

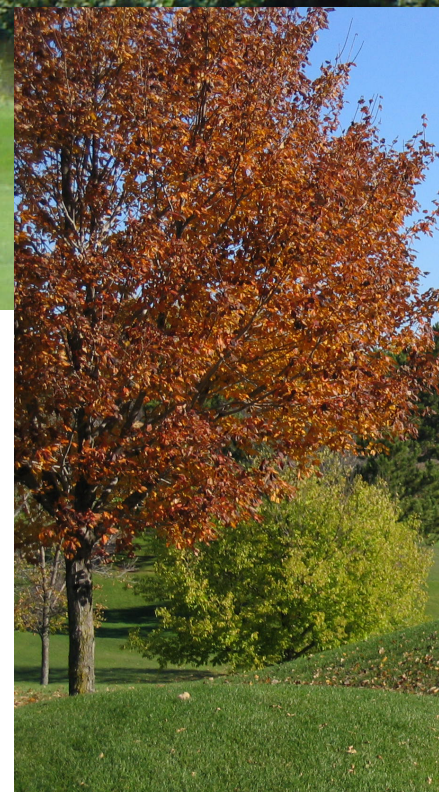
# *New Richmond Golf Club*

## *A Championship Tournament*



By Tom Johnson, Superintendent at New Richmond Golf Club

The New Richmond Golf Club, site of the 2012 MGCSA Championship, got its start six miles southwest of New Richmond near a resort on Bass Lake. It consisted of only six holes because at the time it was common practice to build as many “quality” holes as you could afford. In 1922 that site was abandoned and the golf course was built on the current location just west of New Richmond. The course had sand greens from 1925-1948. The outline of some of those greens is still visible on holes 8 and 9. Crossing number eight fairway,



# Club Best All Season Long

a stagecoach trail from the 1860's can still be seen. Over the years the trail has been 'preserved' and saved from being leveled. It was a trail that ran to Stillwater in the 1860's.

In 1960, Willie Kid, the head professional at Interlachen Country Club, designed a new nine-hole layout. There were 18 tees so the second time around the course played differently.

In 1984, the course was expanded to 18 holes. The changes included adding holes 4-7 and 13-18 with the design done by Don Herfort. At the time many people in



town, including the bankers, were skeptical about an 18-hole course being financially successful in a small community. The proximity to the Twin Cities has been a big factor in the success of the club. It is a course that people enjoy coming back to play.



## *New Richmond's "Real" Champions*

Holes 4-7 are some of the most challenging on the course because they are narrow, tree lined with some water. There are elevation changes on holes 4, 9 and 10 with water coming into play again on number 11. The original nine holes 1-3 and 8-12 play almost the same as they did in 1960.

In 2002 a renovation project took place, upgrading the original nine holes. Hartman Construction was hired to do the renovation. Geoffrey Cornish helped design the changes. He was doing a project for Hillcrest Golf Club at the time and agreed to split his services since he was already in the area. He was one of the finest gentlemen I've met in the golf industry. Some bunkers were added or changed along with expanding the irrigation

pond and adding a pond on hole 11.

In the 1980's and 90's there was a long waiting list for memberships. We are a public golf course, but memberships are also available. To ease the amount of play on the 18-hole course, it was decided that a separate nine-hole course should be built. In 1996 Joel Goldstrand designed the Links Course, which was built west of the Old Course. The links style course is reversible with 61 tees and 10 greens. It is longer in yardage than the 18 from the back tees. It's used by those who want to play only 9 holes and for the youth in the community. We have 150 kids that come out for lessons and play the course each Thursday during the summer.

Our last addition was a new practice facility designed by Kevin

Norby. It is a beautiful setting with five target greens, an 8,000 square foot putting green, a 4,000 square foot chipping green with practice bunker and a 31,000 square foot tee area.

New Richmond hosted the MGCSA Championship in 1991. With the help of a local gardening business we planted some annual beds around the course for the event. The day after the tournament, I received several calls wondering who did the flowers. Since then, John and Kim Kovalski have maintained our perennial and annual gardens on the course. They now also maintain gardens on many courses in the metro area.

I've been the superintendent (one of only three) for almost half of the courses existence. When I started 38 years ago, greens were mowed at 1/4" and mowed 3-4 times a week. Fairways were mowed twice a week at 1 1/2" and the tees were mowed with the same pull behind gang mowers we used on fairways. The course was a lot less expensive to maintain and so was the price of golf.

With a degree in Biology, my intention was to teach. This opportunity came up and I have found it to be very rewarding! My family, especially my wife, Mona, has been

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very supportive of me all these years with the long hours and many weekends at work. My son, Jeff, is a Deputy Sheriff in Sawyer Co. and engaged to a very wonderful woman, Mindy. Our daughter, Allie, and her husband, Chris, have a daughter, Olivia....our beautiful granddaughter. Off the golf course, my wife and I have a passion for reading, traveling and especially fly-fishing.

I've been fortunate to have employees stay for a number of years. My assistant, George (Chip) Norman, has been at New Richmond 22 years. He has a degree in Chemistry and a Turf degree from Anoka Tech. Our mechanic, Wayne Willey, has also been

with us 27 years. These two key people on the staff have had much to do with the club's success.

During the summer months I have a staff of 16. Many have been with me a number of years so it makes it easier each year when the course opens. There have been a number of my young staff who have pursued careers in the golf course business.

With an experienced staff, maintaining the golf course becomes so much easier. I'm proud of the work they do and appreciate all that they contribute to help make the New Richmond Golf Club successful.



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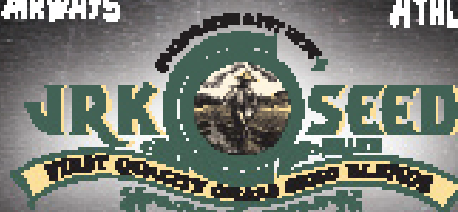
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