



“A Taste of Ti

The 2014 MGCSA Champi

by Nick Folk Superintendent at RG&CC

With Rochester Golf & Country Club approaching its centennial year in 2016, the maintenance staff and membership are excited to host the MGCSA Championship in July. The club's history dates back to September of 1915, when an avid group of golfers took over a lease of 100 acres from Mayo doctors E.S. Judd and D.C. Balfour. Harry Turple, a Red Wing Course Golf Professional, was brought in to lay out a nine-hole course and Rochester Golf



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Club was born. The members desired a more challenging golf course and as luck would have it, a Mayo Clinic physician married the daughter of noted golf course architect Albert Warren Tillinghast. Medical care was exchanged for the course design with Tillinghast stopping in every time he was at The Mayo Clinic.

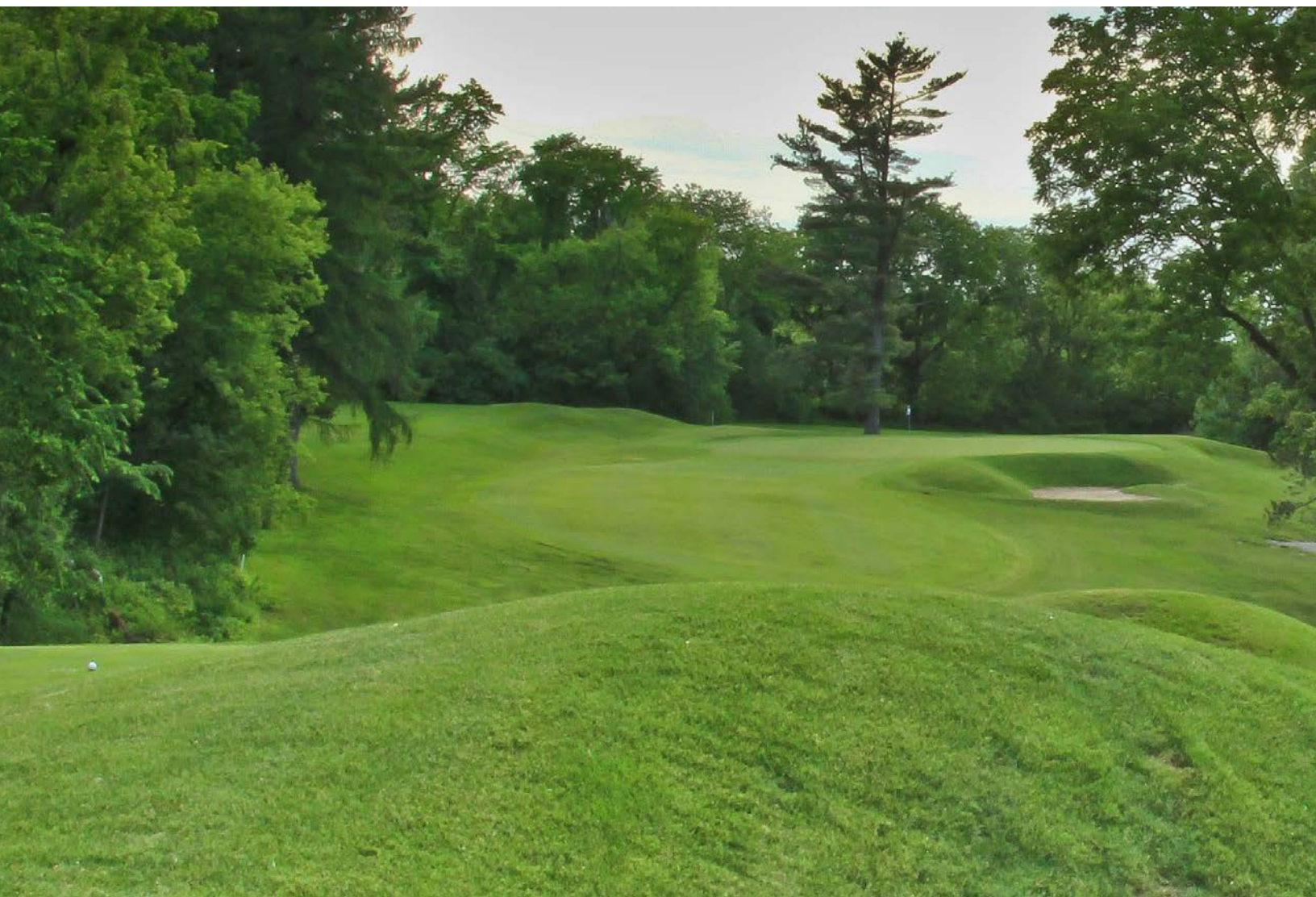
A.W. Tillinghast had become the pre-eminent golf course architect of his time by designing courses such as Winged Foot, Baltusrol and the San Francisco Golf Club. In 1926, Rochester Golf Club became incorporated and changed its name to Rochester Golf & Country Club. Construction began on the new course and it opened the following summer. Tillinghast's rerouting directed the course through more of the valleys on the property opening up some great vistas and steepening the challenge.

One of the original members, who also left his thumbprint on Rochester Golf & Country Club, was Walter D. "Pop" Sheldon, MD. "Pop" Sheldon had played a great course in Texarkana that was cut out of a pine forest and brought that idea back to Rochester with him. In the early 1930s, he bought 5,000 pine seedlings for ten dollars and started a nursery at the southwest corner of the course. Over 30,000 trees were eventually transplanted to the course over the next fifteen years. Unfortunately, "Pop" passed away before the overall project was completed. He has since been honored by the playing of the Walter D. Sheldon Golf Tournament that is now played as the Member/Guest Tournament every June.





Little construction has been done to the course, but it is a stern test even at its short yardage, measuring only 6,471 yards from the championship tees. Some characteristics about the course are that nine of the holes play uphill, blind tee shots or to blind shots into the greens, with all four par 3s requiring a carry to get on the putting surface. Most notably and what will stick in your mind, will be the towering evergreens throughout the course, most measuring over 60' in height. Precision off the tee will be your friend as an accurate tee shot will help you more than length. Undoubtedly, there will be many of us hitting punch shots out of the trees. The greens are also a good test, with all of them being tilted from back to front. The bunkering throughout the golf course was renovated by Hartman Co. in 2000, with the goal of returning most of them to A.W. Tillinghast's original design. By the scorecard, #4 plays the most difficult measuring 542 yards par 5, but watch out for holes #5, 9, 12, 14 & 15 as the elevation changes require a change in club selection for the correct yardage. The easiest handicap hole is #11, a classic short par 3, measuring only 118



yards from the tips.

This is my 1st season as a Superintendent and I'm blessed to have a couple of veteran full timers on staff. Dan Breitbarth is going on his 35th year as our Equipment technician/irrigation/pool maintenance guru here at RGCC. He has raised three boys and enjoys bowling in the slower winter months; he has several 300 games under his belt too. I'm indebted to be able to lean on him in my 1st season, thank you.

Scott Bearson is our 2nd assistant and has been at RGCC for 16 years. He and his wife Dawn raised two girls who are off to college now. Scott dabbles in many different things, but I think most of all he enjoys conversing with just about anyone about sports.

Our most recent addition is Tim Gallagher as 1st assistant. Tim joined our staff in May after spending the last 12 years in Virginia and Wisconsin. We're all



looking forward to having Tim on staff and utilizing his experiences to help improve RGCC. He's originally from Dubuque, IA and is happy to be back in the Midwest.

I'm honored and excited to be part of hosting this event. I've always thought supporting the local association is the right thing to do and holding an event like this is a great start. If someone would have told me I'd be hosting the MGCSA Championship in my first season as Superintendent I think I would have called them crazy, but here we are and I'm confident that the staff here at RGCC is up to the challenge. A big thank you goes to the members of RGCC, Head Golf Professional Matt Paulius, Chef Bill Eisenmann, Banquet Manager Kendra Markee and the rest of the staff who will make the MGCSA Championship a great event.

Keep it in the short grass and we'll see you in July!



Register today at: MGCSA.org