



The par-3 17th hole at Mount Hawley Country Club before, above, and after, left, Bob Lohmann's renovation.

Mount Hawley sports new look

PEORIA, Ill. — Mount Hawley Country Club, which turned 75 years old this summer, had seen better days.

"The members felt, quite rightly, the course simply didn't have many memorable holes," explained architect Bob Lohmann. "The greens had no contour, no pizzazz. The bunkers were in disarray. It was just a worn out private club."

Three months and \$1.2 million later, none of the above comments apply as Lohmann Golf Designs (LGD) of Marengo, Ill., has completed its full-scale renovation here. With construction assistance from Lincoln, Neb.-based Landscapes Unlimited, Lohmann directed reconstruction of all 18 greens, regrassed all 18 fairways with bentgrass, created five new ponds, improved the tee areas, added appropriate fairway bunkering and installed a new irrigation system.

"This wasn't so much restoration as it was complete renovation," explained Lohmann, vice president of the American Society of Golf Course Architects. "The job started out as fairly minor but it snowballed. It ended up being a big job — and we got it done in three months... The members really like it. Some thought you couldn't spend enough money to improve the course. But they came back and now they believe."

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Just down the road at the Country Club of Peoria, LGD recently completed a complete reconstruction of all 18 greens and extensive greenside bunker work.

"The putting surfaces at Peoria were very small, less than 4,000 square feet, and some had slopes of 6 to 8 percent," said Lohmann. "There was nowhere to put the pin. They had drainage problems."

Weiskopf in Mich.

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Donald Ross' acclaimed layouts at Bloomfield Hills and the Detroit Golf Club. That means the contours and undulation of greens are modest, while blind shots, water close to the green, and deep bunkers are eliminated.

"Strategic value and beauty are what the great courses have in common, and that's what you try to duplicate as you create a whimsy of your own," he said.

The course is 100 years old and the greens were just worn out.

"After consulting with the USGA [U.S. Golf Association], the members decided to completely rebuild them. We also convinced them to do them all at once. If we do three or four greens at a time, often we hear complaints like, 'They don't play like the old greens.'

"Well, of course they don't. It's the transition period that invites the comparison. By doing them all at one time, the renovated surfaces have the same style and play consistently."

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Lohmann Golf Designs has also been retained to provide more minor restoration and renovation services at Calumet CC in Homewood, Ill., and Kankakee (Ill.) CC.

"Calumet is supposed to have — quote — 'Donald Ross features' on it. But it's been recontoured and fiddled with several times," Lohmann explained. "This is mainly a bunker restoration project. We're leaving most of the bunkers where they are, but we will restore them to the Ross-style. Currently, they're best described as big blobs of sand."

In Kankakee, LGD will perform similar tasks: Moving bunkers, adding bunkers and shape around the greens, and recontouring the fairways.

"We'll redo a great many greenside bunkers where they are — we won't be moving them down the fairway," said Lohmann. "Instead we're concentrating on the creation of strategy off the tee. It's a very short golf course. With some fairway contours we can toughen it up and provide the player better shot values without moving the bunkers."

True to his disdain for mounding and other artificial effects, there is very little earth being moved, except from three new ponds and a driving range. As a side-light, the 300,000 cubic feet of dirt from the ponds and the range are being used to create another 40 feet of elevation on the top of the resort's ski hill.

In addition to Palmer, there are resort courses by Jack Nicklaus, Arthur Hills, Robert Trent Jones Sr., Tom Fazio, Gary Player, Tom Doak and Rick Smith within a 40-mile radius of Shanty Creek.

LEGION MEMORIAL DRAINED

EVERETT, Wash. — A mammoth subsurface remodeling has transformed city-owned Legion Memorial Golf Course from often-muddy conditions to one of the driest facilities in the area. Burns Golf Design of Fernandina Beach, Fla., and builder Daylen, Inc. of Fresno, Calif., carried out the \$4.7-million project which included more than \$1.3 million for drainage. In the past, the course, which averages more than 70,000 rounds a year, was plagued by extremely muddy conditions much of the time. Some 70 acres are being capped by a 6-inch sand layer over drainage lines installed on 50-foot centers. The course will re-opening in mid-1998.

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