

MIDWEST BREEZES

Charles Anfield, CGCS, *Heritage Bluffs Golf Course*



“Medinah: Ryder Cup Redux”

Medinah Country Club hosted the PGA Championship in 2006. Mr. Woods won the event quite easily. He had his “A” game that week. As part of the multi-year agreement with the PGA, Medinah will host the Ryder Cup in 2012.

Rees Jones, known as the “Open Doctor”, did the renovation work to course #3 prior to the PGA Championship in 2006. He was brought back in 2009 to “tweak” the design and make some overall improvements. Rees worked closely with Curtis Tyrell, CGCS, the Green Committee and the members of Medinah to make the changes. The goal of the project wasn’t necessarily to gain a significant increase in yardage for the Ryder Cup but rather to improve the overall turf and playing conditions of the historic Club for the members. The renovation will certainly also will be a good representation of the Club for the playability and viewing of the Ryder Cup.

The course was closed and construction started on August 16. The early start turned out to be a great “idea”, as it rained 25 out of the 31 days in a very wet in October. Most of the project was completed as Wadsworth Construction did the bulk of the work in 30 days. To complicate matters the other two courses stayed open for play during the construction and the maintenance facility was also undergoing a renovation. Curtis and his staff were working out of a trailer (still are) and a parking lot during the project.

Greens: Prior to the renovation, only 7 greens were of USGA construction. These were “gassed” with methyl bromide. The rest of original greens (built in 1928) were rebuilt to USGA specifications. Most of the greens underwent slight contour changes as directed by Rees Jones. The turf variety selected for the greens was a blend of 007 (70%) and SR1119 (30%). These varieties were selected from trials conducted at Medinah and from NTEP trial data. Both varieties are grown by Seed Research, based in Corvallis, Oregon (Go Beavers). Curtis has worked with Dr. Leah Brillman and Seed Research when he worked at Desert

Mountain in Scottsdale, Arizona and Anthem Country Club in Las Vegas, Nevada. 007 has been recognized for its high density, dark green color and its ability to compete with poa annua. Another feature that Curtis liked about 007 is that it can be mowed at fairway height without concern of “puffiness” or false crowning like some of the other new ultra dense bentgrass varieties. This allows the green turf to integrate with the approaches and fairways without any segregation. Curtis is currently mowing the greens at .125”. He plans on monitoring that height for playability and speed. The grow-in has gone very well. As a final touch, all of the greens were “plumbed” for Precision Air which allows the water to be blown or sucked out of the soil profile as needed.

Fairways: The fairways were completely renovated. Some of the contours were changed as needed. Basamid was used to kill the existing stand of turf. Curtis conducted trials on some of his practice areas to get a better “feel” for how the product and seeding rates would work. The seed varieties selected were, 007 (60%) SR1119 (30%) and

SR7150 Colonial (10%). The fairways are mostly grown in at this time.

Tees: Most of the tees were renovated in 2002 and 2003, so no major changes were needed. New tees were added on holes 6, 7 and 16.

Bunkers: All of the bunkers had the old sand removed. Sand trials were conducted by the members to select a new variety. Curtis installed different sands in different bunkers. Best Sand was selected based on member feedback. Sandtrapper liners were installed in all of the bunkers.

Trees: Tree removal and relocation were integrated into the master plan. A company called Stratapoint; data logged all of the trees with a GPS web based catalog system. The comprehensive plan calls for removal, planting, relocation and plant health recommendations. Primary concerns were for air move-



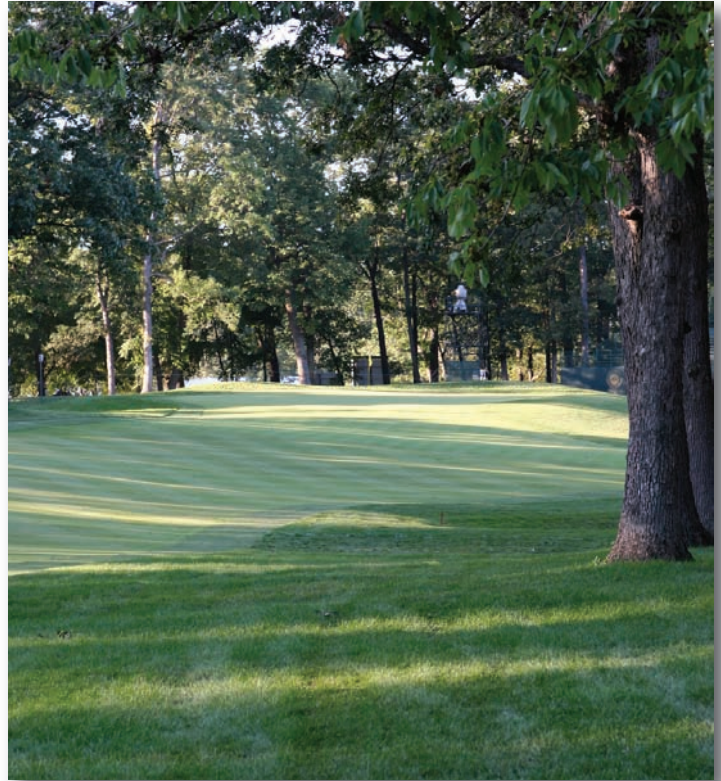
ment, sunlight exposure and to manage the trees as assets. Over 100 trees are targeted for removal. Curtis will move a significant number of trees using a 100" tree spade. This master tree plan was formulated in conjunction with extensive meetings with Curtis, Rees Jones, the Green Committee and the overall Membership.

Hole #15: Hole #15 was completely redesigned. Previously, it was a nondescript short par 4 with drainage problems. Rees Jones transformed it into a drive-able par four that will be one of the most talked about holes during the Ryder Cup. It will play between 280 and 340 yards. The drainage problem was solved with the construction of a pond fronting the green. It has a collection area behind the green for wayward shorts. The entire hole is very spectator "friendly" and will make for some "must see T.V."

The Maintenance Facility: The current facility is undergoing a transformation. It currently has an area of 6,000 square feet with undersized outdated amenities. It will be expanded to 19,000 square feet. All of the office and locker room areas will be upgraded and improved.

Curtis and his Staff, along with Wadsworth Construction were running a nonstop, high speed, round the clock operation to get the job done. He credits his assistant staff on Course #3 of Dave Kloss, Tom Dejong and Jake Mendoza to "drive the machine". As difficult and time consuming process as it was, he feels it was a good experience for all of his Staff. Curtis expects the course to be ready to open by June 18, 2010. Now that #3 is completed the Club will set its sights on

renovating courses #1 and #2. From what I saw on my tour with Curtis on a rainy afternoon, I think the Members, Tiger and the rest of the team will like the changes. Go USA. -OC



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