

Wisconsin State Open Visits Tuckaway Country Club

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

James Poitz is a 19 year member of the Wisconsin Golf Course Superintendents Association and has been the Golf Course Superintendent at Tuckaway Country Club since 1994 after serving as assistant to Pat Shaw for 7 years. Jim and the club hosted the Wisconsin State Open August 19-21, 2013.

The event 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, and all exempt players.

7 qualifying sites are used to fill the field along with the exempt players based on past performance. Jim Lemon a former professional golfer on the Canadian Tour shot a solid 8 under 280 to win first place and the \$7,300 prize. Lemon has been out of professional golf since 2011 when he took a job with Morgan Stanley in Madison and joined the ranks of recreational players.

Tuckaway Country Club opened in 1925 in Greenfield at 35th and Edgerton. The original course was short in length but offered a high degree of challenge to the player as precise shotmaking was needed to score. The course hosted many state tournaments and was the site of numerous LPGA events in the 1960's.

During that time the club hosted the State Open three times with Johnny Revolta winning in 1930, Tommy Veech in 1948 and Tom Puls in 1960.

The club had the opportunity to purchase two farms in Franklin. The new course designed by Ken Killian and Dick Nugent opened in 1968 on rolling property.

The farms both had apple orchards on them and a few trees from each farm are still present on the property. The fairways at Tuckaway

are definitely tree lined despite having 500 ash trees removed in the past few years to prepare for the emerald ash borer.

The soils are primarily clay which can cause challenges with drainage, compaction and moisture management. The greens and tees are pushups but in the 1970's then superintendent Ray Knapp started an aggressive sand topdressing program and since then 8 inches of topdressing has been built up to serve as the root zone.

Tuckaway Country Club hosted the PGA Tour's Greater Milwaukee Open from 1973-1993 with Nicklaus, Elder, Norman, Rodriguez, Sneed, Trivino among other top players to enjoy Tuckaway's layout.

In 1985 Jack Nicklaus competed in the GMO for the first time as a professional and finished second to Jim Thorpe. It was one of Jack's 58 second place finishes.



ABOVE: Holes 1 and 18 in 1967 during construction
(Above photo from Tuckaway Country Club)

BELOW: Hole 1, the 392 Yard Par 4 in its current view



2013 Wisconsin State Open Qualifying Sites and Host Superintendents

Fire Ridge GC - Stan Lushine

Northwood GC - Joe Anderson

Watertown CC - Michael Upthegrove

Ridgeway CC - Steve Blake

Maple Bluff CC - Josh Lepine CGCS

The Club at Strawberry Creek - Matt Kregel

Eau Claire G&CC - John Granholt

COVER STORY

The Greater Milwaukee Open was often either the week of the British Open or the week before or after which reduced top players ability or willingness to play even though the venue was well received by those who played. The event moved to Brown Deer Park Golf Course where it was hosted through 2009 when the event was stopped.

James Poitz started at Tuckaway under Pat Shaw in 1988 just in time for the infamous drought. Luckily the course was in the final stages of converting the irrigation to a automated double row system. For Jim it was a good summer for a crash course on automatic irrigation systems.

Poitz was able to work the GMO for his first 6 years and he reminisced on how exciting it was to see the tour pros walking down the fairways.

Jim became the head superintendent in 1994 and has enjoyed the ups and downs of the years. He offered that if he could change one thing it would be to offer the Jim Poitz of 1994 a little advice. "Be careful what you think you are leaving the next guy to deal with, it might just be you!"

Jim was quick to give credit to his crew and is appreciative to have been blessed with many good crews but fees his current group is one of the best. First assistant Scott Mitchell is in his 10th year.



Mowing and rolling the 366 yard par four 4th hole.

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Member 9 With Jim Poitz

1. **First Vehicle?** 72 Pontiac Lemans.
2. **Favorite Piece of Golf Course Equipment?** Toro Hydroject.
3. **18 Hole Handicap?** Used to be 12, I fish now.
4. **Current Vehicle?** 2000 GMC Sierra.
5. **Favorite TV Show?** Deadliest Catch.
6. **Favorite Pro Sports Team?** Packers.
7. **Favorite Main Course Meal?** Ribey.
8. **Pets?** Had a Bassett hound for 15yrs, none at the moment.
9. **Favorite Thing About Working In Golf Industry?** Being outdoors.



Jim considers Scott as knowledgeable and dependable as it gets and being a single digit handicap he knows how important the finished product is to the members. Second assistant Ben Scharf is just one of eight Scharf siblings who have worked at Tuckaway and still argues with his sister that "he is the one responsible for perfecting the bunker routine". Publicly Poitz sides with Ben since he still works for the club and his sister Julie no longer does.

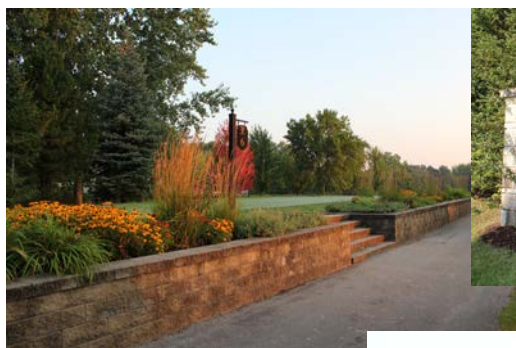
Al Havaich takes care of the clubs ornamentals. Al owned a floral shop in West Allis for many years and now enjoys arranging on a grand scale. Last but not least Kevin Paul is the mechanic and has been working with Jim since 1994 when he became the head superintendent. Poitz expressed Kevin can keep anything running and is great at keeping the reels razor sharp.

I had an enjoyable time walking the property and meeting Jim and his staff. They seemed to work together as a well oiled team to prepare for the states best golfers. Congratulations to them on a job well done. ✓

References:

Haas, Eugene R., 2005. Caring For The Green - A History of The Wisconsin Golf Course Superintendents Association.

Haas, Eugene R., 2001. Playing Through..A History of The Wisconsin State Golf Association.



A few samples of the landscaping and flowers at Tuckaway Country Club.



COVER STORY



The grounds maintenance staff at Tuckaway Country Club



The full time staff includes from left to right Kevin Paul, Ben Scharf, Scott Mitchell, Jim Poitz and Al Havaich
(Above photo from Jim Poitz)

Golf Course Superintendents at Tuckaway CC.

Verland Miller 1930's
Frank Kress 49-51
Clifford Decker 52-60
Albert Wing 61-70
Helmuth Hanneman 71
Ray Knapp 72-86
Pat Shaw 87-93
Jim Poitz 94-Current



Above Left: The 372 Yard Par Four 7th Hole features a undulating green (above right) and is protected by a deep bunker on the front right (right).



COVER STORY



Top Left: Changing the cup on the 414 yard par four 9th hole.

Top Right: 197 Yard par three 17th hole.

Left: 528 yard par five 16th hole.



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COVER STORY



Top: 142 yard par three 5th hole

Top Right: 366 yard par four 13th hole

Bottom Right: 495 yard par five 6th hole

Bottom: 413 yard par four 10th hole



Coming Events!

Tues and Wed Dec 10th-11th, Wisconsin Golf Turf Symposium, American Club, Kohler

Tuesday January 14th, WTA Turfgrass Research Day, Pyle Center, Madison

Feb 2-7, Golf Industry Show, GCSAA Conference, Orlando FL

Monday March 3rd, WGCSA Spring Business Meeting, Fond du Lac