

Prairie Bluff to involve juniors

CREST HILL, Ill. — When Lockport Township Park District's Prairie Bluff Public Golf Club opens in July, there will be more to the facility than

Prairie Bluff will challenge expert golfers as well as beginners.

its Andy North- and Roger Packard-designed 18 holes.

A Junior Golf Club and Little Junior Golf Clinics will be integral elements to the operation — offering a comprehensive lesson program to help introduce young golfers to the course and teach them proper etiquette and care of a golf course.

The Junior Golf Club's members — 12- to 15-year-olds with golf experience — will volunteer to assist with the bag-drop area, replacing spikes, repairing divots and ball marks, and other assignments. They will be trained by Prairie Bluff staff and, in return, receive range tokens, t-shirts and free rounds of golf based on the number of hours volunteered.

The Little Junior Golf Clinic will introduce 7- to 12-year-olds to golf. Using shortened clubs that will be provided if needed, students will learn the fundamentals of the golf swing.

Packard and North, a two-time U.S. Open champion, fashioned a 6,857-yard course that traverses seven lakes and incorporates 40 sand bunkers over 237 acres of rolling terrain. It will sport bentgrass from tee to green, with prairie grasses in several out-of-bounds areas to accent the prairie-style theme.

A June 27 family day will predate the facility's grand opening in July.

Gateway Nat'l 'something different'

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courses are trees, bluegrass and hilly terrain."

Though it is far from a seaside property, it is devoid of trees, faces a constant wind, sports a lot of prairie grasses, English-type stone walls and bridges, railroad-tie bunker faces and lakes that are lined with huge pieces of limestone that give it a rugged Scottish seaside look.

"Ironically, the developers [Walters and Tim Crowley] are the ones who said, 'Can we come up with something different?' " Foster recalled. "They both love golf, the history of the game and a golf course that has its own theme and identity."

A key element in Gateway National's identity is a slashing burn — like the Old Course's Swilken Burn — that runs through the property. All the drainage water goes into the burn, which empties into an irrigation lake to be reused. Whatever is not needed it pumped to

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