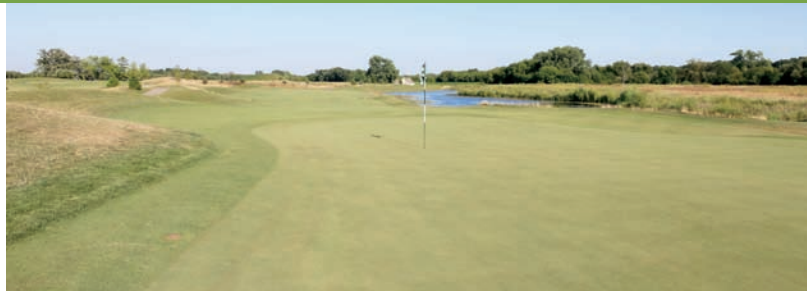


SUPER -N- SITE

Shane Conroy, *Park Ridge Country Club*



## Brad Legnaioli -N- Bowes Creek Country Club

*Most of us know that maintaining an 18-hole golf course is a full-time job in itself. Maintaining two 18-hole golf courses and a 9-hole golf course can take on an entire life of its own. For Brad Legnaioli, CGCS the superintendent of the City of Elgin's three golf courses, Wing Park, The Highlands and this month's host of the MAGCS Golf Championship, Bowes Creek Country Club, it's just another day at the office.*

Bowes Creek Country Club, set in an expansive residential development in Elgin, gives you a wow factor as soon as you step onto the first tee. With its rolling fairways, native tall fescue areas, and its signature "eyebrow'd" lipped bunker faces, you see the best the land has to offer. You can't help but take it the scenery while you are out on the course playing your round or visiting the property. Fast forward to the 18<sup>th</sup>, a fantastic finishing hole, and even if you didn't score the way you wanted to that day, you will still appreciate the view this tee box has to offer. All this is a testament to Brad and his staff and the work they put in to keep Bowes Creek ranked in the top 10 of *Golfweek's* Best "Courses You Can Play in Illinois" list of 2011.

Bowes Creek was designed by another MAGCS member, Rick Jacobson, and opened for play in September 2009. Brad was there to oversee the grow-in of the course and that brought some challenges. Due to the steep slopes found on the property, some areas were prone to washouts during the seeding stage. However, with the help of some favorable weather and Brad's experience they were able to produce a healthy stand of turf. The summer of 2010 was especially rough on some of the young turfgrass plants. Brad and his crew nonetheless came out in good shape. Since then Brad and his staff have made some improvements on the course. He has expanded a few tee boxes, re-constructed a couple of pond banks and added native grasses and plants along other pond banks on the property. He has also added fans on two of the greens due to stagnant air caused by the many numerous trees that surround the greens.

Brad was also in charge of the grow-in at The Highlands of Elgin Golf Course during the grow-in of Bowes Creek. Both grow-ins took place during the 2008-09 seasons. The grow-in at The Highlands took place on the new quarry nine

holes which opened over the July 4<sup>th</sup> weekend in 2010. The course offers golfers a links style golfing experience. The biggest challenge there, he says, was the fact that the nine holes were built on an old quarry where there was very little usable soil. To compensate for this, 130,000 cubic yards of topsoil were brought in to help make the soil more suitable for turf. The Highlands (stop me if I sound like a broken record) is also in the *Golfweek's* "Top 10 Places to Play in Illinois" list of 2011, coming in fourth. The Highlands is the busiest course of the three, taking in almost 30,000 rounds a year. Brad is happy with the high rankings and credits his foremen and staff as the true reason the courses made the list. He knows the city of Elgin takes pride in having the two courses in their own backyard. Brad explained the grow-ins were a great experience and enjoyed working with the architects and planning commissions during the process. Conducting and completing two grow-ins simultaneously has filled his desire to go through another anytime soon.

The third course Brad oversees is Wing Park Golf Course. Wing Park is the oldest municipal course in Illinois, dating back to 1908. Brad only has two full-time employees on hand at Wing Park, and one part-timer.

The part-time employee comes in and mows greens, while full-timers are responsible for mowing fairways, collars and rough. Occasionally if there is need to bring on more staff to Wing Park, Brad "borrows" one or two from his other courses to fill the void.

When not on the 45 holes he maintains, Brad enjoys spending time with his wife Lisa, his daughter Brooke and his son Nick. He is also involved in both Nick and Brooke's sporting commitments. He coaches his son Nick's football team and his daughter Brooke's basketball team. He didn't however reveal their records. **-OC**



*Brad with son Nick and daughter Brooke this past year in Florida.*



