

Harrington Takes The Presidents Gavel

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

Chad Harrington, Golf Course Superintendent and General Manager at Autumn Ridge Golf Club was elected to serve as the 42 president of the Wisconsin Golf Course Superintendents Association on December 4th at the fall business meeting. Harrington has prepared for the job with 7 years of board and committee service. Chad has served as chair for the Education, Symposium, Scholarship and Research committees.

Harrington entered the turf business early when he started a lawn maintenance business at age 11 in his hometown of Plainfield with a old pull golf cart as a trailer.

He entered the golf business in 1988 working at Waushara Country Club in Wautoma under Golf Course Superintendent Jack Drew in 1988 as a senior in high school. The course had 18 holes at the time and half the sand based course was still watered with quick couplers. Chad's first job was at night moving sprinklers

and doing some light equipment maintenance to stay busy between rounds on the golf course.

He continued at Waushara through his time at Ripon College and was offered a full time job after graduation in 1992.

Harrington started as the Golf Course Superintendent at the new Autumn Ridge Golf Course in Valders in February 1996. He was there to open the front 9 in September of 1996 and the second 9 in July of 1998. Overseeing the construction and grow in of a hilly rolling terrain provided some great experiences for Chad.

The course changed hands in 2000 and that can be a stressful time for staff members but it worked out and in fall of 2002 Chad was asked to serve as the interim General Manager and eleven years later he still serves as Golf Course Manager and Superintendent.

Wearing two hats can stretch his time and Chad is quick to recognise Assistant

Superintendent Julian (JJ) Mejia as a key component of the Autumn Ridge team. Communication with Julian and the rest of the staff is key to success facility wide.

Wearing two hats can lead to some long days and variety in the job. A morning might involve work on the golf course, the afternoon book work in his office and the evening helping with a wedding or party.


Agronomically the course offers some challenges with rolling terrain and many areas of micro climates and stagnant air. The soils are primarily red clay making water management a key to healthy turf. The greens are Pennlinks, tees Penncross and the 17 acres of fairways are Penneagle. The course was carved long ago by glaciers and is located on the northern tip of the Kettle Moraine.

One change Chad has made is to primarily mow fairways in the afternoon to eliminate clipping problems and provide a cleaner surface. This frees the staff up in the morning to concentrate on other tasks and most days they are able to find a lull in the tee sheet to get fairways mowed without too much interruption from play.

Autumn Ridge hosts over 100 events each season and have had some very unique outings. The course hosts a benefit for the visually impaired each year in memory of owner Tom O'Connor's father but the course actually hosted a regional Vision Impaired Golf Championship.

Chad has been married to his wife Jackie for 15 years and she works as a nurse in Manitowoc for Dermatology Associates of Wisconsin and helps out at the golf course in whatever capacity needed.

Chad and Jackie have two sons, Colton 11 and Thane 8. The boys enjoy downhill and water skiing, snowboarding, wrestling, football and of course golf. They also enjoy coming out to the golf course and helping where they can.

With many years in business and experience on the board of directors Chad Harrington is in perfect position to lead our association for the next two years. 



Colton, Chad, Jackie and Thane Harrington.

COVER STORY



Top Left: Hole 10, 312 yard par 4

Middle Left: The fountain and waterfall make a nice setting.

Below: A hole made just for weddings and party's looks like the real thing.

Top Right: Hole 1, 408 yard par 4 with the clubhouse in the background.



COVER STORY



Top Left: Hole 5, 335 yard par 4

Top Right: Hole 9, 565 yard par 5 is rated as the number one handicap hole for men.

Right: Hole 15, 129 yard par 3



Member 9 With Chad Harrington

- 1. First Vehicle?** 1978 Volkswagen Rabbit
- 2. Favorite Piece of Golf Course Equipment?** *Probably the greens roller or anything not in the shop for repair*
- 3. 18 Hole Handicap?** 10.5 and rising
- 4. Current Vehicle?** Dodge Durango and GMC 2500HD depending on what kind of day I expect.
- 5. Favorite TV Show?** *Sporting events or many of the Discovery & History Channel Programs*
- 6. Favorite Pro Sports Team?** Green Bay Packers
- 7. Favorite Main Course Meal?** *It is hard to go wrong with a great Tenderloin*
- 8. Pets?** *Two Springer Spaniels, Putter (15) and Divot (3). They take care of the goose issues with over 80 acres of wetland on the property.*
- 9. Favorite Thing About Working In Golf Industry?** *The majority of people that come to the course are there to have a good time so the atmosphere at the facility is always upbeat.*

