

WGCSA Meeting - Wisconsin River Golf Club



By **Dustin Riley**, Golf Course Superintendent, Oconomowoc Golf Club

The Golf Course - Wisconsin River Golf Club

The Wisconsin River Golf Club is a public 18-hole golf course located in central Wisconsin's Stevens Point. The golf course opened in 1961 displaying its front 9 labeled the "River 9" holes, which were designed in 1959. Ten years later, the back 9 titled the "Road 9" completed the layout. During the mid 1990's, golf course architect Larry Roberts performed improvements.

In January of 2001, Bill Stupar purchased the Wisconsin River Golf Club. Bill holds the positions of Owner, Club Manager, Golf Professional and is the WSGA Representative. The 150 members and the daily fees total nearly 25,000 annual golf rounds. The bentgrass greens and bluegrass fairways provide the playing surface for a challenging golf course hidden amongst the outskirts of Stevens Point.

The Golf Course Superintendent - Tod Blankenship

Tod Blankenship arrived at the Wisconsin River Golf Club in 2001. Tod graduated from the University of Wisconsin - Madison in the fall of 1999 with a Bachelor of Science in Horticulture with the Turfgrass and Grounds Specialization. Following graduation, Tod proceeded to upstate New York to assume the assistant superintendent position at the private golf course, Skaneateles Country Club. One year later, Tod assumed the golf course superintendent role at the Wisconsin River Golf Club in his quest to return to Wisconsin.

The Event

WGCSA members, affiliates and guests traveled to the center of the state to gather at the Wisconsin River Golf Club on July 15, 2002. June and July have caused Wisconsin to withstand a barrage of harsh weather. Southern Wisconsin counties have suffered high temperatures and drought-like conditions, while the western and central counties have had to endure several intensive rainfalls. Unfortunately, the Wisconsin River Golf Club had suffered from some of these severe storms. Although located in the "Central Sands" of Wisconsin, the golf course could not handle the nearly 10 inches of rain that Mother Nature would deliver two weeks prior to the event. That large amount of rain, coupled with upper 80 to 90 degree days, obviously created a golf course superintendent nightmare.

The severe weather from the prior weeks could not

discourage Tod Blankenship, as he smiled and welcomed everyone to the golf club and a wonderful day of golf. As groups took the golf course it quickly became evident of nature's cruelty, as well as the turf's inability to do the impossible. However, the damages from the storms were overshadowed by the extensive and intensive repair efforts made by Tod and his maintenance crew of 15.

Although I have only been a golf course superintendent for a short time, I will always be amazed by fellow superintendent dedication. Many superintendents refer to 80-90 hour workweeks as a job requirement, responsibility or passion. Most people would label a superintendent's passion as insanity. Nevertheless, when a golf course superintendent hosts an event for his/her peers, you can bet every attempt will be made to overcome all obstacles, including Mother Nature. Those efforts were definitely realized by those who played on July 15th. Thank you Bill, Tod and the entire Wisconsin River Golf Club staff. All those in attendance truly enjoyed a wonderful event.

The Awards

#1 Longest Putt	Gene Hogden Ettrick Golf Club
#6 Closest to pin	Charles Schenk Blackhawk CC
#8 Longest Drive	Troy Jasta Wisconsin River Golf Club
#12 Closest to Pin	Layne Anderson Ettrick Golf Club
#15 Longest Putt	Brad Wagner Foxboro Golf Club
#17 Closest to Pin	Steve Blake Crystal Springs Country Club

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#18 Longest Putt	John Krutilla Janesville Country Club
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