

Faucher grows in Cedar River

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Lansing and The Elks in Grand Rapids.

"I got to work with three different superintendents and gained a little bit of knowledge from each," he said.

Shortly after graduating in 1990, he ventured to northern Michigan, where he became assistant superintendent at The Legends. Within a year he was named head superintendent. He also served briefly as interim grounds superintendent.

"I intended to go back out West when I graduated," Faucher recalled. "But I heard about this job and checked it out. I'm an outdoors guy and this had everything. There are hills, lakes and then having an Arnold Palmer golf course, it seemed like it would be fun."

The Legends and The Bear at Grand Traverse were the first two high-end resort courses in northwest Michigan, Faucher said. The Legends opened in the late 1980s. Several superintendents

came and went.

Because it opened too early and the difficulty of working with the layout's pure sand greens, the course was in fairly rough shape when he first arrived in 1990, Faucher said.

"Few people have experience with sand greens," he explained. "But we kept working the greens, then the tees and fairways."

"It was also a drainage nightmare. We just tried to get things to where they should be for such a fine layout. In 1991-92 we started getting some awards and getting ranked in magazines. Now it's

where it needs to be. People can pay \$100 now and enjoy it."

Among the accolades, *Golf Digest* named The Legends the Best Resort Course in the Midwest (1992) and 19th Best Resort Course in the Country; *Golfweek* (1995) named it the third best course in the state behind Oakland Hills and Crystal Downs; *Golf* (1998) magazine named it the 4th best resort course in the country and 4th best in course condition.

Faucher also received his share of individual awards including the 1995 Club Corporation Superintendent of the Year Award and 1998 GCSAA Environmental Steward Award.

Shanty Creek officials started talking about building a fourth course in 1995 and hired Tom Weiskopf to design and H&D Construction of Petoskey to build Cedar River Golf Club.

"Things were getting a little mundane at The Legends," Faucher remembered. "We had solved all these problems and it wasn't challenging me the way I wanted it to. I approached them and they said I could move over there if things got going."

Of Weiskopf, Faucher said: "He was fun to be around and always accessible. He was very conscientious about maintenance and playability issues."

Faucher was also impressed with Weiskopf's flexibility. The original plan called for the layout to cross the Cedar River in the area of holes 13 through 15.

The courts blocked that plan and Weiskopf had to change his routing on the fly.

"He was standing there one day, looking around and said 'I think we have to take these trees out, move this over here and...' And I could see it. He solved a lot of problems right out there in the field...He was presented with a difficult problem and he solved it."

Another problem occurred on a Saturday night last August when a 4 1/2-inch rainstorm flooded the site. The permanent drainage wasn't completed and some material moved toward the river, Faucher explained. An environmental group has taken the issue to court.

"It was pretty devastating," Faucher said. "We lost cart paths on every hole. The site starts up high and then works down toward 13 and 14. We did have material go in the river. How much is being determined in court right now... That's Mother Nature. You get bummed out for a day, then get back with it."

As for his own future? "I'm thinking I'd like to do another grow in," Faucher said. "If the right project came up, I might do it. It was a lot of fun."

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