's home club. Letts birdied the first and third holes, was 4 up after eight holes, and with great distance off the tee and smart approaches, was never threatened.

Chicago Tribune golf writer Joe Davis called it "the best golf ever seen in a Western final," while *The American Golfer* gushed, " 'Unbeatable' is an easy word to juggle but in this case it may reasonably be applied to the brand of golf Mrs. Letts produced and as fine a player as Miss Rosenthal is, she never did anything better over the course in her practice rounds."

Marjorie Dodd Letts scored a third Women's Western Amateur title in 1920, this time knocking off Edith Cummings, F. Scott Fitzgerald's inspiration for Jordan Baker in *The Great Gatsby*, two up. It was the final hurrah for a groundbreaking two-sport champion.

said Sean Riley, the PGA of America championship director who is overseeing the operation at Olympia Fields. Those who can't get into the conference will be able to follow it on a live stream via the PGA, CNBC and Golf Channel websites.

This endeavor is too big for Olympia Fields' mammoth clubhouse. Instead, a large tent will be erected on the club's grounds to serve as the site.

The summit and the golf tournament benefits the KPMG Future Leaders Program, a scholarship and mentoring program that last year awarded 16 four-year scholarships worth \$40,000 each to high school senior girls across the country.

And the golf? There will be plenty of that at a high level. Canadian Brooke Henderson is the defending champion, having edged Lydia Ko of New Zealand in a sudden-death playoff last year at Sahalee to collect her first professional major title. Ariya Jutanugarn of Thailand, who won the U.S. Girls Junior on Olympia Fields' South Course in 2012, was

continued on page 37



1895

Charles Macdonald brought golf to Chicago with his makeshift course in Lake Forest in 1892. In 1895, he won the inaugural U.S. Amateur.

1899

Tom Bendelow arrived in Chicago in 1899, and designed the great majority of his approximately 600 courses while here.

1900

The Onwentsia Club in Lake Forest was an outgrowth of the Farwell Estate course. The photo shows its original clubhouse in 1900.

What Macdonald Wrought Golf at 125

By Tim Cronin

It was 125 years ago that Charles Blair Macdonald, a 36-year-old Canadian long transplanted to Chicago and schooled at the University of St. Andrews, convinced a buddy to let him plant a few tomato cans in the grounds of the estate of the buddy's father-in-law in Lake Forest.

The father-in-law either went along with the silliness or had no idea of the endeavor, but Macdonald proceeded to do so in April of 1892. He then took a golf club in hand, teed a perfectly good gutta-percha ball on a tuft of sand, and proceeded to whack it directly into Lake Michigan.

With that offering to the golf gods, the game, however primitive, was afoot in Chicago and vicinity. This year, we celebrate the quasiquintennial of that humble beginning.

Macdonald's buddy was novelist Hobart Chatfield Taylor. His father-in-law was former Sen. Charles B. Farwell. The course, from seven to 10

holes, depending on whose reminiscence one gives the most weight, was laid out on Farwell's Fairlawn estate.

Wrote Chatfield-Taylor in 1905, "Absurd it would seem to the golfer of to-day, but when Urban H. Broughton and the writer drove off in a blinding rain storm for the first game on that ridiculous course, and I tore up a divot the size of my hand and managed to send the ball about 10 feet, I confess that a hundred yards looked as formidable as a mile would to-day."

Let Chatfield-Taylor, then, hold the title of Chicago's first frustrated golfer. Countless others have followed since. He soon discovered that besides Broughton, an Englishman who already knew the game, his friends and neighbors were also intrigued by it.

"With merciless intent I managed to slip a club into the hands of each of these guileless Lake Foresters - business men for the most part - and tee a ball," he wrote. "In about three Saturday afternoons the town was conquered, and before the summer had passed Chicago converts began flocking to the course among the trees."

Quickly came the following: Chicago Golf Club, organized by Macdonald at Belmont, located, more or less, on the property that today is graced by Downers Grove Golf Course, a nine-hole course all can play. The Lake Forest Golf Club, nine holes at the edge of town, replaced the Fairlawn layout and allowed the Farwells to get some peace. Barely a year later, with LFGC bursting

with interest, there was a move across Green Bay Road to more spacious grounds, which were quickly named the Onwentsia Club, with no less than Chatfield-Taylor the first president.

By then, it was 1895, and already, Chicago Golf Club had moved to Wheaton, where it still holds forth on ground scouted by Macdonald. Clubs representing Riverside and Hinsdale had also come into being. By 1899, there were 30 courses in the area, including nine holes open free to the public at Jackson Park. The formidable first tee, about where the back of the Museum of Science and Industry stands today, demanded a drive over the lagoon to a distant fairway, perhaps the most intimidating opening shot in the history of Chicago golf.

Organization came in the form of the Western Golf Association, which codified the schedule of club tournaments and held its own Western Amateur and Western Open. Those would instantly become the second-most important of their kind on the national calendar, behind only the U.S. Amateur and U.S. Open.

The popularity of Jackson Park brought the common man into golf, and nowhere was this notion more fervently embraced than Chicago. A second course opened at Jackson Park in 1901, and in short order courses opened in Zion, in Elgin's Wing Park, in Garfield Park, in the infield of the Harlem Race Track in what is now Forest Park, and Marquette



1916 Chick Evans made golf history in 1916 when he won both the U.S. Open and U.S. Amateur. He's here with caddie "Shorty" on the right after winning the Open at in Minneapolis.



1934 Bobby Jones (left) congratulates Oak Park Country Club head pro Horton Smith after Smith captured the first Masters Tournament at Augusta National in 1934.



1942 World War II all but stopped golf, but the CDGA, the USGA, and the PGA stepped in with the Hale America National Open at Ridgemoor in 1942, won by Ben Hogan.



1967 Jack Nicklaus eyes an iron shot en route to his Western Open title at Beverly Country Club in 1967. (Western Golf Association archives)

Park. Only the American entry into the Great War slowed the expansion of the game, and once the Kaiser had been vanquished, the American golf boom was on in earnest.

Chicago being a cliquish town, various ethnic and religious groups organized golf or country clubs along their own interests, and the early ones in the days of the horse and buggy were usually near, if not directly against, railroad lines, just as in Scotland. Thus Chicago Golf in far-off Wheaton was a quick train ride from downtown. Likewise Midlothian, founded in 1898 in the rolling farmland to the southwest of the city, where the high-profile membership – fellows named Smith, Armour, and McCormick populated the locker room – financed their own rail spur from the Rock Island Line two miles to the east.

The influence of Chicago on American golf was strong from the start, thanks to Macdonald, whose complaining about

the rules and conditions at a pair of ersatz national amateur championships led directly to the formation of the Amateur Golf Association of the United States. Almost before the ink had dried on the parchment, the group was renamed the United States Golf Association. Macdonald, whose victory in the first U.S. Amateur momentarily quelled his penchant for argument, was the USGA's key rules committeeman in talks with the Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St. Andrews for 18 years.

A second golf boom beginning in the teens and running until early in the Great Depression brought dozens of courses to the area, among them the multi-course golf factories called Olympia Fields, Medinah, and Cog Hill, which started with two courses and eventually expanded to four during the 1960s boom under the direction of visionary Joe Jemsek, who created the country club for the masses.

From almost the start, with stars such as Chick Evans, whose double crown of the U.S. Open and U.S. Amateur in 1916 was unprecedented, as well as Elaine Rosenthal and a galaxy of imported pros led by Jock Hutchison, made Chicago a major center of American golf. For some time, it *was* the center. The PGA of America headquartered here. The major pro championships – the U.S. Open, Western Open, and PGA – were often played here, and the CDGA became a regional leader. Chicago became the most golf-crazy town this side of St. Andrews.

Modern spectator golf was even born here. Business efficiency expert George S. May wasn't the first promoter to offer an outsized purse, but he was the first to offer \$1 tickets, put up grandstands, and promote relentlessly. As a result, his Tam O'Shanter tournament grew from one weekend to a carnival of two weeks featuring pro and amateur tournaments for men and women the first week, capped by

a World Championship that would eventually offer a \$50,000 first prize, and double that for 50 exhibitions by the winner. A player couldn't make that for the of the fledgling Tour all season.

Perhaps most important, May also brought golf and television together, creating new fans and eventually filling the pockets of the players.

The most recent building boom is long over, but it brought players gems such as Harborside International, The Glen Club, Black Sheep, and the Highlands of Elgin. In keeping with changing times, all but Black Sheep are public courses. In keeping with ancient tradition, Black Sheep is both private and male-only. In both cases, Charles Blair Macdonald would probably approve, and surely note that for all the novelty in the game and hiccups in the business of it, the outlook was bright.

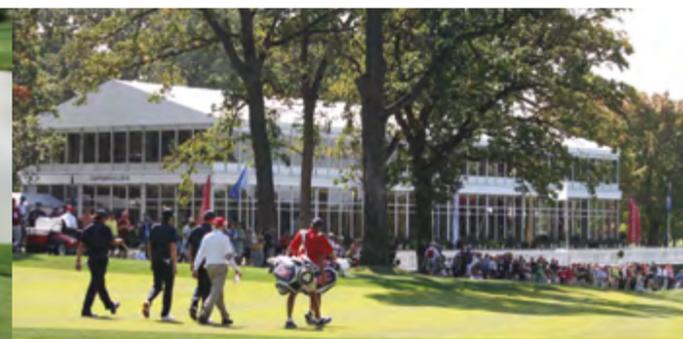
Enjoy the quasiquicentennial!



1968 Jack Nicklaus accepts the J.K. Wadley Trophy from Chick Evans after winning his second straight Western Open, at Olympia Fields in 1968. (Western Golf Association archives)



1995 Joe Jemsek led the way in upgrading the public golf experience, his capstone being the Western Open on Cog Hill's Dubsread layout for 20 years beginning in 1991.



2009 The 2012 Ryder Cup at Medinah Country Club attracted enormous galleries, and provided a surprise finish when the Europeans rallied on the back nine of Sunday's singles matches. (Tim Cronin)



2012 A changing economic climate has led to changes in golf in the 2000s, including course closures and status changes. Ravisloe Country Club, pictured here, went from private to public in 2009. (Tim Cronin)



2017 Outlook

A Year of Bounty

By Tim Cronin



The beauty and ferocity of Erin Hills, site of this year's U.S. Open, is best on display late in the afternoon. This is the par-3 ninth hole. (Paul Hundley / Erin Hills)

A

U.S. Open so close to Chicago you can drive to it. A women's major you can take the train to. The cream of the college crop in the neighborhood. A trio of courses with grand openings worth a day trip. An old favorite with a new look and sheen.

That's on the tee for you in 2017. It's the most lively and progressive year on the calendar around here in years. Here's a closer look, starting with the championship chase:

The presence of the U.S. Open at Erin Hills in Erin, Wis., and thus in the Midwest, is a departure from recent years. The last one was at Olympia Fields Country Club in 2003, and it's been no closer than Pittsburgh, at fabled Oakmont in 2007 and last year, since. And after this year, Oakmont, in 2025, is the next nearby visit, as the sponsoring United States Golf Association bounces between the coasts, with the occasional diversion to Pinehurst, North Carolina.

Two visits to the Midwest in about a quarter-century is too few, so it's Erin Hills or bust if you want to see the National Open in person without driving to Pittsburgh for a weekend or taking a plane somewhere. And it should be quite a show.

Erin Hills is the realized dream of Robert Lang, whose concept of a nine-hole course for his employees turned into an 18-hole championship course that was awarded the U.S. Women's Public Links before it was finished. It then was awarded a U.S. Amateur and the U.S. Open, but Lang nearly went under trying to make changes, and finally sold to millionaire Andrew Ziegler, who is closely aligned with the USGA through having former USGA vice president Jim Reinhart on the course's board of directors.

If Lang makes an appearance at Erin Hills, it will be a surprise. It will be no surprise to see thousands of fans crowding the hills of fescue that border many of the fairways on the sprawling layout, even with ticket prices starting at \$110 for tournament rounds (and \$400 for the week). The Open is the Open, an exercise in golf masochism, where the PGA Tour's usual diet of birdies and eagles is replaced with a sterner test defined by par saves and escapes from double-bogey.

It's different, the Open, and Erin Hills is different as well. Fescue fairways are the start, and if the extra hole Lang installed to break ties has been eliminated – alas, along with the ode to the blind par 3 at Ireland's famed Lahinch – there's still plenty of quirk in the course, along with enough length that USGA guru Mike Davis can stretch or shrink holes by as much as 150 yards in many cases. Erin Hills is only 18 holes, but almost all can be set up at least four ways, which could get the heads of the players, defending champion Dustin Johnson included, spinning.

The U.S. Open starts on June 15, but the area's tournament trail commences three weeks earlier at Rich Harvest Farms, where the men's and women's NCAA Championships will take place. The women play from May 19-24, and the men follow from May 26 through 31, the first Chicago-area appearance for the college test in 20 years. Illinois' men's team, in the top five the last five years, may finally win it all.

The week before the Open, hopeful pros will populate the Ivanhoe Club in Lake County, where the Rust-Oleum Championship, a Web.com Tour stop, will stop for the second consecutive year. Max Homa isn't likely to defend his title, having qualified for the PGA Tour, which is the whole idea of the stepping-stone circuit.

The same week as the U.S. Open brings one of the biggest amateur tournaments in the country back home. The 117th Women's Western Amateur is set for River Forest Country Club in Elmhurst, the first playing in the area since 2001 for the show that often showcases future LPGA stars.

The current galaxy will take over Olympia Fields the last few days of June for the LPGA's championship, these days titled the KMPG Women's PGA Championship, to be played on Olympia's challenging North Course and concluding on July 2. Canadian teen Brooke Henderson will be defending the title she captured in a sudden-death playoff over New Zealand's Lydia Ko last year at Sahalee near Seattle.

It's the first women's major at Olympia since the 1933 Women's Western Open, which was won by Olympia member June Beebe. Golf has changed exponentially since then in many ways, not the least of which is the money involved. Beebe was an amateur, but there was no purse anyway. The ladies will be playing for \$3.5 million, and if you're looking to make a wager, Ariya Jutanugarn, who finished third last year, a stroke back, isn't a bad bet. Last year's top player won the Women's British Open later in 2016, and six years ago captured the U.S. Girls Junior on Olympia's South Course.

That's a full menu in many ways, but wait, there's more. The John Deere Classic, the state's remaining annual PGA Tour stop, returns to its mid-July dates at picturesque TPC Deere Run in Silvis. Jordan Spieth, who won his second Deere in 2015 but didn't play in 2016 because the tournament was scheduled against the Olympics, will be back, as will 2016 winner Ryan Moore, whose sterling play earned him his fifth victory on the circuit. It's as if the Deere will have two defending champions.

The Deere is supported amazingly well by the Quad Cities, from attendance – usually crowded on the weekends, but not to the point of jammed – to the enrollment in the Birdies for Charity program, which last year raised about \$10.5 million, a record for the tournament by almost \$1.8 million.

Finally, there are the WGA's two big championships, the Western Amateur, set for Skokie Country Club in Glencoe from August 1-5, where the stars of tomorrow will challenge a layout that first gained fame when Gene Sarazen won the 1922 U.S. Open on it, and the BMW Championship – the erstwhile Western Open – being played for a third time at Conway Farms Golf Club in Lake Forest.

Conway yielded a 59 by Jim Furyk in 2013, and a 72-hole tournament record-tying 262 by Jason Day in 2015. This much is sure: Conway, which has never played as long as 7,200 yards in any BMW round, will yield more low scores, and with a \$1.53 million first prize, big hitters like Day and Dustin Johnson, who won last year at Crooked Stick, are sure to be close to the top once again.

That's the best of golf watching this year. But what about playing? Now, too, there's a cornucopia of places to tee it up.

The one getting the most attention, thanks to the pedigree of the owner's previous endeavors, is Sand Valley, the latest concoction of sand-based golf envisioned by Chicagoan Mike Keiser. Located in remote central Wisconsin west of Stevens Point and south of Wisconsin



Jason Day celebrates his 2015 victory in the BMW Championship at Conway Farms. (Charles Cherney / Western Golf Association)



The fourth hole at Sand Valley both beckons and threatens. (Ryan Farrow / Sand Valley)



The new 15th green and 16th tee and fairway of Oak Meadows Golf Course in DuPage County greened up quickly after being seeded in the fall of 2016. (Oak Meadows Golf Course)

Rapids – Nekoosa is the nearby town, where the previous best attractions were a historic paper mill and the Lure Bar and Grill on the shore of Pentenwell Lake – Sand Valley is like Keiser-owned Bandon Dunes in Oregon or Cabot Links in Nova Scotia, only without the ocean.

Instead, Sand Valley will be an inland version, with a Bill Coore-Ben Crenshaw course beginning its first full year of operation, a David Kidd layout under construction, and more to come. With 1,700 acres of a former Christmas tree farm to work with, there's plenty of room for more.

The Sand Valley website says the resort "pays homage to the great heathland courses of London," including the intensely-private Swinley Forest and the better-known Sunningdale and Walton Heath. With its sandy underfooting created by the bed of an ancient glacial lake, it has a similarity to some of Chicago's better courses, including Exmoor and Beverly, along with Keiser's first project, the private nine-hole Dunes Club in Michigan, all of which were built on the edge of the old Lake Chicago.

At Sand Valley, the elevation changes created by the sudden outflow of an ancient lake that created the Wisconsin Dells to the east are even more pronounced. As a result of great land upon which to create and the imagination of the architects, and the use of fescue for firm and fast playing conditions, early indications are that both the Coore-Crenshaw course and Kidd's creation will be as favorably received as Bandon Dunes and Cabot Links.

The location is strangely serendipitous. Sand Valley isn't near any major city, but nor is it all that far from Chicago or the Twin Cities (about four hours), Milwaukee, Madison, or Des Moines. And with luxury lodging on site befitting a Keiser resort, it's a weekend waiting to happen. It is walking only unless you have a disability and – we're not kidding – a note from a doctor sent in advance, which seems overly strict for a place where you're supposed to have fun.

On the other side of Lake Michigan sit the other two notable newcomers, and one needs some explanation, for it is two courses in one. Or two atop one. Forest Dunes Golf Club owner Lew Thompson wanted a memorable course for his second layout in Roscommon, not far from Traverse City. Architect Tom Doak gave him two in the form of a reversible course, The Loop. You can play it clockwise, so to speak, one day, and go around counterclockwise the next.

Doak took the idea from St. Andrews, where the Old Course was originally played in the other direction – from the first tee to the 17th green, as it were, and so on – until the fairway was widened and the current rotation became more popular. (The other layout, now known as the reverse course, is still played a few days each year.)

Doak had the idea in his head for two decades, found Thompson amenable to it, and went to town. The result is an eminently playable walking-only layout with some brilliant holes in each version, running 6,805 yards as the counter-clockwise Red or 6,704 yards from the clockwise Black. Said Doak just before it opened for limited play last summer, "Whichever way you're playing, it never feels like you are going the wrong way."

The Loop alternates play each day, so a two-day stay yields a trip around each version. Hang around for a third,



By Dave Lockhart with Dave Weretka

GOLF, GUMBO, AND GAMING ON THE BAYOU



The sparkling vacation destination of Lake Charles, Louisiana, is located just off the Gulf of Mexico near the Texas border. In the southwest corner of Louisiana you will discover outstanding golf, great cuisine, world-class gaming and world-class people. Better yet, this fascinating region also features comfortable seasonal temperatures ideal for a golf journey no matter the season.

While guests have ample options to accommodate their lifestyles and budgets, the **L'Auberge du lac Casino Resort** (www.lakecharles.com) on the pristine banks of Lake Charles seems like a perfect choice for sportsmen and women. This 26-story hotel basically combines chunks of Las Vegas with slices of Myrtle Beach to create an unbelievably delicious gumbo of fun.

The fabulous Tom Fazio Contraband Bayou golf course rests a few steps away from the hotel lobby. Ignore your inclination to play it safe off the tee and pull out the driver on all the par 4s and 5s. Remember that you're playing a Fazio course: hit it

slightly off the fairway and there's a decent chance you will get a kick off the friendly mounds that border each side of the fairway.

There's a nice mix of holes with just enough water hazards and strategically placed eye-popping white sand bunkers to keep you focused. The GPS on the carts tells you where to hit it, and in the process takes the yardage excuse out of the equation. You won't lose many nuggets on this well-maintained fun design with a fun name that describes this Louisiana area to a tee – Contraband Bayou.

The layout is yet another solid design from America's favorite course architect as it captures both the feel and the essence of the Louisiana marshland. Fazio has been honored for creating award-winning courses throughout the United States. No living designer has more courses credited on *Golf Digest's* list of America's 100 Greatest Golf Courses and *Golfweek* magazine's collection of America's Best.

The resort features exquisitely appointed guest rooms and includes

a stunning outdoor pool area with private cabanas, jacuzzis, and a lazy river for totally chilling out. When you're done relaxing you'll want to get your other game on and hit the casino.

L'Auberge claims an enormous glass dome, a grand vaulted ceiling, and 30,000 square feet of the best gaming around. It features more than 60 table games and 1,600 slots. From blackjack to baccarat, there's always a game to be played. Of course, the action never stops around here – even when you're not playing. That's why they put Globar at the center of the gaming floor. Grab a drink and enjoy the scenery, because you never know when you'll hit it big.

In between golf and gaming, you can't go wrong, with many themed restaurants and the other libation stations inside the hotel. My favorite dining spot is the Ember Grille & Wine Bar. It features outstanding service, abundant wine selections, and steaks that rival the best beef you can find in Chicago.

Yes, Louisiana is a foodie's delight. You literally can't go wrong

L'Auberge du lac Casino Resort combines chunks of Las Vegas with slices of Myrtle Beach to create an unbelievably delicious gumbo of fun.





or go home hungry in Lake Charles. Creole cooking is some of the tastiest food you can find due to its amazing variety of delectable sauces and spices. The seafood gumbo and the crawfish are absolute musts when visiting a casual laid-back restaurant. Affectionately known as “mudbugs,” this delicacy looks like a miniature lobster but serves up a taste similar to shrimp. It can be a bit of work to unravel the shell on this freshwater crustacean, but truth be told, that’s half the fun! Try the authentic Seafood Palace restaurant (www.facebook.com/seafoodpalace) in town for the true local dining experience.

The kolache (co-lat-chee) is another delicacy not to be missed. As popular in Louisiana as it is in Chicago, this a soft pastry that in Cajun Country can be filled with fruit, cheese, ham, sausage, jalapeños, or just about anything else you can dream of! Usually served for breakfast, the kolache will provide a nice anchor to your belly when you hit the links.

If you’re looking for other great golf experiences in the bayou, test

your game at **The National Golf Club of Louisiana** (www.nationalgcla.com). This superbly conditioned layout will surely get your attention with some 80 sand bunkers and 14 lakes. And if those hazards don’t stop you, perhaps a few of the alligators will. While they seem friendly enough, I’ve always had difficulty discerning the difference between a gator smile and gator sneer. So I heartily recommend letting sleeping golf balls lie if they find the water. Nothing slows a round down more than a lost finger or toe!

The course is nestled among stately pines accented by wide fairways and fast true greens. One of the more memorable holes is the beautiful par-3 No. 5 near the clubhouse. It has three church pew bunkers in the front left of the green and water all the way to it from the tee and around the left side of the green. The hole can play from 100 yards to over 210 yards to an elevated and undulated green. Top conditioning and outstanding putting surfaces make this par-72, 7,000 yard layout a true gem.

As referenced earlier, it’s the people of Lake Charles that make the region such a delight. Southern hospitality must certainly have originated in this community, as the locals are to a person warm, hospitable, and attentive. Nothing starts a day better than the question “How y’all doing?” said with a Cajun lilt. Somehow, someway, they have managed to keep their spirits up despite occasional hurricanes and an oil spill. Lake Charles is a place of both soul and character.

The newest must-stay-and-play destination in the area is the **Golden Nugget of Lake Charles** (www.goldennugget.com/lakecharles). The centerpiece of this all-encompassing gaming resort is The Country Club at Golden Nugget designed by award-winning architect Todd Eckenrode. The course has five sets of tees so it plays comfortably to anyone’s game tipping out at 7,000 yards. The manicured greens framed by the property’s native bayou land offers varied levels on every hole and provide a spectacular

The National Golf Club will get your attention with 80 sand bunkers and 14 lakes. If those don’t stop you, perhaps a few of the alligators will.





Nature abounds here, with beautiful birds and interesting wildlife to help make Gray Plantation part of the Audubon Golf Trail for Louisiana.

backdrop for guests seeking a getaway within their getaway.

Following your round, head to the Grand Event Center at Golden Nugget for entertainment. The complex attracts a long list of world class acts including upcoming shows by ZZ Top and Rock 'n Roll Hall of Famers Cheap Trick – the pride of Rockford, Illinois.

Gray Plantation Golf Course (www.graywoodllc.com) is a semi-private gem where the breeze off the bay plays a pivotal role in your day's strategy. This place has terrific vistas and good challenges on every hole. Designed by Rocky Roquemore, this is a traditional layout that will challenge the weekend warrior and the touring professional. Nature abounds here, with beautiful birds and interesting wildlife to help make Gray Plantation part of the Audubon Golf Trail for the State of Louisiana.

Don't leave the premises without enjoying one of the best 19th holes in all of Louisiana. Sit outside on the veranda of the plantation-style clubhouse and slurp up a bowl of gumbo,

a muffleta sandwich, and the local Abita beer. Spicy, tasty and smooth ... a fantastic way to finish the day. Gray Plantation has won numerous high accolades from Zagat's and *Golfweek*.

A great place to quench your thirst after a round is Crying Eagle Brewery (www.cryingeagle.com) which features an array of delicious microbrews. Take the tour and receive an education on what goes into making these tasty craft brew delights such as the Ready to Mingle Belgian, the Calcasieu Common Ale, and the Chuck Golden Ale.

Adventurous foodies will enjoy a visit to Tia Juanita's Fish Camp. Don't worry, this is not a place where you have to bait a hook and catch your own meal; rather, it is a low-key, tasty restaurant featuring a menu of Mexican and Cajun-Creole seafood dishes. Take in the grilled shrimp tacos, and don't forget the house-made jalapeño ranch sauce. It adds a delicious zing to all dishes. My personal recommendation is to take in a few of the menu's boudin offerings available at the camp.

What is boudin? It's considered a staple snack in the southern regions of the Bayou State. Boudin is made of varying amounts of pork meat, liver, rice, onions, parsley and dry seasonings like salt, red pepper, black pepper, and garlic powder. Tia's smoked boudin quesadillas in a grilled butter tortilla are truly memorable. Locals and visitors agree that this affordable culinary experience is worthy of a stop. Both Yelp and Google give Tia Juanita's an impressive 4-1/2 stars.

Both American Airlines and United Airlines seem to agree that Lake Charles is a worthwhile destination as each has regular flights to the Lake Charles Airport. Don't forget to pack a fishing pole inside your golf bag, as Lake Charles isn't just a city name but a destination that serves up a multitude of water activities including boating, water skiing, and swimming.

Lake Charles, Louisiana: Go on down and have a ball, y'all!

For more information, go to www.visitlakecharles.org



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2017 Outlook

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and there's Forest Dunes' original layout, a Tom Weiskopf creation that opened in 1998. But The Loop is the showpiece.

Stoatin Brae is closer, in Augusta, just outside Kalamazoo, but similarly dramatic. In this case, Doak's design crew at Renaissance Golf (Eric Iverson, Brian Slawnik, Brian Schneider, and Don Placek) were given a parcel of land high on a bluff above the Kalamazoo River that had been cleared for a subdivision. That never happened and the Scott family, owners of the Gull Lake View group of courses, saw the opportunity for a links-style course on the cleared land.

With broad fairways and equally wide vistas from atop the bluff, the early effect is to lull a player into thinking Stoatin Brae is a pushover. A collection of challenging approach shots to greens with plenty of movement will quickly eliminate that notion.

Much of the golf is old-fashioned. There are blind tee shots here and there. The seventh hole, a par 3, is uphill and into a green hidden by a ridge that obscures all but the flagstick. But the largest hazard is the wind, thanks to the high elevation and the open vistas.

Twelve holes opened last year, and the whole course should be available in April.

All that's new, and so is Oak Meadows Golf Course, the DuPage County Forest Preserve-owned layout that architect Greg Martin is remodeling to both create additional flood-retention areas and improve the course. He's succeeded in both departments, creating a course that should take on water far less often than before, and provide a more interesting test of golf.

There are two questions yet to be answered: Precisely when it will re-open – ideally before the first day of summer, but it's too early to tell – and what it will be called. Forest preserve district officials are calling it "the former Oak Meadows" on their golf website, but a new moniker for what was originally Elmhurst Country Club has not yet been announced.

No matter the name, players should find it a pleasant upgrade from the old layout, Martin having effectively retained the original corridors while building a new course, and relocating some green complexes on the old carcass.

That's what golf promises us in 2017. Now if only the pages would fall off the calendar more quickly!

For ticket information:

Rust-Oleum
<http://rustoleumchampionship.com/purchase-tickets/>

U.S. Open
www.usga.org/tickets.html

Women's PGA
www.kpmgwomenspgachampionship.com/

John Deere Classic
www.johndeereclassic.com/sponsorship/ticket-packages/

BMW Championship
www.BMWChampionship.com

For course information:

Sand Valley
www.sandvalleygolfresort.com

Forest Dunes / The Loop
<https://www.forestdunesgolf.com/>

Stoatin Brae
www.gulllakeview.com/

Oak Meadows
www.dupagegolf.com/course/

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Tinley Expo Turns Six

Welcome to the sixth Tinley Park Golf Expo! You're one of an anticipated 10,000 visitors to walk through the doors of the Tinley Park Convention Center through Sunday to peruse the offerings of more than 150 exhibitors, plus test the latest in golf equipment – everything from drivers to putters, and all the trimmings that fit in your bag, as well as bags – and perhaps pursue a bargain in the sales area.

Featured attractions include demonstrations and clinics, a demo area for new clubs, long putt and driving contests with cool prizes, and junior golf lessons provided by The First Tee of Greater Chicago.

As in years past, the Expo's practice area will be manned by Illinois PGA professionals providing free mini-lessons and tips.

"With so much to see and do, the Expo is an excellent indoor retreat for golfers and their families to experience," Expo co-owner Joe Copeland said. "Come for an hour or stay for the whole day. There's plenty of helpful and fun people to meet."

The show is open Friday, Feb. 10 from noon to 6 p.m., Saturday, Feb. 11, from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., and Sunday, Feb. 12, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.



G.T. Golf Learning Center



Gregg Tengerstrom



WDRV Chicago



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Sunday	7:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m.

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Golf Life Navigators Help Relocators Find Dream Homes

Over the years, matchmaking services have exploded. The internet is awash with sites that unite users with their dream pets, their dream homes, and, of course, their dream dates. As a graduate student at Florida Gulf Coast University, Jason Becker was seeking an interesting topic for a research paper when he came upon an untapped matchmaking category. Who, he wondered, connects golfers from the north with golf communities in the south when they decide that they've had it with cold Midwestern winters? Becker not only developed a good thesis; he had created a business model.

Golf Life Navigators is managed by PGA professionals who take a thoughtful and methodical approach to pairing up relocators with golf communities that fit their profiles and preferences. The process begins with an interview that goes beyond golf partialities to incorporate likes and dislikes on lifestyle preferences, hobbies, and even dining preferences. Each spouse answers questions separately to ensure that a happy medium is reached. According to Becker, who is a teaching PGA professional, the process actually helps couples learn what's important to them and what makes them happy. "The social aspect of a club or a community is as critical a factor. Men look for camaraderie after they finish a round. Women seek a social environment across the community as well as on the golf course."

The company has developed software called "ProGuide" which compiles this preference data and pairs that information up with club and community information compiled in a data base to offer multiple recommendations on club choices. "We are neutral—like Switzerland—when it comes to the options provided to the clients." Customers pay a fully-refundable consultation fee to use the service. Likewise, some of the clubs and communities pay a fee to the company for its research and referrals. Some 1,200 Florida golf club facilities are presently in the database.

While the business is relatively new, the research results have already shown interesting trends regarding lifestyle



preferences. "The single most important factor people look for in a golf community is a club's aesthetics," Becker says. "They want beautiful surroundings. They want an environment that makes them feel good." Other needs include security, health and fitness, and the quality of food and beverage available on the property. "It probably sounds amazing, but golf is only the sixth most important aspect of the community to men and is the eighth most important feature to women," says Becker.

Another fascinating finding in the research is that only about 50% of the customers are existing members of country clubs. The other half incorporates golfers who in their moving process have also determined that their new lifestyle will become more golf-centric. "Baby boomers are making the biggest decision of their lives by choosing to relocate," Becker says. "Until now, there's never been a program in place to provide a trusted advisor in their decision."

The fact that managers of Golf Life Navigators are PGA professionals is, according to Becker, an important aspect of the matchmaking process. "We leverage our PGA network to help find the right fit for clients," he says. "Country club members often times look to their club professionals for more than teaching advice. They ask for recommendations on where to play and where to relocate." While the primary destination represented by the company is Florida, the service is expanding to other major golf destinations including Palm Springs, Calif., and Scottsdale, Ariz. "We are really excited about the demand for this concept," says Becker.

Former Chicago Bears coach and TV analyst Mike Ditka has personally endorsed the service. "From Chicago to Naples, golf can be year-round," he said. "Before [anyone] picks a Florida club, talk to Golf Life Navigators first."

Calling itself "America's #1 golf lifestyle relocation company," Golf Life Navigators can be reached through its website: www.golflifenavigators.com or by calling 800-447-8707.

Sweet Home Chicago

continued from page 15

third, and now has a chance to score a victory on the North Course.

Ticket information is at www.kpmg-womenschampionship.com. Juniors up to age 17 are free with a paying adult.

That Hardy Boy: He's Good!

Mike Small has an embarrassment of riches on his highly-ranked Illinois men's team. Junior Dylan Meyer won the Western Amateur last year and finished 12th in the Australian Masters of the Amateurs just after the first of the year. Sophomore Edoardo Lipparelli, the pride of Ronciglione, Italy, swept his semifinal and final matches in leading the Fighting Illini to the East Lake Cup. Freshman Bryan Baumgarten fired a 65 at Olympia Fields, two strokes off the course record on a day with U.S. Open conditions. Freshman Michael Feagles posted a 66 at Tavistock. Freshman Giovanni Tadiotto won the Northern Intercollegiate at Rich Harvest Farms, site of this year's NCAA Championship.

finish (and low amateur) in the Illinois Open and making the Sweet Sixteen in the Western Amateur, and the erstwhile Glenbrook North standout had a tremendous year.

There's reason to think 2017 will be even better.

He's tested. Two U.S. Opens and a large handful of major amateur tournaments, including a semifinal berth in the 2014 Western Amateur at Beverly, ensures that he's seen tough conditions and dealt with them.

He's steady. That was evident his freshman year at Illinois, when he struggled early, kept his head down, and broke into the top 10 by the end of the year. All that time, Small kept Hardy in the lineup. He knew he had a leader in the lineup.

Justin Gerbich, his high school coach, said as much two summers ago when reflecting on Hardy's high school career. "When you're good, you end up leading. He set the tone for us to be good," he told *Pioneer Press*.



Then there's Nick Hardy, the junior from Northbrook.

All he did in 2016 was set the scoring record in routing the field in the Illinois Amateur, win his U.S. Open qualifier to advance to Oakmont – his second straight Open appearance – win the opening tournament of the college season at Wolf Run, and score a 5 and 4 victory over Edwin Yi at the East Lake Cup. Throw in a fourth-place

Hardy's done nothing but get better. While his fall scoring average of 72.42 ranks only 176th nationally, he's ranked seventh individually by *Golfweek* entering spring play, thanks both to an 11-5 head-to-head record and the difficulty of the courses Illinois plays. If PGA Tour players teed it up at Wolf Run, Olympia Fields, Tavistock and East Lake under testing conditions, their averages would go up as well.

Get Moving

The holiday feasts have ended, but a full plate of winter still sits in front of us. For some, a little taste of warm weather and golf will come in the not-so-distant future. If you have been exercising this winter, then you are in great shape to enjoy a snowbird escape to green fairways. You are ready to begin packing your travel bag and carry-on luggage. However, if you are still in hibernation mode, then the best short-term preparation for a golf trip is to get moving.

This may seem over simplified, but one of the best ways to prime your body for the rigors of a round of golf is to be habitually active. Several weeks of moderate exercise for 30 minutes, five days a week, can make a significant difference in your enjoyment of an off-season round of golf. The intensity of exercise at which you start will depend on your overall condition and health, so if you have not had a recent physical, schedule an appointment with your physician.

Start at a moderate level of exercise and then progress to a more vigorous level as tolerated. The most basic way to estimate the intensity level is your perceived exertion level. You are at a moderate level of

exercise if you are working relatively hard and can maintain only a light conversation. A vigorous level of exercise is achieved when you are working hard and you can only say a few words at a time. A simple web search for target heart rate can give you a more specific range to exercise for your age if you desire, or purchase an activity tracker to guide your intensity.

How you get your heart rate to the level you want can be done many ways. Walking and jogging are options, but the cold of the Midwest may make that a less desirable option. The treadmill, elliptical, and stair stepper are readily available and can be used independently or in conjunction with a fitness program.

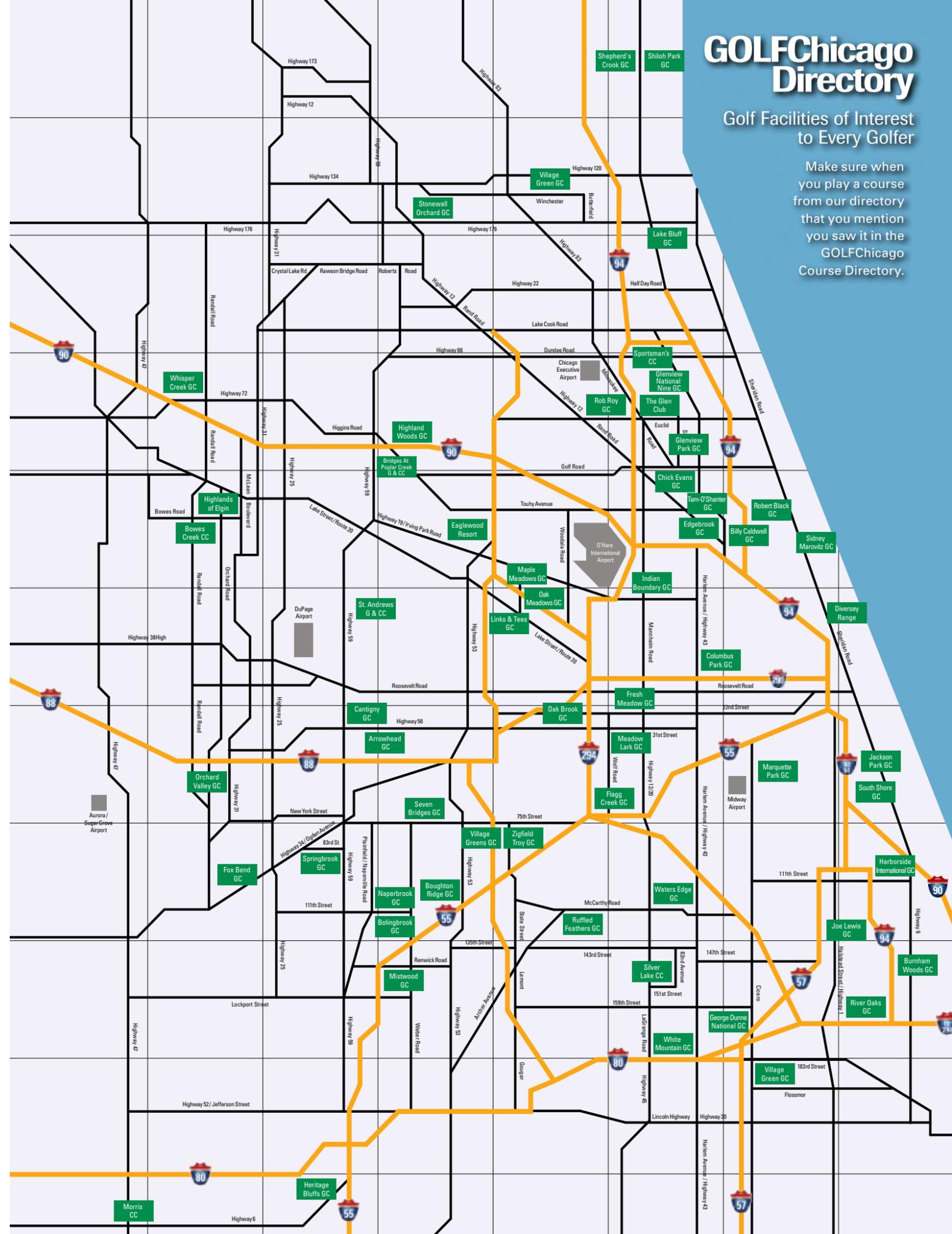
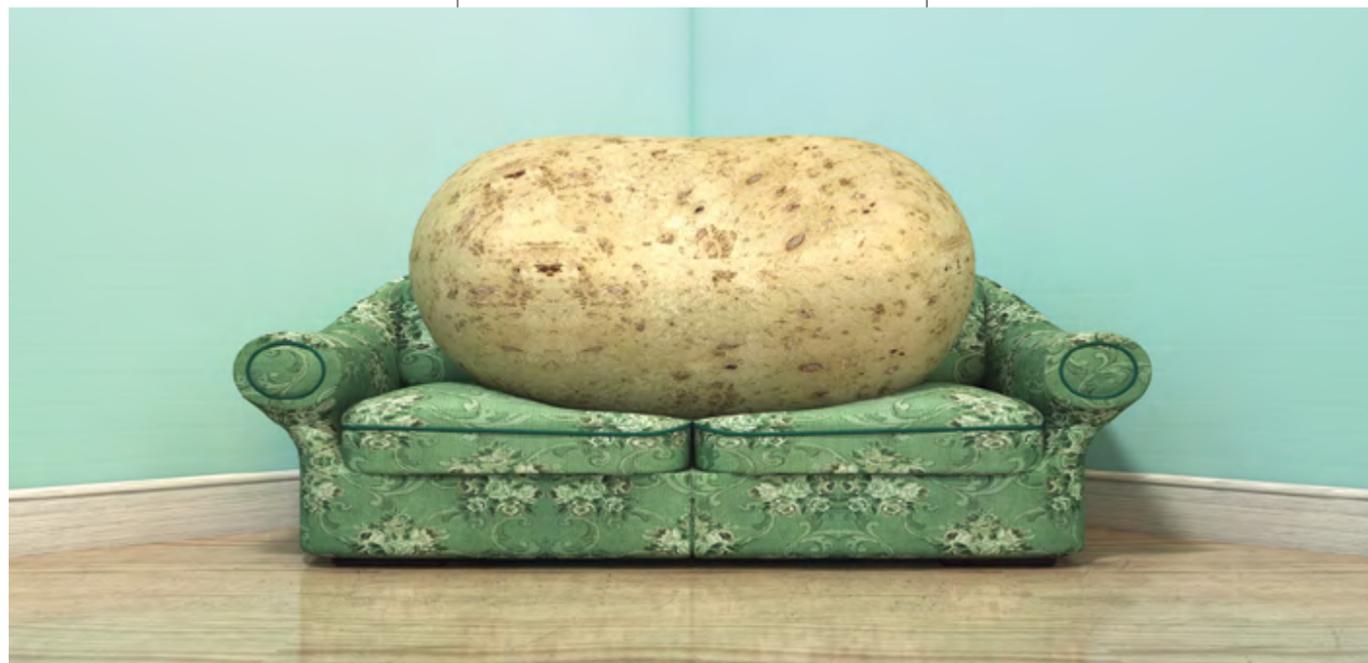
A treadmill is easiest for most couch potatoes because you are walking/running, rather than learning a new movement. Treadmills offer the flexibility that allows you to vary the incline and speed, and they do engage the core muscle, especially if you are jogging. Treadmills also allow you to do variations of sidestepping and backward walking to emphasize the hip and thigh muscles. Just make sure you always use the safety mechanisms recommended by the manufacturer.

An elliptical machine has the benefit of using arms and legs, along with facilitating the core muscles. The whole body movement engages the muscles utilized to swing a golf club effectively. The elliptical is also low impact to protect joints in the legs and back.

Steppers and stairmill machines are low impact, but the legs, buttocks, and lower core muscles are emphasized more than treadmills and elliptical trainers. It is important to avoid leaning on the arm too much or the benefits are reduced. Because of the climbing motion, steppers and stairmills may not be the best option for people with knee problems.

Ideally, you are active and participate in an on-going fitness program. Movement and activity are the keys to enjoying your golf vacation. If you are still bingeing on Netflix as your prime winter activity, then join a health club, recreational center, or take the laundry off the treadmill in the basement and get moving. If you are stuck in the Midwest like me, then just take this as an opportunity to prepare for the coming golf season.

Remember – sitting is the new smoking. Golf well!



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Arrowhead

630-653-5800
26W151 Butterfield Rd.
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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.



Bolingbrook Golf Club

630-771-9400
2001 Rodeo Dr.
Bolingbrook, IL 60490
bolingbrookgolfclub.com

Bolingbrook Golf Club features a championship golf course designed by Arthur Hills and Steve Forrest, an exceptional practice facility with a learning academy, state-of-the-art GPS-equipped golf carts, and a 76,000 square-foot clubhouse with men's and women's locker rooms, lounges, two full-service restaurants, and full banquet facilities. Memberships are available.

Bolingbrook Golf Club was named #28 in the 2010 *Golf World* Readers' Choice Awards for best public course in the country; named to the 2009 *Golfweek* Best Courses You Can Play list; and received 4½ stars from *Golf Digest*.



Bowes Creek Country Club

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

Here at Bowes Creek Country Club, our patrons are not treated like an everyday customer. You can buy a membership for the year or you can pay to be a Member for a Day! Instead of standard green fees, we offer a daily membership. The Member for a Day Fee will allow you to play unlimited golf with cart, and allow you full use of the practice facility. There will be no limit to the amount of golf you can play that day because you are ... Member for that Day!



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630-668-8463
27W270 Mack Rd.
Wheaton, IL 60189
cantignygolf.com

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Glenview Prairie Club

847-657-1637
2800 W. Lake Ave.
Glenview, IL 60026
golfglenview.com

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630-723-5215

Naperville 60563
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630-396-2020

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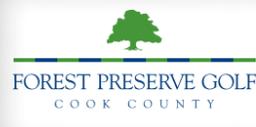
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- Indian Boundary: 18 Holes
- Joe Louis: 18 Holes
- Meadowlark: 9 Holes
- River Oaks: 18 Holes



Fox Bend Golf Course

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

Fox Bend is Oswego's own welcoming and challenging public course. This 18-hole, par-72 course boasts plush fairways, mature trees, and challenging greens. With 34 well-positioned bunkers and water coming into play on 11 holes, the course tests skills of all levels. USFGA FootGolf is also available on select days. Enjoy a drink or dinner on the deck overlooking the scenic course at Pearce's restaurant, or book the Pavilion for your next outing or special event. Take advantage of tee time specials and book online.



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847-724-7272
2901 W. Lake Ave.
Glenview, IL 60026
theglenclub.com

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Glenview Park Golf Club

847-724-0250
Shermer Rd.
Glenview, IL 60025
golfglenview.com

Experience pure golfing enjoyment at the Glenview Park Golf Club. After a complete renovation in 2014-2015, the course has re-opened to rave reviews. Bent grass from tee to green, rolling fairways, and meticulous landscapes await you on this 18-hole, 6,133 yard par-70 course. The Glenview Park Golf Club offers the amenities of a private club, but is open to the public and close to home.



Lake Bluff Golf Club

847-234-6771
355 W Washington Ave.
Lake Bluff, IL 60044
lakebluffgolfclub.com

Located on the scenic North Shore of Chicago, Lake Bluff Golf Club offers a beautiful and challenging layout in a traditional parkland setting. The course measures 6,589 yards from the back tees and offers three additional sets of tees to accommodate all skill levels. Lake Bluff Golf Club takes great pride in the immaculately conditioned bentgrass fairways and greens. Other amenities include a full-service golf shop, private and group instruction, and an exceptional dining experience at the new Hel's Kitchen. The club hosted the 44th Annual Lake County Amateur.



Mistwood Golf Club

815-254-3333
1700 W. Renwick Rd.
Romeoville, IL 60046
mistwoodgc.com

Mistwood Golf Club, with its recent multi-million dollar renovations and new state of the art golf-learning center, has become one of the premier golf experiences in the Chicagoland area

Mistwood, host of the Illinois Women's Open, features new Scottish-style stacked sod-wall bunkers, which are not something seen in traditional American golf. Other amenities include a full-service pro shop, golf instruction, and wonderful dining.

- *Golf Magazine's* "2013 Best U.S. Renovation You Can Play"
- Golf Range Association of America "2013 Top 50 Golf Ranges."



Mt. Prospect Golf Club

847-259-4200
600 See Gwun Ave.
Mt. Prospect, IL 60056
www.golfmtprospect.com

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Mt. Prospect is the closest thing to the conditions and feel of an old private club, with a daily fee rate. Come back to a new 90-year-old classic.





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, native prairie grasses, and wide fairways. Challenges in the way of ponds, a double green, and hidden bunkers await golfers of all levels. Additional amenities include a ten-acre driving range, separate lesson tee, and practice putting greens. Enjoy post-game refreshments on the picturesque patio; Naperbrook also offers lessons, outings, a well-stocked golf shop, and much more.



Oak Brook Golf Club

630-368-6400
oak-brook.org/recreation

18 Holes – Par 72
Yardage: 5341 - 6541
The Oak Brook Golf Club is a classic playing experience with a superb blend of challenges where every hole requires solid shot-making from tee to green. The par 4s will utilize every club in the bag; the par 3s are a devilish balance of risk and reward; and the par 5s offer multiple playing strategies from conservative to bold ... and all on manicured greens and fairways. The course features a well-stocked pro shop, delightful grill and outdoor patio, men's and women's locker rooms, expansive all-grass driving range with three chipping and putting greens, and six PGA teaching professionals.



Orchard Valley Golf Course

630-907-0500
2411 W. Illinois Ave.
Aurora, IL 60506
orchardvalleygolf.com

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Prospect Heights, IL 60070
robroygc.com

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St. Andrews Golf & Country Club

2241 Route 59
West Chicago, IL 60185
630-231-3100
standrewsgc.com

36 Holes:
Course #1: par 71, 5116-6920 yards
Course #2: par 72, 5341-6818 yards
Located 30 miles west of Chicago in West Chicago. Since 1926, Chicago-area golfers have sought out St. Andrews for its two championship courses and top-ranked Practice Center. With its vast rolling terrain, mature trees, and historic setting, St. Andrews offers quality facilities for discerning golfers, golf outings, and leagues, as well as permanent tee times. Guests will also enjoy premium range balls, motor carts with tablet GPS, and selections from J.J.'s Bar & Grill.



Silver Lake Golf Course

14700 82nd Avenue Orland Park, IL 60462
708-349-6940 x4
www.silverlakecc.com

Silver Lake Golf Course is the premiere public golf course of the Chicago southland. Family owned and operated since 1927, the course features 36 championship-golf holes, a natural-grass driving range, and a dedicated short-game area. Silver Lake GC is also home to the award-winning "Rolling Hills," named Chicago's #1 Sporty 9 for almost two-decades.



Springbrook Golf Course

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

Springbrook Golf Course commands some of the finest views of Naperville's open space and trails. Built in 1974, the facility features a challenging 18 holes, 28-stall natural turf driving range, two practice putting greens, and a short-game practice green with bunkers. Golfers of all skill levels return time and again to play. Enjoy post-game refreshments on the picturesque patio; Springbrook also offers lessons, outings, a well-stocked golf shop and much more.



Stonewall Orchard

25675 West Highway 60
Grayslake, IL 60030
847-740-4890
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

6700 West Howard Street
Niles, IL 60714
847-965-2344
www.niles-parks.org

One of the most important courses in popularizing the game of golf in America is located right here in Niles, Illinois. 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!
Instructional programming available year-round!



Water's Edge Golf Course

7205 West 115th St.
Worth, IL 60482
708-671-1032
watersedgegolf.com

Rated Best Places To Play By *Golf Digest*.
Water's Edge is Chicago's south side destination course. This championship 18-hole golf course offers bent grass greens and fairways, and a complete day/night practice and range facility, along with The Edge Bar & Grill for great meals and daily specials.

PLUS...a program for everyone!

- SAVE on every round with the Edge PLUS Pass
- UNLIMITED twilight golf and range with the Edge Practice Club



Whisper Creek Golf Course

12840 Del Webb Blvd.
Huntley, IL 60142
847-515-7680
whispercreekgolf.com

Luxury Golf at a Whisper of a Price!
Whisper Creek Golf Club is a fair test for a gamut of golfers. From beginners to scratch golfers, anyone who appreciates a day on the course will come away feeling rewarded by a round at Whisper Creek.

PLUS...a program for everyone!

- SAVE on every round with the Whisper Rewards PLUS program
- UNLIMITED twilight golf and range with the PDP card
- Annual Memberships and MORE!



White Mountain Golf Park

9901 179th St.
Tinley Park, IL 60477
708-478-4653
whitemountaingolfpark.com

Learn. Practice. Play.

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- Practice Range with artificial and grass hitting stations, and heated, covered stalls
- Mini Golf park offering 18 holes
- Professional instruction for all levels and abilities
- Fully stocked golf shop
- Party room perfect for events, fundraisers and more!

PLUS...earn FREE stuff with the Playback Rewards program – join TODAY!

Arlington Lakes Golf Club

847-577-3030
Arlington Heights, IL 60005

Blackberry Oaks

630-553-7170
Bristol, IL 60512
blackberryoaks.com

Bonnie Brook GC

847-360-4735
2800 N. Lewis Ave.
Waukegan, IL 60087
waukegangolf.org

Boughton Ridge

630-739-4100
Bolingbrook, IL 60440

Green Meadows Golf Club

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

Par 30
Yardage: 1,888 - 1,545 yds.
Weekday: \$14 walk \$22 ride
Weekend: \$16 walk \$24 ride

*Frequent specials on course website
Discount Program: Yes
Jr./Sr. Rates: Yes
Twilight Rates: No
Banquets/Outings: No

Kids Golf Foundation of Illinois

Golf Changes Kids' Lives
630-466-0913
P.O. Box 610
Sugar Grove, IL 60554
kidsgolffoundation.org

Links & Tees Golf Facility

630-458-2660
Addison, IL 60101
Recognized in 2011 by *Golf Range* magazine as one of the Top 100 Learning Facilities in North America.
addisonparks.org

Maple Meadows Golf Club

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

West 18 - Par 70
Yardage: 6,438 - 5,339 yds.
Weekday: \$32 walk/\$49 ride
Weekend: \$41 walk/\$58 ride

*Frequent specials on course website
East 9 – Par 34
Yardage: 2,815 - 2,427 yds.
Rate: \$16 walk / \$25 ride
Discount Program: Yes
Jr./Sr. Rates: Yes
Twilight Rates: Yes
Banquets/Outings: Yes

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Rate: \$16 walk / \$25 ride
Discount Program: Yes
Jr./Sr. Rates: Yes
Twilight Rates: Yes
Banquets/Outings: Yes

Oak Meadows Golf Club

630-595-0071
900 N. Wood Dale Rd.
Addison, IL 60101
DuPageGolf.com
Par 71
Yardage: 6,718 - 5,628 yds.
Weekday: \$32 walk/\$49 ride
Weekend: \$41 walk/\$58 ride

*Frequent specials on course website
Discount Program: Yes
Jr./Sr. Rates: Yes
Twilight Rates: Yes
Banquets/Outings: No

Sentry World

866-479-6753
Stevens Point, WI 54481
18 holes
Par 72
6,951 yards
sentryworld.com

Shepherd's Crook

847-872-2080
351 N. Green Bay Rd.
Zion, IL 60099
shepherdsCrook.org

Shiloh Park

847-746-5500
23rd and Bethesda Blvd.
Zion, IL 60099
shilohparkgolf.com

Western Golf Association / Evans Scholars Foundation

westerngolfassociation.com

Zigfield Troy Par 3

630-985-9860
1535 W. 75th Street
Woodridge, IL 60517w

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Course Managers:

For inclusion in this directory, or to update your listing, please call 815.741.8005 or email us at dweretka@golfchicagomagazine.com



TECH TALK

TODD MROWICE

A Club That Connects

The main purpose of Tech Talk is to keep our readers informed of the latest and greatest golf-related items which possess innovative qualities. I've got some fun items lined up for 2017, but I felt compelled to lead off the year with a piece of equipment that really grabbed my attention. The key word there being "equipment."

I've never featured anything in Tech Talk that could land in the equipment category. It has highlighted GPS devices, swing analyzers, laser rangefinders, etc. But never a club. So when Cobra announced their new King F7 and F7+ drivers, which include Cobra Connect technology, I knew it had a place here.

Cobra absolutely hit a home run with its predecessor, the King F6 and F6+. In many independent lab testings the F6 generation was at or near the top in distance and forgiveness. For 2017, Cobra has improved on both and gives consumers a little something extra. Many will recognize the Arccos brand as being one of the most popular stat tracking devices on the market. A crowded market at that.

A virtually weightless Arccos sensor is installed in the grip of the King F7 driver. From there, you simply pair your iPhone or Android phone with Cobra Connect. Hit your drive and once you take your second shot the Arccos sensor will record your total distance.

After you've completed your round you can check-in to your Cobra Connect to review a slew of stats, including your average driving distance, longest drive, and number of fairways hit, all of which are shown from a bird's-eye view on a GPS map of each hole. Your phone can also turn into a GPS rangefinder on 40,000 courses. It's fair to point out that Cobra did install Cobra Connect in its late 2016 King LTD Black Driver. The King F7, however, is its first full line of drivers with the technology.

The F7 model is intended for the average player, but lower handicappers can also enjoy the extra forgiveness this version provides.

It has a larger face, along with three center of gravity settings which are adjusted with a weight system. The F7 stock shaft is a Fujikura Pro, retails for \$349, and is available in black, silver, or blue finishes.

The F7+ is a more compact head design and intended for the more advanced player, with lower lofts and a Fujikura Pro XLR8 stock shaft. The King F7+ has the same weighting system at the regular F7. This version retails for \$399 and is available in a black or blue finish.

For more information visit www.cobragolf.com.



ON THE CORKSCREWS

STEPHEN HAWK

Beyond the Pale

In the early 1980s, the Benziger family (not to be confused with *Beringer*, although they often are) migrated west from White Plains, N.Y., and started a winery on Sonoma Mountain. Winemaker Joe Benziger learned his craft by making large production wines for the Glen Ellen brand, but eventually decided that his future lay with a series of small, artisan wines, sustainably produced.

Depending on location, every Benziger vineyard is certified sustainable, organic, or biodynamic, using the most up-to-date green farming practices. But, just what does that mean? Green, sustainable, and organic are words that are often used rather casually. At Benziger, they try to be more precise.

Their third-party certified-sustainable vineyard program emphasizes environmentally-sound growing methods, such as biodiversity, soil revitalization, and integrated pest management. Their growers are required to participate in sustainable farming.

Organic grape growing avoids the use of synthetic chemicals and uses natural methods like crop rotation, tillage, and natural composts to maintain soil health, as well as natural methods to control weeds, insects, and other pests. The winery itself is certified organic, too. Organic is an evolutionary step up from sustainable. After that, many Benziger growers move on from certified organic to certified biodynamic.

Animals and beneficial gardens play an important part in biodynamic farming techniques. Benziger relies on sheep for the removal of overgrown cover crop, and they replace the need for mowing, disking, and spraying herbicides; they aerate the soil while continuously depositing nutrient-rich fertilizer throughout the vineyard.

Olive trees also support the health of the estate. Olives often grow well in the same climates and soils as wine grapes, and Benziger has been offering an Estate Biodynamic Olive Oil for the past four years. **2014 North Coast Sauvignon Blanc \$15** This very pale-yellow sipper is made from 100% Sauvignon Blanc grapes harvested from the North Coast appellation of Sonoma

County. It opens with hints of melon on the nose. There is a subtle sweetness in the taste, suggesting peaches. The acidity comes on reminiscent of Key lime. It ends with a bit of bubbly on the finish.

Pair this easy-going wine with tabbouleh, braised swordfish in white wine, or grilled shrimp in a Catalan almond sauce. ■■■■

2014 Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir \$29 This selection looks more like cherry Kool-Aid than wine, but it's wine, for sure. The understated nose features raspberry and sweet earth. The taste is cherry, alright, but this time of the tart variety. There is a medium finish with restrained tannins.

This easy-to-drink Pinot would go nicely with steam-poached salmon, Spanish chicken with sweet peppers, or Andalusian braised lamb shanks with honey. ■■■■



smhawk@ayainc.com

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Life Without Golf?

It's difficult for me to imagine my life without the game of golf. Now, before you judge me, I'm not comparing a leisure sport's place in my world to that of my family, friends, food, shelter, and so on. I know my priorities, folks. It's just that I can't remember a time when I didn't golf. I thought long and hard about when I didn't own clubs. Can't. Even jogged a few memories of old equipment, including the Maxfli Australian Blades that I had no business trying to game as a pre-teen. Also dug up some golf outfits that, by today's standards, are fit for the nut house. Why were my shorts so short? Yes, the game has been with me forever.

One of my favorite aspects about golf is that it can be whatever you need it to be. Need a leisurely round with your pals? Tee it up. A big money game with some equally big talkers? Tee it up. A Bloody Mary-laden shotgun outing where mulligans are for sale? Tee it up ... but please have a designated driver. I've taken part in all of the above, and then some. The constant for me is that I will always love having a golf club in my hands, no matter what the situation.

Recently, that irreplaceable feeling got me wondering, "How did I get here?"

My dad taught me the game at a very young age. It was, and still is, what I enjoy doing the most with him. I didn't grow up a country club kid, just the local driving ranges and public tracks for me. My dad got me into IJGA tournaments, got me ready for high school golf, and always had a spot for me on Sunday mornings with his buddies.

It took me darn near 33 years to realize that my dad not only taught me how to play, he gave me the game. He gave me something to learn, nourish, respect, enjoy, and grow with. Something to take with me and apply to my everyday life. And now, as a father myself, something to pay forward to my son. I now realize that I owe my dad a very sincere thank you.

So that brings me to you, the person who hasn't closed the page, checked out our back cover advertisement, and thrown this issue on your coffee table (face up please). Who do you need to thank? Who introduced you to golf? For some people like me, it's a parent. Maybe your dad or mom pushed you into it? Maybe they pre-paid for the



golf lessons and forced you to go? In either case, glad they did, aren't you?

One of my favorite things to see is a foursome on Mother's Day or Father's Day that consists of parents, grandparents, and grandkids. Doesn't get much better than that. If family golf runs deep in your case, it shouldn't be too hard to find the person that you should thank.

Maybe the person you should be thanking is a friend. Someone who dragged you to a driving range on a whim or a college friend that got you to ditch class to go play nine holes. Maybe your bowling buddies got you to try something different. Do you still keep in touch with that friend? If you answered "we're still Facebook friends," that does not count! Reach out to that person. Say "thanks" in whatever way makes you happy. A round of golf, a round of beers and TopGolf, whatever.

How about a co-worker? Were you introduced to the game by someone you work or worked with? I find this to be pretty common, especially among Millennials. It's different than what it was 20 years ago when business got done on the golf course. Golf chatter runs rampant in the office from recapping your weekend round to which new clubs you purchased. There isn't a better way to connect with your office peers than to spend time away from the 9 to 5 confines. Maybe golf has had a small impact on a raise or a promotion? Which cube-mate should get a Venti-sized Starbucks from you on Monday morning?

Now, we all know it's impossible for me to check on who's dishing out their "thank yous" and who isn't. Not the point, my *GOLFChicago* readers. The purpose here is to get you to think about the person that you owe a small debt of gratitude. If nothing else, do me a favor. Try to take an inventory of good or great memories you've had on a golf course. A hole-out from a bunker. Winning longest drive in an outing. That time your buddy got rejected by the cart girl. Your uncle wearing a kilt in True Scotsman style. Don't ask about that one.

If you really give it some thought, I bet you'll remember some great things. Memories that will last forever, stories that have been shared, and those ever-so-precious perfect shots. Feeling thankful? 🍷

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*Offer valid March 21 – May 8, 2017. Specials cannot be combined with other discounts and must be paid in full and booked with Reservations at least 48 hours prior to play. Specials do not include play at Lakewood Golf Club. Specials do not include tax or lodging. Not valid with previously booked packages. There is a \$10 surcharge for each round on the Judge at Capitol Hill. Some restrictions may apply. Offers subject to change.