

## State Open Visits Racine Country Club

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

Mike Handrich is a 29 year member of the Wisconsin State Golf Course Superintendents Association and has been the Certified Golf Course Superintendent at Racine Country Club since 1989. Mike and the club recently hosted the Wisconsin PGA's 92 Annual Wisconsin State Open.

The event held August 21 to 22 featured 72 holes of stroke play with 18 holes on Monday and Tuesday followed by a cut to the top 60 players and ties to finish with 36 holes. The State Open is open to any legal resident of the State of Wisconsin, golf professionals working as such within the state, PGA professionals working as such within the Wisconsin Section, PGA and all exempt players.

7 qualifying sites are used to fill the field along with the exempt players based on past performance. At Racine Andrew Steinhof of Madison and Vitense Golfland took the \$7,200 first place prize by shooting a 3 under 281. The 20 year old turned pro at 19 rather than play college golf and has been working on his game and playing mini-tour events.

Taking second place with even par was Racine Country Club member Ben Bendtsen III followed by 2008 Open winner Ryan Helminen of Appleton at one over par 285.

Racine Country Club was founded in 1900 as a 9 hole club just west of Racine and in 1901 joined 8 other clubs to found the Wisconsin State Golf Association. The club moved to its current location in 1909 again as a 9 hole course until property was purchased and the club expanded to 18 holes in 1926.

The first nine holes at the current location were designed and built by Joseph Rossman. Rossman had been a caddy at Philadelphia Country Club before becoming the professional/greenskeeper at Des Moines Golf and Country Club. He served a similar role at Racine until about 1916, when he moved to the Chicago area and founded the Rossman Tractor Mowing Company.

The second 9 opened in July of 1927 and was designed by golf professional Ted Sloan who went on to design the neighboring Meadowbrook Country Club later that year. Sloan stayed at Ra-



**The Par 4 7th Hole Plays 422 Yards From the Blue Tees.**

cine until 1934 when he left to design and be the golf professional at the City of Racine's new Johnson's Park Golf Course.

The course was basically unchanged until the mid 1970's when Roger Packard was brought in to remodel the course. In 2005 Mark Mungeam of Cornish, Silva and Mungeam created a master plan and oversaw the renovation of the bunkers.

Handrich is pleased with the new bunkers as they drain well and were designed to reduce run off and erosion from turf around the bunkers. Most days the bunkers only need a touch up raking and have been easy to maintain.

Mike adds his name to a list of long serving golf course superintendents with WGCSA Charter Member Eugene Fox 1928-1949, John Crewe 1950-1970, Harold Schuemann 1971-1978, Dennis (Skip) Willms 1979-1988 and Mike himself for 25 years.

### 2012 Wisconsin State Open Qualifying Sites and Host Superintendents

Timber Ridge Golf Club - Jay Pritzl  
Meadowbrook Country Club - Jeff Normant  
Nakoma Golf Club - Craig Filley  
Castle Course at Northern Bay - Paul Schippers  
Eagle Creek Golf Club - Andy Noll  
Washington County Golf Club - David Jahnke  
Kenosha Country Club - Scott Verdun

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## Member 9 With Mike Handrich

1. First Vehicle? *Mercury Lynx*
2. Favorite Piece of Golf Course Equipment? *Toro Procore*
3. 18 Hole Handicap? *18*
4. Current Vehicle? *Toyota Tundra*
5. Favorite TV Show? *None*
6. Favorite Pro Sports Team? *Milwaukee Brewers*
7. Favorite Main Course Meal? *Bone in Ribeye*
8. Pets? *Cat Woggie*
9. Favorite Thing About Working In Golf Industry? *People*



The hard working staff at Racine Country Club provides a great product for the members.

# COVER STORY

While touring the course with Mike he made it clear he enjoys working with his staff and gives them credit for the course conditions. Handrich fully appreciates all they do for the club and thanks Heather Henning for her leadership as assistant superintendent.

The staff is mainly maintaining bentgrass/poa annua mix greens, tees and fairways although credits his use of Primo and Cutless to increase bentgrass populations. One challenge for the staff is being in the flood plain of the Root River so the course

has faced numerous flooding events over the years. Mike has taken a conservative approach to golf course maintenance using proven cultural practices to encourage plant health. He has been able to remove some trees to allow for greater airflow and sunshine especially behind the 9th green.

Handrich does not expect any changes to the course for the open players as the staff strives to maintain the course to championship levels for daily member play.

Mike lives in Racine with his wife Karen and originally wanted to work for the

DNR but during college he realized those opportunities were limited so he switched to the “best turf program in the country at UW-Madison”. While at Madison Handrich interned for Monroe Miller at Blackhawk Country Club before acquiring his B.S. degree in Agriculture in 1983.

Handrich served at Ville du Parc Country Club in Mequon before taking his current post at Racine Country Club.

Congratulations to Mike and the staff for providing a great golf course to challenge the states best players. 



**Racine offers a large short game practice area with two greens with bunkers connected by fairway turf as part of its practice facility.**



**The Par 5 525 yard 9th features a small but healthy green since the brush and trees have been cleared on the hillside behind the green.**