

# Dave Braasch -N-



Dave Braasch with fiancée, Jayme VanGalder.



*On Tuesday, June 22 at the June meeting, the membership of MAGCS enjoys the opportunity to play the newly opened Glen Erin Golf Club in Janesville, Wisconsin. The golf course superintendent, Dave Braasch (or Junior, as he is fondly called by friends), will be our host for the day. I recently had the distinct pleasure of touring the golf course with Dave and was really excited with what I saw.*

The definition of a glen is a secluded and narrow valley; a dale; a depression between hills. Erin is the poetic name for Ireland. Given the rolling terrain and open expanses among which this course resides, the name Glen Erin is fitting.

Construction commenced at Glen Erin in October 2001. Golf course architect Greg Martin of Batavia, Illinois, in conjunction with contractor Ryan Central Incorporated, created a masterful example of a golf course blending classic features into existing terrain. Dave was brought on board in February of 2002 and has been going nonstop since that time, first with the construction, then the grow-in, and now fine-tuning a maintenance program. Dave is a 1990 graduate of the turf management program at Joliet Junior College. Following this accomplishment, Dave proceeded to attend Southern Illinois University, where he received a bachelor's degree in plant and soil science in 1992. Dave's management team is rounded out by first assistant, Dave Hale, and second assistant, Ray Mason.

Glen Erin is situated upon 150 acres leased from the adjacent airport. The terrain is rolling with some subtleties mixed in for good measure. The front nine varies from the back in that it is a little more open with groves of trees scattered throughout. The back nine includes a number of holes bordered by mature stands of trees. This golf course has no water features owing to its close proximity to the airport and water's attractiveness to waterfowl (an aviation hazard). The only place you may see water is on the left side of hole 8, where there is a detention area for collecting runoff following a heavy rain.

Construction required movement of very little material and the existing terrain was optimized to create distinct features throughout the course. The native soil is quite sandy and drains at an extremely rapid rate. The greens are 100% sand and percolate at the rate of 46 inches an hour. This is beneficial in some instances and detrimental in others. One natural feature that is very persistent would be the prevailing south wind. The combination of wind and quick-drying soil demands that the maintenance staff be attentive to course conditions in order to prevent excessive drying. However, the prevailing wind and rapidly draining soil also result in very limited disease pressure. No sod was used during construction as the entire course was grown in from seed. The

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No. 17 green.

Photos by Jim Trzinski.

greens are seeded with L-93. The tees and fairways are low-mow bluegrass that provides a thick cover of turf and allows the ball to sit up nicely in every lie.

Measuring 6,806 yards from the tips, Glen Erin is a good test of the game. Four colored sets of simple stone markers adorn each tee, indicating the starting point for the hole. A variety of tee pods allow for varying course set-ups and distances depending upon wind conditions. Everything appears very straightforward, yet a few features are deceiving. To begin with, five-foot flagsticks make the hole location appear to be further away than it really is. Glen Erin utilizes a colored flag system with green being front, white-middle and orange-back. I stood in approaches on a number of holes and had no idea how far the distance was to the green. A good tip

would be to use the yardage markers located on sprinklers and not to rely on perceived distance. In many instances, bunkers are situated not to capture a ball, but to fool the player into thinking the yardage is different than it actually is. The prevailing southwest wind blows strong in your face, especially on the front nine with its greater openness and increased elevation.

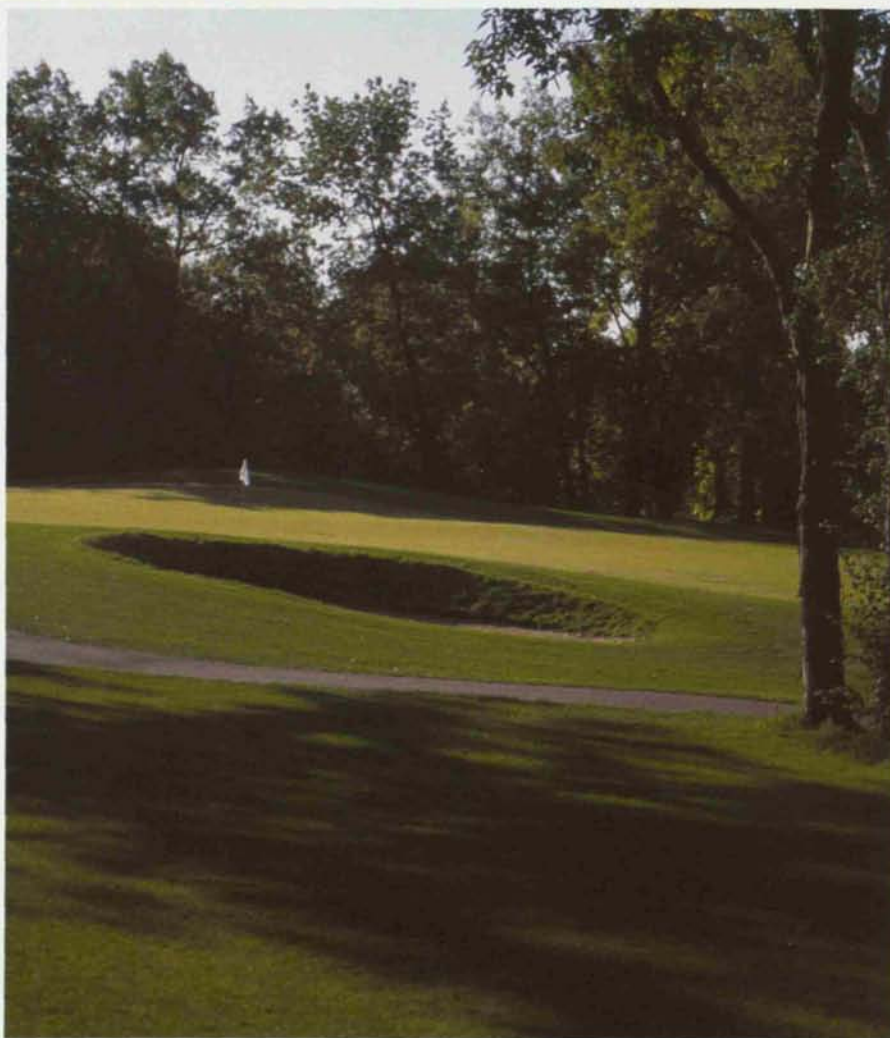
Dave feels fortunate to have been involved with this project from its early stages, calling the experience both very educational and rewarding. He designed and set up the maintenance facility and oversaw installation of the drainage and irrigation systems. The Rock River taunts him daily during the summer as he hears boats traveling upon the water. One of Dave's passions is boating and his dream boat is a 30-foot cabin cruiser. Dave also enjoys golf, playing in a

Wednesday night league, as well as softball.

Dave's favorite hole here is number 15, a par 4 measuring 421 yards named Ryan's Wrath. Off the tee, a good drive is greatly rewarded as the well-placed ball lands slightly to the right side of the fairway; from here, it will roll another 75 yards down a slope. Between the firm ground conditions and the tightly cropped low-mow bluegrass, a ball traveling in the wrong direction can easily run off the fairway and into trouble. The green offers two tiers and provides many challenging hole locations.

Other holes of interest include number 10, which is a long one, measuring 595 yards into the prevailing wind. Number 12, par 4, 424 yards is tight with trees off to the right and left side. Number 16 is the shortest par 3 on the course, measuring 155 yards. The hazard on the right side of the green offers the illusion that the hole is longer than it really is. However, don't be misled into selecting too much club, as the back drops off into a ravine. Hole 18 is a final par 5 measuring a hefty 579 yards from the back markers, putting an emphasis on hitting the ball straight with bunkers both left and right.

During the round, when not watching your ball travel across the golf course, you may wish to glance toward the sky occasionally looking for airplanes setting up for the air show that will be in town that weekend. If your round has not finished in the manner you intended, there is relief in sight. The cursing stone sits on the back side of the clubhouse for those who wish to place their hand upon it and unleash a string of expletives otherwise frowned upon for use on the golf course. After a visit to the cursing stone, the charming clubhouse awaits with an array of ales and stouts imported from across the pond. The Glen Erin experience is one that you will not want to miss.



No. 12 green.



*No. 6 green.*