

## United States Golf Association U.S. Amateur Championship Comes To Erin Hills

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

The United States Golf Association's oldest national championship The Amateur is coming to the Badger State for the first time August 22 to 28, 2011. The first Amateur was played in 1895, a year after the USGA was formed and was won by Charles Blair McDonald. McDonald is a history lesson all by himself and is considered the father of American golf course architecture as he designed the country's first 18 hole layout, The Chicago Golf Club.

The Amateur will feature 312 players competing for two days of stroke play at Erin Hills and Blue Mound Golf and Country Club. From there the top 64 players compete for the Havemeyer Cup in 18 hole match play format at Erin Hills.

The United States Amateur Championship is highly regarded because it embodies the foundation of the USGA and the purest form of competitive golf. Just a love of the game with no prize money or endorsements. Throughout its history, the U.S. Amateur has been the most coveted of all amateur titles and many of the modern day great names of professional golf, such as Gene Littler, Arnold Palmer, Jack Nicklaus, Lanny Wadkins, Craig Stadler, Jerry Pate, Mark O'Meara, Hal Sutton, Phil Mickelson and Tiger Woods, grace the Havemeyer Cup.

The game of golf started to attract media attention and in turn spectator attendance with the success of longtime amateur Robert T. Jones Jr.. Jones won the championship a record five times (1924, 1925, 1927, 1928, 1930). The 1930 victory is considered by many to be the greatest feat in golf history when, at the Merion Cricket Club, Jones rounded out the Grand Slam, winning the US and British Opens and Amateurs Championships in one year.

In comparison to the history of the game Erin Hills is a newcomer, however many of the features the golfers will play are as they were left by the ice age over 10,000 years ago. Construction on the links layout started in 2004 and the course first opened in 2006 to great acclaim. The layout was awarded the 2008 U.S. Women's Amateur Public Links Championship before it even opened followed by the Amateur in 2011 and the U.S.



Open Championship in 2017.

This respect from the USGA Championship Committee speaks volumes for the work architects Mike Hurdzan, Dana Fry and Ron Whitten did in creating a championship caliber golf course using the natural landscape.

Although natural and beautiful the course had room for tweaking and Erin Hills has gone under two stages of remodeling and improvements in preparation for golf's biggest stage. The work completed in 2010 included drainage improvements, tree re-

moval, reshaping of fairways all to improve course playability and golfer enjoyment. The 10th hole was shortened to allow for a better approach shot into the new green. The work also improved the visual look of the course with less blind or restricted view approach shots and a better visibility of the overall terrain, including the golden fescue roughs.

Current owner Andrew Ziegler, co-founder of the investment firm Artisan Partners purchased the course in 2009 from Bob Lang the original owner. An avid golfer himself, Mr. Ziegler has been very involved in the changes to the property and working with Hurdzan and Fry in preparation for the 2011 U.S. Amateur Championship and the 2017 U.S. Open.

Erin Hills Golf Course Superintendent Zachary Reineking has been with the club since its construction in 2005. Originally hired as Assistant Superintendent, he was promoted to Superintendent in the spring of 2008.

Reineking attended the University of Wisconsin-Madison on the Evans Scholarship from the Western Golf Association.

### U.S. AMATEUR SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

***Saturday & Sunday - Practice Rounds: Erin Hills & Blue Mound***

***Monday & Tuesday - Stroke Play Rounds: Erin Hills & Blue Mound***

***Wednesday - Low 64 Match Play at Erin Hills***

***Thursday AM - Match Play 32 Players at Erin Hills***

***Thursday PM - Match Play 16 Players at Erin Hills***

***Friday - 9 AM - Match Play 8 Players at Erin Hills***

***Saturday - 9 AM - Match Play 4 Players at Erin Hills***

***Sunday - 8 AM - 36 Hole Championship Match at Erin Hills.***



Construction on the new turfgrass facility at Erin Hills was well underway in October.



The simple entry sign to the Erin Hills Clubhouse area will welcome players and spectators this August.

## US AMATEUR RECORDS

**Championships** - Bobby Jones (5)

**Final Matches** - Bobby Jones (7)

**Championships in a Row** - Tiger Woods (3)

**Matches Won in a Row** - Tiger Woods (18)

**Oldest Champion** - Jack Westland (47 yrs, 3 mo, 9 days)

**Youngest Champion** - Byeong-Hun An (17yrs, 11mo, 13 day)

**Match Play Victories** - Charles Evans Jr. (57)

**Times Qualified for Match Play** - Charles Evans Jr (50)

**Years Between Victories** - Francis Ouimet (17, 1914-1931)

**Smallest Entry Field** - 1895 (32)

**Largest Entry Field** - 1999 (7,920)

He received a bachelor's degree in Agricultural Science and Turf Management. While attending UW, he performed internships at BlackWolf Run and Whistling Straits golf courses near Kohler. In 2004, he returned to Whistling Straits and served as part of the 2004 PGA Championship preparation and maintenance staff.

Zachary is from Sheboygan Falls, Wis., and lives in Ixonia, with his wife Bridget and their daughter Nola.

Blue Mound Golf and Country Club is the accompanying host course for the stroke play portion of the championship. Designed by Seth Raynor, Blue Mound is considered one of Milwaukee's best clubs. The club was established in

1903 and was the first in Wisconsin to host a PGA major: the 1933 PGA Championship, won by Gene Sarazen.

Tim Venes is the Golf Course Superintendent at Blue Mound where he has been on staff for 22 years. Like many of us Tim was interested in golf because he liked playing it as he enjoyed high school and college golf. He graduated from UW Lacrosse with a degree in Physical Education and Health Education. Although that is not his current field he does use his education at the golf course especially in training staff members.

After college while Tim was looking for a teaching position he found a job working for Dewey Laak working at Kettle Moraine Golf Course and Willow Run Golf Course. The rest is history as many years later Tim is still in the golf business and worked his way up at Blue Mound from 2nd Assistant Superintendent to Assistant Superintendent to Superintendent. Venes and his wife Debra have two children.

Wisconsin may have lost the Greater Milwaukee Open but the Badger State is quickly becoming a golf destination for Major Golf Championships.




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