



# A USGA Championship Comes to the Badger State

By David Brandenburg, Golf Course Manager, Rolling Meadows Golf Course

June 16 to 21, 2008 will be the beginning of what the Wisconsin golf community hopes is a long relationship between Erin Hills Golf Course in Hartford, WI and the United States Golf Association. The Scottish links style golf course will be hosting the USGA's Womens Amateur Public Links Championship.

Erin Hills was awarded this national event by the USGA even before the course opened for play. That honor, the first of its kind speaks volumes for the layout designed by Dr. Mike Hurdzan, Dana Fry and Ron Whitten.

The Women's Amateur Public Links has a history with the Badger State that started in 1977 when the inaugural event was held at Madison's Yahara Hills East Golf Course. The tournament visited Wisconsin at Sentryworld Golf Course in Stevens Point in 1986. At Sentry World Cindy Schreyer beat Wisconsin's own Vicki Goetz-Ackerman who was just 13 at the time. Goetz-Ackerman would go on to join the LPGA tour in 1994 after a great collegiate golf career at Georgia.

The Women's Public Links starts with 36 holes of stroke play to determine the top 64 and seating for the 6 rounds of match play to determine the winner. Only those players at the top of their game survive the 9 rounds to be crowned champion in the 36 hole final.

Erin Hills has been praised as a terrific Scottish links style layout. For those of you lucky enough to hear Dr. Hurdzan at the WTA Winter EXPO you realize what a special piece of property owner Bob Lang provided. Only 4 holes on the 600 acre property had major earth work done. When you consider the amount of work it takes just to revise a hole, it is amazing to consider the lack of work done at Erin Hills.

Watching Dr. Hurdzan's slide show I was amazed to see how many of the fairways were left natural. Roundup was sprayed in the native grasses, irrigation installed and new grasses seeded into the existing canopy. Most of the rolling terrain with its ridges and hollows were naturally carved during the last ice age.

According to owner Bob Lang the "star" of Erin Hills is the contrast of the grass varieties and the sea of fescue that surround every hole.

It's hard to highlight all the special features of Lang's golf only property. The natural layout offers awesome views of the Basilica of Holy Hill just a few miles away. If the views are not enough players need to bring their A-games if they want to play the back tees at 8,200 yards.

Overseeing this unique property is Golf Course



A natural green site before construction.



A fairway made in the ice age.



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Superintendent Jeffery Rottier. Maintaining a special golf course and hosting a national championship is a big challenge for a superintendent but Jeff has the experience if not the age. His resume includes;

- Whistling Straits - Straits Course, New Haven, WI Assistant Superintendent
- Michigan State Turfgrass Disease Lab, Student lab Assistant
- Meland Golf Klubb, Bergen, Norway, Student Intern
- Bos Landen Golf Resort, Pella, Iowa, Crewleader
- Horseshoe Bay Golf resort, Austin, TX, Crewmember

Jeff is from Central Iowa where he was attracted to golf course employment for free golf as many of us were. A graduate of Michigan States Golf Course Turf Management Program in 2001, Jeff choose a great career path.

With tournament experience from working at the PGA Championship at Whistling Straits and volunteering at the 2002 PGA Championship and the AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am, the USGA is comfortable that Rottier will have Erin Hills ready for the world's best amateur women players.

Coming on board early in the construction allowed Jeff the opportunity to see the property in its original condition. One of his goals at Erin Hills is respecting the natural feel of the property and staying in tune with nature while maintain the fine fescue with as little input of products as possible.



A natural view of Erin Hills.



The finished fairway looks just like the pre-construction picture with a flag

The national golf community is excited with talk that if the Womens Public Links goes well, Erin Hills will be in line for a United States Amateur and possibly a US Open in the near future..

Wisconsin is fortunate to have among our many great golf courses, and an above average number of facilities ideal for national championships. With Whistling Straits already scheduled to host two more PGA Championships in 2010 and 2015 along with the Ryder Cup in 2020 Wisconsin's "major" future looks bright.

The Women's Amateur Public Links Championship is open to the

public at no charge. It is a rare opportunity to see United States best women golfers right in our backyard. Take the family and have a memorable time in the June sun. 🌿

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