



The Rodman Wanamaker Trophy
at Oak Hill Country Club in
Rochester, N.Y., the site
of the 95th PGA Championship.



PRIMED FOR THE PGA

Corcoran and crew have Oak Hill rough
and ready for the 2013 PGA Championship

BY DAVID MCPHERSON

Oak Hill Country Club is no stranger to hosting Majors. Since it was founded in 1901, the 36-hole facility has hosted nearly every major golf tournament, including three U.S. Opens, a pair of PGA Championships, The Ryder Cup, and most recently the 2008 Senior PGA Championship.

And just as the course is used to hosting Majors, Jeff Corcoran, the club's savvy superintendent, is used to preparing for them. Now, Corcoran and his crew are ready for the world's best to put The East Course to the test when the prestigious private golf club in Rochester, N.Y.,

hosts yet another Major this August: The 95th PGA Championship.

"It will be interesting to see how it holds up 10 years later, as we didn't do a full-scale renovation coming into this tournament," Corcoran

Continued on page 36

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No. 13, a 598-yard par 5, has never been reached in two. They expect that record to fall at the PGA Championship.

Continued from page 35

says about the last time the club hosted this event, when Shaun Micheel won it in a surprise victory.

No major course changes have occurred in the past five years, but there's been a lot of fine-tuning. For instance, new tees on 17 and 18 were constructed, and various bunkers on the course were modified. Some contours on the 5th and 6th greens were tweaked as well, and the 15th green was rebuilt. All those green changes were made to increase pinnable positions.

"We found, even during the 2008 Senior PGA Championship, those three greens were extremely challenging to find a good variety of hole locations," Corcoran says.

Those subtle changes give Kerry Haigh, chief championships officer of The PGA of America, the opportunity to have a lot more variety now when it comes to setting up the course each day.

"With the addition of more possible pin locations," Corcoran adds, "he can also bring the water into play as much, or as little, as he likes on these holes."

Beyond taking cues and guidance from the PGA of America, how is Corcoran, and his capable crew of 65-strong, making sure Oak Hill is in top agronomic shape for the year's final Major?

"What we do any given year on a day-to-day basis isn't that much different than what we are doing to prepare for this tournament," he explains. "Trying to peak for that one week in August is certainly the key. However, Mother Nature is the biggest variable that can throw you a curveball anywhere along the way. That is my biggest concern. It's also the one that is the furthest out of my control."

Corcoran was a little concerned that the course would have to weather the peak stress of the summer heat before the pros tee off August 5-11. Nonetheless, "in the last 10 years we have had floods, extreme heat, drought, etc.," he says. "We will handle anything that comes this year the same way we have done in the past."

While he can't control Mother Nature, Corcoran prays for no rain. He knows wet

conditions would make for the worst possible scenario and lead to lower scores. "That would let the pros throw darts out there and would be unfortunate," he says. "We want to challenge them."

Roughing It

At a little over 7,000 yards, by modern standards, Oak Hill is not long in yardage. The defense of the timeless course is its tree-lined fairways and its gnarly rough, which the PGA of America has asked to be graduated.

"We are going to have a graduated rough that will be 14 feet outside the width of the fairways and roughly the same around the green surrounds," Corcoran reveals. "That



Jeff Corcoran

is really a challenge and a lot of extra labor ... it adds a whole new dimension to our mowing practices and the amount of bodies we have to use."

Corcoran interned at Oak Hill back in 1994, and other than the brief time he left to take a head superintendent job at Weston Golf Club outside of Boston, it's his most familiar golfing ground. Still, one wonders whether Corcoran feels any extra pressure this time around.

"I've been at Oak Hill for four major tournaments now," he concludes. "I feel like I have a pretty good knowledge of the property. If we don't make any mental mistakes, we will be in good shape; we can handle whatever is thrown at us. We know what we have to do and we will make sure we don't stray from that path."

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