

## SUPER -N- SITE

Steven Biehl, Naperville Country Club

# Phil Zeinert, CGCS -N-



*As I sat down to write about Elgin Country Club, I realized a happy coincidence. The first round of golf was played at Elgin Country Club, 109 years ago, to the day. It is hard to imagine the rudimentary grounds that must have existed during those first rounds of golf on May 10, 1901. It is also hard to imagine the speed of action that those original members exhibited in the 45 days leading up to those first rounds. It was on March 26, 1901, that 32 men met in downtown Elgin to pledge charter membership in a new golf club. They then proceeded to acquire a total of 82 members and a lease on 80 acres for the construction of nine holes. Then, they cleared trees and stones and built fairways, bunkers, and greens—all in time for the May 10th tee times.*

The club played on that original nine-hole creation for over 25 years, until 1928, when more permanent facilities were erected. A new club house was built and another nine holes were added to complete a full 18 holes. Then, in 1948, three of the original nine holes were abandoned to make room for a new driving range, and three new holes were added at the other side of the property.

Phil Zeinert, CGCS grew up in north-central Wisconsin with three brothers, one sister and—like most kids in Wisconsin—cows. The small hobby farm had more than just cows, but in addition to taking care of animals, he found time to play many sports as a kid. Phil first worked on a golf course when he was 14, at a nine-hole course. He now reminisces about those simpler times, when he used the same gang mower for the fairways and the roughs and only needed to change the height of cut. Those first years on the golf course did not make much of an impression.

When it came time to go to college, it was the farm and a sport other than golf that influenced Phil's decision. He attended the University of Wisconsin to play baseball and study Agri-Business. Phil is still a baseball fan, but don't ask him about the Cubs; he's a Brewers fan. After two years, Phil took a Soil Science course with Dr. Love, who was the head of Wisconsin's Turf Program. Dr. Love talked him into revisiting his days on the

golf course and concentrating on a Turf degree. Phil complied and graduated from Wisconsin with his Turf degree in 1985.

Phil's first job out of college was Assistant Superintendent at Cherokee Country Club in Madison, working for Pat Norton. His path then took him to Elwood Greens for his first Superintendent position. From there he went to Kishwaukee Country Club in DeKalb. In 2001, Phil became the Superintendent at Elgin Country Club, where he has made many improvements. Changes made since 2001 include a new driving range, new irrigation system, new tee boxes, and some fairway re-contouring and greens expansions. Amid all of that, he was able to serve on the MAGCS board, including a term as MAGCS President in 2005.

If he's able to find some free time, Phil enjoys being outside with his family. He has three sons: Zachary, 25; Justin, 21; and Jonah, 15. Phil and his wife, Naomi, have been married for 17 years.

Elgin Country Club sits on a beautiful piece of property. The hilly terrain seems out of place at a club located in the Chicagoland area, but it creates a spectacular set of holes. One hundred and nine years later, you can still play a few of the same holes that were played during the club's inauguration, but you can also count on much better conditions, thanks to superintendent Phil Zeinert, CGCS and his staff. **-OC**



Phil Zeinert





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