

SUPER -N- SITE

Travis Dykstra, *St. Charles Country Club*

## Andy Perry -N- Blackstone Golf Club



*Blackstone Golf Club (BGC) is an upscale, 18-hole, public golf facility located just outside Marengo, Illinois, on 172 acres of rolling terrain. It is owned and operated by Dan Weck. Construction began in 2005 and the course opened in 2006, under the architectural lead of Bob Lohmann. BGC offers a full practice range, as well as a full bar and fine dining options, all located in its newly-constructed clubhouse. What makes Blackstone unique is that each hole is very different from the next. Not only does it have a great mix of wooded holes that protect you from the wind, but it also has many holes that are out in the open, which challenges the golfer's ability to hit every shot. This makes turf management challenging because of the different microclimates. At least this is what my good friend, and BGC course superintendent, Andy Perry, tells me.*

Andy has been at Blackstone Golf Club since February of this year. He took over for Nick Leu, when Nick moved to Superintendent at Omaha Field Club, located in Omaha, Nebraska. Oddly enough, Andy and Nick are high school friends who grew up in Ottumwa, Iowa. Andy says, "My transition to BGC has been very smooth because Nick was doing an outstanding job and was very organized."

Andy developed a passion for the golf course at a very young age because his father was a course superintendent back in Iowa.

"He was always bringing me to the golf course to hit balls or ride on the course with him," says Andy. Andy started working at Ottumwa Country Club, for Gary Twedt, while he was still in high school. After graduation he went on to Iowa State University where he earned his degree in Horticulture with an emphasis in Turfgrass Management. During his tenure at ISU, he worked at Veenker Memorial Golf Course, under the supervision of John Newton. During the summer of 2003, Andy participated in an internship program at the Seaview Resort, in Absecon, New Jersey. In the summer of 2004,



*Andy and wife Sara.*

Andy came to the Chicagoland area and interned for Ron McCarthy at Edgewood Valley Golf Club in LaGrange. After graduating from ISU in May 2005, his passion for golf and the Chicagoland area brought him back. He landed his first Assistant position at Cress Creek Country Club, in Naperville, working for Bill Kennedy. After spending five years at Cress Creek, he worked for Dave Biery at Black Sheep Golf Club in Sugar Grove for the past two seasons.

Most superintendents would agree with Andy that the most challenging aspect of course maintenance is dealing with the ever-changing "Mother Nature."

However, Andy says, "Each day is different than the last, and there is always something new going on. The job always keeps you on your feet, and there is never a dull moment." Currently, Andy and the BGC crew are working on removing a large hump in the practice green and leveling it out. They will be expanding it to allow for more cup area, permitting them to disperse foot traffic a little more. Additionally, they also plan to continue re-sodding collars that have been contaminated with bluegrass.

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His favorite piece of equipment at BGC thus far is a Toro Greensmaster 3300 Tri-flex that was purchased last year. It has 14 blade reels. This piece of equipment allows Andy to allocate man hours elsewhere on the golf course without sacrificing quality of cut.

Andy told me that even though his father is no longer a golf course superintendent he is someone he has always looked up to and calls often for advice. He also has tremendous respect for the above-mentioned men who have been instrumental in his development from assistant superintendent to superintendent.

Outside of work, Andy and his wife, Sara, live in Aurora with their dog, Chloe, and George the cat. In his off hours he enjoys spending time with Sara, golfing, exercising, following sports, going to concerts and spending time with family and friends. Most importantly, he enjoys cheering for the Iowa State Cyclones and the Detroit Lions.

I am truly honored to say that Andy is one of my good friends. Therefore on behalf of me and MAGCS, a big "Thank You" goes out to Andy, Dan, and the rest of Blackstone Golf Club crew for their generosity and dedication in preparing for the June Meeting. **-OC**



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