



Tournament Time

As memories of Augusta fade, let us draw our attention to home with a slew of golf events in our own “backyards”. Some will receive national media attention and some are the seasonal highlight of the everyday golfer or member that our courses and clubs support. We, as Golf Course Superintendents, look forward to setting up our individual golf courses for competition no matter the skill or performance level of play. It gives each of us the opportunity to showcase our own course and the hard work our staffs put forth. As you set up your courses for local championships and competition, I would like to recognize a few of our member’s and their courses. As readers, we step into their shoes and try to understand the trials that lie ahead for each of them; please give them support, you never know when you may be sharing the same experience. Trust me on this, it happened to me in 1987 during the Western Open.

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The Western Open

The annual Chicago area stop and the oldest tournament of the PGA Tour is the Western Open. The tournament will take place at Cog Hill Golf and Country Club on July 3 thru 9. Ken Lapp and staff of forty-three will quietly prepare #4 – Dubsdread for the fifteenth consecutive time. Prior to the Western Open, Tim Kelly and the Village Links of Glen Ellyn will host their 26th Western Open general qualifying round. These rounds give the opportunity to local, tour, and other out-of-state golf professionals to compete in the Western Open. Tim and the Village Links have hosted every one of these events since 1983 excluding ‘86 and ‘03 when they were closed for renovations. Tim and staff will again ready the Village Links for the first of two qualifying rounds on June 28 and the final round on July 3 prior to the Western Open.

Western Amateur Championship

Ron Fox, CGCS and the Point O Woods Golf and Country Club from across our freshwater “big pond” in Benton Harbor, Michigan, will host this year’s Western Amateur Championship July 31 thru August 6. This is the 35th consecutive time this event will be played at Point O Woods and may produce another notable winner as in years past. Andy North, Ben Crenshaw, Curtis Strange, Hal Sutton, Scott Verplank, Chris DiMarco, Phil Mickelson, Justin Leonard, and Tiger Woods have all claimed victory on these links. The course is open for member play the day before the tournament begins but this doesn’t stop Ron. He starts modifying his maintenance practices about a month prior to the start of the event. Modifications include changing the height of cut on greens from 0.120” to 0.09”, double cutting greens two weeks out and increasing the height of cut around green banks from 2.5” to 5.0”. During the tournament Ron intensifies maintenance by: double mowing greens two times per day, rolling greens twice daily (green speed averages 12.5), and mowing tees and fairways twice daily.

PGA Championship

Tom Lively, CGCS and Medinah Country Club will host the 2006 PGA Championship the week of August 14 thru 20. Preparation for this Championship began shortly after Medinah hosted the 1999 Championship with the

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hiring of Rees Jones to prepare plans to renovate the #3 Course. The renovation moved from paper to practice in 2002. The layout remains the same, however significant changes have been made:

- A few hundred trees were removed to provide more sunlight around greens.
- All greens were killed and reseeded to improved cultivars.
- Seven greens were completely redesigned and rebuilt.
- All bunkers and most tees were rebuilt, reshaped and some repositioned.
- The most significant changes happened to two par 3s, numbers 13 and 17. The 13th green was rebuilt and enlarged to accept (or not accept) shots from the new championship tee of 244 yards. The 17th green was moved from the top of the hill to the water's edge that players will be forced to carry from an elevated tee of 196 yards. In August, the course will play from 7,561 yards.

Hooters Tour / LaSalle Bank Open / Illinois Opens / Futures Tour

If you can't make it to the major tournaments this year or don't like large crowds, check out a few of the smaller events scheduled in our area. The Hooters tour will take place the second week of May when Chuck Ardell will host at Indian Lakes Golf and Resort in Bloomingdale. Steve Daurer, superintendent of the Glen Club has two events to contend with this summer. He will prepare his course for the LaSalle Bank Open, a stop on the Nationwide Tour on June 8 thru 11 and then do it all over again on July 31 thru August 2 when he hosts the Illinois Open. Dave Drendel will be in the spotlight this summer when he hosts the Illinois Women's Open the last week of July at his golf club, Mistwood in Romeoville. Mike Boudreau, the Superintendent at my old stomping grounds, Kankakee Elks Country Club, will host the Futures Tour on June 9 thru 11.

I wish all these fine Superintendents good luck this year with their events and thank them for representing our profession in the best light possible. The conditions they provide are "unlike any other" in any region of the world.



[Editor's Note: Scott Witte, CGCS is hosting the Western Junior Amateur at Cantigny Golf Club this July 17 thru 21 and will be profiled next month in OC.]

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