

StoneRidge GC Set to Host the MGCSA Harold Stodola Research Scramble on July 6

By JEFF GIRARD
Superintendent, StoneRidge Golf Club

StoneRidge Golf Club opened in the year 2000. The par 72 championship course measures 6,992 yards. Bobby Weed was the course architect. Jeff Girard has been the Superintendent since March 2007.

StoneRidge is a heathland-style design, which is pretty unique to the Twin Cities area. A vast amount of bunkers, waste bunkers and fescue-grassed native areas dominate the 18-hole layout. We aim more for a rugged appearance on the course, to match the true intentions of its design. While we want the playing surfaces to be at their best, we certainly don't shoot for the manicured look.



No. 7 at StoneRidge Golf Club, site of the MGCSA Harold Stodola Research Scramble on July 6.

Challenges

Some of our biggest challenges revolve

around the soils that the golf course was built upon. The property used to be a sand and gravel pit, so needless to say drainage is not one of our major challenges. However, with that being said, keeping the soil moisture at acceptable levels provides enough work in itself. Needless to say, *Poa annua* has a very difficult time finding its ideal growing environment here at StoneRidge. Though we do have continuous cartpaths, I have really never had to restrict carts in my three years here. We can take a two-inch rain at 4:00 am and be mowing fairways at 5:30 am.

Being a very wide open, links-style course, the wind becomes another major challenge. Finding days to get out and make chemical and fertilizer applications can often times be challenging and requires lots of flexibility in the schedule.

History

StoneRidge was founded and built by Dave Kloeber and Mike McGrath, our two current owners. We are a semi-private facility, and try to provide our members with the private club experience. Prior to



No. 10 at StoneRidge Golf Club

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StoneRidge Golf Club-

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development of the club, the property was a horse farm and gravel pit. The golf course was designed by Bobby Weed out of Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida.

While the golf course sits on roughly 200 acres, we maintain about half of that on a daily basis. Fairways and approaches are quite expansive, covering about 40 acres of L93 creeping bentgrass. Tees and greens, also L93, make up about another 9 acres combined. Finally, our Kentucky bluegrass/fine fescue primary rough take up another 40 acres.

We operate a medium-sized staff during the season. In addition to myself, assistant Aaron Siek, mechanic Matt Johnson, and horticulturalist Sarah Sundmacker, we employ 12 seasonal Hispanics and usually one intern. It provides us enough to get the work done, though we often have to be a bit more creative to make sure things get done in the most efficient manner. Our mechanic Matt has been here since day one, so we are able to pull from his knowledge of where things are, how they were done, and hopefully he remembers...which he usually does.

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Superintendent Jeff Girard

I started out in the business at the age of 15 at Golden Valley Country Club working on the grounds staff for Mike Olson. I attended Miami University in Ohio and obtained a BS of Decision Sciences degree, but kept finding myself going back to the golf course each summer. I really owe Mike a great deal of thanks for getting me interested in the business and letting me learn all the aspects that are involved in our job. I then went on to Penn State University and completed the two-year program which transitioned me into working for Scottie Hines at Baltusrol Golf Club in Springfield, New Jersey. In 2002 I followed Scottie to Windsong Farm Golf Club as his assistant where we did the construction and grow in. In the spring of 2007 I moved on to my current position here at StoneRidge.

Assistant Superintendent Aaron Siek

Aaron came to StoneRidge in the spring of 2006 from Las Vegas. He has been able to especially utilize his knowledge of irrigating in the desert of Las Vegas and transfer that over to the sand pit that is StoneRidge. Aaron is also currently in the MBA program at St. Mary's University and is also an active member of the Minnesota Air National Guard. All of us here at StoneRidge are grateful of the commitment and efforts that they provide to our country. Aaron is married to his wife Kylie and they just had their first child less than a year ago.