

PEER-TO-PEER: BETTER TURF THROUGH NETWORKING

MGCSA Superintendents were asked:

What does your club/course do to develop more golfers for your club and the future of golf?

The Golf Academy of **Three Rivers Park District** has been designated by the World Golf Foundation as a First Tee Chapter. Programs of the First Tee are spread throughout the golf facilities of Three Rivers Park District. Three Rivers Park Districts Eagle Lake Youth Golf Center, Glen Lake Golf & Practice Center, Cleary Lake Golf Course and Baker National Golf. For more information, contact the First Tee of Three Rivers Park District at: thefirsttee@threeriversparkdistrict.org.

- Gary Klingelhoets
Three Rivers Park District

Here at **Chisago Lakes Golf Course** we have a one week junior program of 100 kids. Additionally there is a junior league that plays from our Orange tees measuring 3,189 yards. These tees are Flexstake markers with sleeves on the edges of the fairway. In the past we have had specials of free golf for juniors under 16 years old while accompanied by a paying adult. We are looking at moving this to a regular slot on weekend afternoons and promoting this program further. For adults we have Community Ed golf classes for those new to the sport.

- Brian Brown
Chisago Lakes GC

At **North Oaks** we have always had an extensive junior program available all summer long to kids and grandkids of members. Age starts at 5 and goes up to 17. The real little children have their own course set up on the driving range every Wednesday morning. They are called the Bow Wow group. We have also initiated a forward tee course set at about 4,800 yards.

- Jack MacKenzie, CGCS
North Oaks Golf Club

Three area entities, **Blue Top Ridge Golf Club**, Iowa section of the PGA and The VA Medical Center in Iowa City have started a program called GIVE (Golf for

Injured Veterans Everywhere). The program has four phases of training for veterans to enhance their mental, social, physical and emotional well-being and improve their quality of life.

The four phases are introduction to golf (rules, equipment, dress, scoring, etiquette, etc.), indoor instruction, outdoor practice on the range, golf rounds at Blue Top Ridge. PGA Professionals have developed the training materials for the course and have volunteered their time to the program. Our grand opening on August 1, 2007 was a fundraiser which raised approximately \$65,000 for the program. So far the participation and feedback has been phenomenal.

- Mike Nelson, CGCS
Blue Top Ridge GC

"Emily Greens initiated a 'Grandkids Play Free' with anyone who has a Season Pass to our course. We are in the Brainerd Lakes area and have many generations visiting or vacationing and it makes it easy for them to say "let's go to the golf course" when they do not have to consider shelling out \$20 - \$30 or more to get the kids out and involved in an activity they can all enjoy."

In an effort to promote the game of golf and future players, **Windsong Farm** has a well attended junior golf program. The juniors meet two days a week, depending on ability and age and the program runs June through August. Last year we had over 90 children in the program.

Instruction covers all aspects of the game and access is granted to the course on the appropriate days. While on the course kids are accompanied by one of our golf pros or a volunteer parent to help with the rules, speed of play and etiquette. I feel it is a widely beneficial program that is both well received and liked by all the juniors.

- Scottie Hines, CGCS
Windsong Farm Golf Club

At **Victory Links** our course was designed with kids in mind. We have six sets of tees for golfers of all skill levels. Our forward tees play 2,830 yards for 18 holes while our back tees measure over 7,100 yards. In addition we offer reduced rates for kids, they pay their age, and offer one flat rate for family play. We are a member of The First Tee program and we participate in many USGA and PGA player development programs. Our pro and his staff also offer beginner golf lessons through local park and rec programs.

- Curtiss Conkright
National Sports Center

In 2007, **Emily Greens** initiated a 'Grandkids Play Free' (grandkids must be 18 or under) with anyone who has a Season Pass to our course. The media reports continue to come out about how each generation is spending less time engaged in outdoor activities than the previous generation. The *Minneapolis Tribune* had an article recently and even though they did not mention golf they certainly could have (it was more geared to camping, use of parks, etc). We are in a retirement/vacation area (the Brainerd Lakes) and have many generations visiting or vacationing and it makes it easy

for them to say "let's go to the golf course" when they do not have to consider shelling out \$20 - \$30 or more to get the kids out and involved in an activity they can all enjoy. Last year was the first year doing this and I had more than a few comments from the 'middle' generation that this has been great this summer when they come up to visit their parents and it has gotten them (the middle generation) out to play much more than they would have. We look forward to expanding the number of rounds in 2008.

- Gregg Gamble,
Emily Greens Golf Course