

# USGA Holds 7th Women's Mid-Amateur Championship at Rochester Golf and Country Club

1993 is the year that the USGA should have set up house-keeping in Minnesota. With the Walker Cup Matches held recently at Interlachen Country Club in Edina, it was time to move to the historic Rochester Golf and Country Club for the Women's Mid-Amateur Championship.

The original layout was designed in 1916 by Harry Turple, a golf professional from New Orleans who over-summered along the western shores of the mighty Mississippi River in Red Wing. Turple's design was a simple layout that featured sand greens. In 1925 famous golf architect



PHOTOS BY DALE WYSOCKI

Rochester G&CC superintendent James Gardner, left, confers with Mary Kapouch, center, Women's Mid-Am Committee Chair and Maggie Giesenhaggen, Women's Affairs USGA.

A. W. Tillinghast (Tillie the Terror) was brought in to completely re-design the Rochester site. Tillie was one of the most colorful characters in the history of golf. It is also thought that A. W. coined the term "birdie" to describe a hole shot in one less than par.

With the golf course being built in the 1920s, many horse and mule drawn "Frisco Scrapers" were used to contour the hilly site. During the 1930s over 5,000 evergreens of all different varieties were planted. These mature trees have since grown to become the trademark of this exceptional tract.

Environmentally-conscious Superintendent James Gardner, who is extremely well-versed in the history of amateur golf along with the design aspects of historic golf courses, had the golf course completely ready to accept the challenge. When the USGA accepted Rochester's invitation to hold the tournament a couple years prior to the event the Grounds Staff knew that this would be an enormous task. USGA tournament conditions are stringent. However, when your golf course is kept very similar to these conditions, the stress to come up with tournament conditions is alleviated. The golf course is a delight to anyone who enjoys seeing wildlife, from raccoons staking out their territory in the bunkers, to an albino squirrel named "Balata" stalking the area around the 12th tee. Several deer were seen during the early morning hours of the tournament.

A. W. Tillinghast would have been proud to see the conditions that the contestants had. The bentgrass fairways had been keenly groomed all summer long and greens sheared to an eighth of an inch and rolling so true that

the contestants and USGA tournament staff were in absolute awe of this architectural gem. Intermediate rough was so well-kept that some golf courses would be proud to have those areas as fairways. The bunkers strategically placed to gobble up an errant shot or placed to give you false depth perception of the target area. Then there is a certain bunker, a "big mouthed bunker" as quoted by several of the contestants on hole 7. It not only ate golf balls but it significantly added to the scores of anyone who happened to venture into its realm.

Anytime you have a major event at your facility, it helps to have a great Assistant Superintendent. Jeff Anderson filled these shoes very easily. Jim Gardner would be busy with the administrative work that has to be done with the running of a major event, so not only is a strong Assistant needed but an extremely talented and dedicated staff. And that's the case at Rochester Golf and Country Club Grounds Staff.

What is the magic that the USGA seems to have when it comes to Minnesota? With the Walker Cup Matches there was the 1.80" of rain. Now with the Women's Mid-Am there was thunder and lightning delays, temperatures started out in the upper 70's then suddenly plummeted down to the



"Balata" the squirrel

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lower 40's, giving new meaning to locker-room towels to become turtle-necks to keep the contestants warm. The tournament week was supposed to be the most normal week of weather. Chalk that one up to Minnesota's theater of seasons.

With the tournament underway, the contestants found an extremely well-groomed golf course. Mary Kapouch, chairperson for the Women's Mid-Am put it simply: "The golf course was in superb condition. The players and officials were all talking about it." Sara Ingram, the eventual winner, offered these comments: "The golf course was perfect, everything was just great, the greens rolled true, and the layout was great." At the awards ceremony, it was plain to see the respect that the USGA and the membership of Rochester Golf and Country Club have for this Grounds Staff.