



Wes Powers at his Lanark Links Par-3.

Pitching the game to Kids

By MARK LESLIE

ALMOND, Wis. — Three days after opening Lanark Links on April 4, Wes Powers and his wife Jan had already donated 2,000 free passes to coaches and athletic directors in the area, and had committed Tuesday afternoons to Amherst High School's fledgling golf team.

"It's our way of giving back to the community," as well as attracting clients, Wes Powers said. A machine operator since 1990 at Sentry World's Stevens Point course, Powers said: "They were charging \$60 a round and I thought there was a niche for a real affordable short course, which would be appealing to families and new people to the game."

Filling that niche is Powers' pitch-and-putt layout that can be played for \$5 for adults and \$3 for students and senior citizens. Its 18 holes vary in length from 67 to 120 yards, with two sets of tees and complete with 20 sand bunkers and the coup de grace: bentgrass greens.

"The high school team loved our greens. They came through the winter very well," said Powers, adding: "My focal point in building the course was country club-quality greens."

The course is fully irrigated and has a practice putting green.

Now the builder/owner/superintendent, Powers said he and his wife are "making a strong effort to bring new golfers into the game."

"We will continue our efforts and bring a lot of new kids and families into the sport," said Powers. "We are attempting to get some help from The First Tee to build a range and practice holes, but we realize being a little course in the middle of Wisconsin will make any grants unlikely. A range would give the chance for kids to take full swings, and it would give us a better customer base."

Powers said he built a lot of miniature golf-type features into the course. "We just want families to

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Gateway National is so close to the inner city that the Gateway Arch is within sight throughout most of the course.

Gateway National eyes inner city

By MARK LESLIE

ST. LOUIS — When Gateway National Golf Links opens May 1, this once-flat, featureless, desolate land will be "like faith: reclamation of a lost soul. This is reclamation of lost property."

So said Keith Foster, who designed the 18-hole daily-fee course in Madison, Ill., five miles from downtown St. Louis, featuring a links style he calls "a major departure from golf in the Midwest."

In addition to reclaiming the property, which in the early 1900s was a huge stockyard, Walters Golf Management intends reclamation of human proportions as well. Working with Madison Mayor John Hamm and Urban League President Jim Buford in St. Louis, the company will offer events exposing urban youth to golf, according to Vice President Jeff Smith.

Walters Golf Management, whose President Dennis Walters is a past PGA of America vice president, owns or operates eight golf courses in the St. Louis metropolitan area and "has always had a good working relationship with John Hamm and Jim Buford," said Smith. "Through them, we will make programs

available to inner-city youths who otherwise wouldn't be available because they can't travel 15 to 20 miles to the county course to participate."

Walters Golf will "try to carry on the concept that The First Tee is laying the groundwork for," said Smith, referring to the program which is reaching out to youths and others through golf facilities around the country.

At the same time, superintendent Scott Reynolds, who recently worked at Muirfield Village and New Albany Country Club, is investigating working with Sunshine Mission in St. Louis to develop a program with inner-city men who are trying to rebuild their lives.

Walters Golf will even reclaim caddying by implementing a caddie program, Smith said.

Meanwhile, Foster has designed a track he said "is very much a departure from golf in the Midwest."

Beginning with a dead-flat 200 acres, he moved about 600,000 cubic yards of earth and "created an environment that is very links-like. Here is St. Louis most golf

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Reaching Out



This package of stories is one of an ongoing series covering new initiatives and projects developed to bring new golfers into the game, particularly youths and minorities. People wishing to submit projects, or stories for consideration should contact the editorial department of *Golf Course News* at 106 Lafayette St., P.O. Box 997, Yarmouth, ME 04096; telephone 207-846-0600; Fax 207-846-0657; e-mail: mleslie@golfcoursenews.com.

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Prairie Bluff to involve juniors

CREST HILL, Ill. — When Lockport Township Park District's Prairie Bluff Public Golf Club opens in July, there will be more to the facility than

Prairie Bluff will challenge expert golfers as well as beginners.

its Andy North- and Roger Packard-designed 18 holes.

A Junior Golf Club and Little Junior Golf Clinics will be integral elements to the operation — offering a comprehensive lesson program to help introduce young golfers to the course and teach them proper etiquette and care of a golf course.

The Junior Golf Club's members — 12- to 15-year-olds with golf experience — will volunteer to assist with the bag-drop area, replacing spikes, repairing divots and ball marks, and other assignments. They will be trained by Prairie Bluff staff and, in return, receive range tokens, t-shirts and free rounds of golf based on the number of hours volunteered.

The Little Junior Golf Clinic will introduce 7- to 12-year-olds to golf. Using shortened clubs that will be provided if needed, students will learn the fundamentals of the golf swing.

Packard and North, a two-time U.S. Open champion, fashioned a 6,857-yard course that traverses seven lakes and incorporates 40 sand bunkers over 237 acres of rolling terrain. It will sport bentgrass from tee to green, with prairie grasses in several out-of-bounds areas to accent the prairie-style theme.

A June 27 family day will predate the facility's grand opening in July.

Gateway Nat'l 'something different'

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courses are trees, bluegrass and hilly terrain."

Though it is far from a seaside property, it is devoid of trees, faces a constant wind, sports a lot of prairie grasses, English-type stone walls and bridges, railroad-tie bunker faces and lakes that are lined with huge pieces of limestone that give it a rugged Scottish seaside look.

"Ironically, the developers [Walters and Tim Crowley] are the ones who said, 'Can we come up with something different?'" Foster recalled. "They both love golf, the history of the game and a golf course that has its own theme and identity."

A key element in Gateway National's identity is a slashing burn — like the Old Course's Swilken Burn — that runs through the property. All the drainage water goes into the burn, which empties into an irrigation lake to be reused. Whatever is not needed it pumped to

Continued on next page

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City issues bonds, creates public improvement district to attract course

Graham & Panks see the mutually beneficial aspects of the arrangement. "It's a real win-win situation for all the entities involved," said David Graham, Senior Tour golfer and president of Graham & Panks.

Rowlett Mayor Buddy Wall

agreed, saying: "As residential developers, WaterView will enjoy the advantage of adding a golf course to their list of marketable amenities; future home owners get the inherent values of buying in a golf course community; the city and its retailers

will enjoy increased revenues from the new homes built and the families that will live and shop locally; and the public in general and the city of Rowlett in particular get a world-class golf course."

Currently under construction, the WaterView Golf Course will

be an 18-hole, 7,050-yard course with bentgrass greens and white sand bunkers. Scheduled to open to the public in the fall of 1999, the 220-acre course will also boast a three-hole junior-level course, clubhouse, pro-shop, food/beverage facility, driving range, and putting and chipping practice area. Approximately 1,560 homes will be built over the life of the surrounding residential community.

DALLAS — Calling it one of the most innovative "win-win" alliance's created between a local developer and a city government, WaterView Development, Inc. has chosen the city of Rowlett as the location for the next golf course to be designed for the firm by Graham & Panks International. It is normally incumbent upon developers to finance such projects. But, here the city took an aggressive role to ensure the course's site selection by issuing bonds to finance the venture and establishing a public improvement district (PID) to facilitate the course until the bonds are repaid.

WaterView Development and

Gateway Nat'l

Continued from previous page a retention lake.

Foster mimicked the old-style bunkers of Scotland and Ireland with have high fescue faces.

"The scale of the golf course is magnificent," Foster said. "You can see great distances. On 13 or 14 holes you can see the Gateway Arch."

"Keith has done a fabulous job," said Smith, who is looking forward to a May 1 opening.

Gateway National will be the only public golf course in St. Louis with bentgrass from tee to green, he said.

The par-71 layout stretches from 5,187 to 7,168 yards.

The signature hole, Smith said, is the 10th, a 317-yard par-4 with a large wood-faced bunker square in the middle of the fairway and a tie-walled burn that runs directly in front of the green.

"You either drive over the trouble or lay up short," he said.

...

Meanwhile, the Foster-designed Persimmon Woods in St. Louis is expected to open June 15 with a sold-out membership.

"There are so many daily-fee golf courses in St. Louis, this bucks the system," Foster said. "It's private, but affordable private for average folks who love golf. For most private clubs, it's a social scene, tennis, pool, etc. This one, every member loves golf."

The stand-alone golf club was developed by a group of investors led by Gregg Eisenberg.

Lanark Links

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have fun and not feel the pressure of a large course," he said.

How has the response from the community been?

"It's early and a lot of people are doing yard work, but those who have come out have liked it," Powers said.

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