Dobie continues to leave his mark — at Sharon Club and on his profession

By TERRY BUCHEN

SHARON CENTER, Ohio — It seems Frank Dobie has always been at the head of his class, the top of his profession. His story reads like a "Who's Who" of golf course management.

Dobie started his love affair with golf courses at age 14 at Homelinks Golf Course in Olmsted Falls, Ohio, and later in high school at North Olmsted Golf Club under superintendent Earl Yesberger. Dobie then entered Penn State's two-year turfgrass management program, graduating in 1960 at the top of his class. That was the year Prof. Burt Musser retired and a young Dr. Joe DuChesne took over the program. Both men have had a profound influence on Dobie's life.

During his apprenticeship training at Bob O'Link Golf Club in 1959-60, he worked under renowned superintendent Bob Williams in Highland Park, Ill. After leaving Bob O'Link in the fall of 1960, he went to Meadow Brook Country Club in Detroit to work for superintendent Andy Bertoni installing an irrigation system.

Dobie served six years in the U.S. Army Reserves, being honorably discharged with the rank of sergeant. In 1961, he was offered the position of superintendent at Sleepy Hollow Country Club in Brecksville, Ohio. At age 21, he got the job. In 1963, he became superintendent at Fairlawn Country Club in Akron. He was offered the position of superintendent in 1964 at The Sharon Golf Club, a new men's club then being built in Sharon Center.

"I've been here since the beginning, 31 years," said Dobie. "My job is primarily superintendent but I'm also general manager. The club is structured so that our president, M.G. O'Neil, really calls the shots and has since the beginning, I'm directly responsible to him, so as far as the membership is concerned."

Being there during the construction phase left its mark on Dobie. He has been altering the design of Sharon ever since. He proudly tells of the more than 40,000 trees planted through the years and the complete facelift on the 4th and 11th holes.

"Before the course was built, there were two farms," he explained. "Part of one farm was a wooded area, mostly sugar maples. But three-quarters of the area was pretty barren."

"Initially, we knew we needed a lot of trees. We had a broad plan to plant a large amount of trees in a short period of time. We developed seven acres of tree nurseries at one point. As they grew, we would transplant them onto the golf course. A big part of the program was patience."

Dobie admits course design and construction is the part of the job he loves most. "Over the years we've put in the shots and has since the beginning."

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