



FEATURE II
Shane Conroy, *Park Ridge Country Club*

Paving the Way

Park Ridge Country Club's Cart Path Beautification Process has been ongoing for over three seasons. Under the direction of Green Committee Chairman Jim Harmon and Course Superintendent Joel Purpur, CGCS, the club has renovated four teeing areas. There is another area currently under construction and two more brick projects planned for later this season.

Park Ridge Country Club (PRCC) faced a similar situation on a handful of holes on the course: dated cart paths and tired landscapes located near the teeing ground. The green committee addressed these issues and implemented a plan that was cost effective, and could be completed in-house. The goal was to give the areas a modern feel and to tie the design and feel with the overall theme of the golf course.

The green committee first decided to focus on one of the weaker teeing areas on the course, the thirteenth hole. The old layout featured a large asphalt cart path turn-around that was bordered on one side with large planter pots. These pots were a temporary solution that became semi-permanent. The new plan made use of a brick paver turn-around with a perennial bed cut out of the center that features a variety of plants and color. Along the exterior of the path are additional perennial beds that work well the new design. Without having a lot of supplementary space to work with, the new path

was constructed roughly in the same footprint as the original. The new path was very well received by the membership and the tenth hole was quickly targeted to receive the next makeover.

The tenth hole teeing area also featured an existing turn around, however the path was composed of crushed red brick instead of asphalt. Already there was an area cut out of the center that carts circled as they drove to get to the tee box. We did not veer very much from this design for the new brick-paver path. The end result of this path is comparable to the tee turn-around on hole 13. There is a perennial bed in the center and perennial beds encompassing much of the path. The members dedicated the planters to longtime PRCC PGA Professional Ken Weiler.

This past season we worked with the green committee and updated two teeing areas. The first one completed was

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on the sixth hole, which did not feature a center perennial bed, but one solid circular turn-around. The layout of this path was very similar to the original asphalt path, again due to lack of space. The current path however features a larger turn-around area making it easier for carts to access the back portion of the tee. The path on the twelfth hole was the second upgrade completed in 2011. It was originally a red gravel path that made a turn behind the men's tee. Due to the carts turning while on the path, it would frequently rut. Like previous path renovations, the layout of the old path is very similar to the new path.

This year the work has been focused on the cart path around hole 14. The majority of the brick laying began late last season and was finished up this spring. We mainly left the perimeter cuts to finish as the winter we never had moved into the summer month of March, 2012. This is the first path renovation that saw the actual teeing ground receive a renovation as well. The green committee wanted to give the hole more teeing space to break up divot patterns on the short par 3. As a result, the men's tee was expanded. The hole gained more teeing options and allows play from a new angle.

Installing these paths has been a great learning experience for everyone on the crew, including myself. We are lucky enough to have a staff who, after working on the first couple of path renovations can undertake most of the prep-work as well as a majority of the brick laying on their own. The real fun begins however, after the border and middle bricks are all laid and in place. Cut bricks obviously are required to fill in the missing space along the perimeter. I can't say enough what a good wet-saw and few replacement blades will do for the brick-cutting process. Unfortunately, we haven't had either of those...

By installing most of the current paths in the same area as the original paths we are able to use the existing sub-bases for the new paths. Not only has this kept material expenses down, but has reduced the amount of hauling and time it takes to properly compact the subsurface prior to brick installation. The green committee did a great job addressing these teeing areas and the membership has taken notice of the completed projects. The upgraded paths really do make a statement and were a great way to aesthetically improve the course without altering the playing surface. **-OC**

