

Major Golf With Women's Open and Ryder Cup

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

It is a great time to be a fan of professional golf in Wisconsin and the upper Midwest. In 2011 we had the USGA US Amateur at Erin Hills Golf Club and in 2012 we had the US Women's Open at Blackwolf Run Golf Club and now the PGA Ryder Cup in Chicago.

The 67th United States Golf Association U.S. Women's Open Championship was held July 2 -8 on the original Championship Course at Blackwolf Run in Kohler, WI.

Blackwolf Run was opened in 1988 as a 18 hole course and success soon necessitated opening a 2nd 18 hole loop. The new holes were placed outside the original holes leading to the Rivers Course and Meadows Valley Course. The Open was played on the original Championship Course or a combination of the current 18's.



The putting green is a popular place for players and fans.



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The original championship course at Blackwolf Run incorporates holes 10-18 of the Meadow Valleys Course and holes 1-4 and 14-18 of the River Course, the same layout that was used at the 1998 Women's Open.

The 36 hole Pete Dye designed complex underwent a renovation a couple years ago with few design changes but new grasses on greens, tees and fairways along with new drainage and sand in the bunkers.

With the exception of the fumigation the staff was able to complete the regrassing and bunker work themselves saving total project costs. The work to the championship course was done in 2009 and the other 18 was done in 2010.

The greens are seeded to A-4 and the fairways were seeded to memorial bentgrass. To keep poa populations down the staff is keeping the turf dry and using cutless, velocity and legacy.

The goal was to keep the great design with modern grasses to provide for dryer conditions. The main change for the women from 14 years ago is the course played 500 yards longer due to the black tees being used rather than blue.

Mike Lee has been the Certified Golf Course Superintendent at the course for 19 years. With 36 holes at Blackwolf Run and 36 holes at the Whistling Straits Facility a few miles away the course does not need many volunteers for the maintenance department. Blackwolf Run has 50 of their own and any extra can come from the Whistling Straits course.

Key personnel working with Mike include:

Jeff Wilson, River Course Superintendent
Ron Bierwith, Meadow Valley Course Superintendent
Chris Deckard, Assistant Superintendent
Ben Lebarre, Assistant Superintendent
Ryan Retherford, Assistant Superintendent
Bill Schwantes, Assistant Superintendent
John Weber, Equipment Manger

South Korean Na Yeon Choi bested the field of 156 amateur and professional the event by 4 strokes with scores of 71, 72, 65 and 73.

Congratulations to the Kohler Company, Mike Lee and the entire staff at Blackwolf Run for hosting a successful event.



Above: Hole 1 From The Tee
Middle: Hole One from Approach
Bottom: Hole One from behind green looking back.



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FUTURE AREA CHAMPIONSHIPS

2013 BMW Championship - Conway Farms, Lake Forest, IL
2015 PGA Championship - Whistling Straits, Sheboygan
2015 US Amateur - Olympia Fields, Olympia Fields, IL
2016 Ryder Cup - Hazeltine National, Chaska, MN
2017 U.S. Open Championship - Erin Hills, Erin
2020 Ryder Cup - Whistling Straits, Sheboygan



Above: The sand bunker on hole 18 was filled with water for the event

Bottom: Hole 9 looking down from 8 tee. Left of the bunker is the a optional green offered for daily play. Championship players used the normal green over the river.



**Above: Hole 17 Tee has mesh to keep players from hitting where the tees will be during the championship.
Middle: 17 green
Bottom: Despite the heat many of the Asian players wore long sleeve shirts to keep the sun off thier skin.**



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Top Left: Morgan Pressel Hits out of the sand on hole 15.

Middle Left: The Par 3 Hole 8 is all carry and does not leave any room for error.

Bottom Left: Hole 15 from the fairway.

Bottom Right: Hole 12



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The 39th Ryder Cup is being hosted at the 7,668 yard Medinah Country Club in Medinah, IL. It is rare that PGA players play for pride and for country and not for prize money but that is the case for the Ryder Cup.

Although matches began back in 1921 the Ryder Cup officially started in 1927 when the United States team of Walter Hagen, Leo Diegel, Johnny Farrell, Johnny Golden, Bill Mehlhorn, Gene Sarazen, Joe Turnesa and Al Watrous beat the Great Britain team 9 1/2 to 2 1/2 at the Worcester Country Club in Massachusetts.

English seed merchant and entrepreneur Samuel Ryder took up golf after his 50th birthday as a way to relax and get more fresh air. He developed a quick love for the game and through 6 day a week practice sessions quickly became a good player.

Ryder hosted a professional event in 1923 and became familiar with many of the professionals at the time. Later in 1926 as he was appreciating the 1926 unofficial international match conversation led to him donating the Ryder Cup trophy.

The Ryder Cup was originally the United States against Great Britain and then Ireland and in 1979 it became the United States against all of Europe.

The event was cancelled from 1939 to 1945 during World War II however the US team participated in challenge matches against each other to raise fund for the war effort. Ryder Cup matches continued in 1947 and continued in even years until 2001 when the terrorist attacks of September 11th caused a one year delay. Rather than play two years in a row the event has been in even years ever since.

The Medinah Country Club started in the early 1920's as a country retreat for Shriners from Chicago. The club covers 640 acres and has enjoyed a rich history having hosted the 1949, 1975 and 1990 US Opens along with the 1999 and 2006 PGA Championship.

By the late 1920's the Tom Bendelow designed courses had over 1,500 members but hardships from the great depression and War II dropped membership numbers to a point non-Shriners were admitted.



MEDINAH 2012



Hole 5 at Medinah is picture perfect.

Coming Events!

Tues Nov 15th & Wed Nov 16th - WGCSA Golf Turf Symposium @ American Club, Kohler

February 3-5 - GCSAA Golf Tournaments and National Championship, San Diego, CA

February 4-8 - GCSAA National Conference and Golf Industry Show, San Diego, CA

Mar 4,5 - NGLGCSA Educational Conference, Wausau

March 13,14 - Reinders 21st Green Industry Conference, Waukesha Expo Center, Waukesha

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Above: Walk mowers lined up and ready for daily adjustment.

Middle: Squeegees ready to go but there will be no rain this week.

Bottom: Miles of cable are laid to accommodate the television and radio coverage around the world.



The Ryder Cup was played on Medinah's number 3 course which was designed by Bendelow as a ladies course but quickly re-done only three years after opening. The course was re-designed again in 2009 by Rees Jones.

Curtis Tyrrell III is the Certified Golf Course Superintendent for the Medinah Complex. A graduate of Pennsylvania State University Tyrrell came to the course after serving as the Director of Agronomy at Lake of Isles, in North Stonington, Connecticut.

The Medinah staff has 90 employees in season and had 100 volunteers for the tournament. Curtis is assisted by: Jim Wallace, Golf Course Superintendent Course 1. Jake Medoza, Golf Course Superintendent Course 2. Ross Laubscher, Golf Course Superintendent Course 3. Paul Barousse, Equipment Manager. Marguerite Zimmerli, Horticulturist.

When Tyrrell started in 2009 he and his team oversaw the second phase of an undertaking that dated back to before the 2006 PGA, when seven greens — Nos. 1, 2, 13, 15, 16, 17 and 18 — were rebuilt to USGA recommendations and regrassed, and about 275 trees were removed.

The 11 remaining greens were rebuilt to USGA standards and then grassed with a SR 007/SR 1119 bentgrass blend. That same mixture was used in a regrassing of No. 3's fairways. Medinah's Penncross tees were largely unaffected by the changes, but roughs did get a fresh coat of bluegrass seed after the fairway work had been completed. In the bunkers, the existing sand was removed, the subgrade drainage was stabilized, then the bunkers were rebuilt with all-new liners and sand.

Design changes in 2009 were limited to new teeing grounds on Nos. 6, 7 and 16 and new bunkers constructed on Nos. 6 and 17 as well as a complete redesign of hole 15.

The other change was the removal of over 1,100 trees to improve turf health and playability. With 5,600 trees remaining most attendees will not notice the change. Removing trees at any club can be a political challenge so Curtis used a third party to do an assessment and inventory of all the trees so the members could make an informed decision for the best future of the club.

The uniqueness of the Ryder Cup allows the host team captain to recommend course conditions. This year Davis Love III has asked for a shorter rough to allow players to hit away without fear of being buried in grass. The primary rough is mowed to 1 1/4" for the event.

Those conditions seemed to help the Americans build a big lead in the matches on Friday and Saturday before the team wide collapse on Sunday to lose 14 1/2 to 13 1/2 to the Europeans.

The Ryder Cup offers a unique perspective for fans as the crowd is louder and more involved in the match play format.

Despite the loss by the home team congratulations to Curtis Tyrrell and the entire staff and group of volunteers at Medinah for providing spectacular playing conditions. 🌱

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Top Left: The teams hit the course at daybreak.

Mid Left: They travel as a team.

Bottom Left: They work as a team.

Above: Detail work involves cleaning sprinkler heads.

Below: Detail works involves brushing sand foot-prints off the grass.



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Above: The par-3 17th hole.

Top Right: Hole 18 from 17 tee.

Right: Steve Stricker practices chipping on hole-4.

Bottom Right: Rolling and blowing the putting green with the clubhouse in the background.

Below: After taking readings with moisture meters water is applied sparingly.

