

Nine More Holes Added to The Pines

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Course Superintendent Tom Kientzle, Staff Had a Busy Year

One would think that building an additional nine holes after you've gone through construction of the original 18 should be a lot easier for a golf course superintendent.

Not necessarily.

Six years ago Tom Kientzle, head superintendent at The Pines at Grand View Lodge in Nisswa, was involved right when construction started on this championship layout.

"It was a tremendous experience and one that all golf course superintendents should have at some stage of their careers," Kientzle said, "and what I learned as far as working with the architect and contractors, reasonable timelines for various segments of construction and being familiar with the countless details that had to be pursued was of considerable help."

But, on the other hand for Kientzle and his staff, there still were all of the responsibilities of making certain the original 18 was maintained properly. That, in itself, was a challenge, primarily because of the heavy demand for tee times as well as several special competitions like a Minnesota Golf Association tournament, the Camp Confidence Classic, special media events, junior college tournaments and others.

This heavy use was what led to Grand View Lodge's decision to build the additional nine holes (now known as the Marsh Nine) two years earlier than planned.

"Fortunately, I had a lot of good help from our capable crew," Kientzle said. "So many of them were familiar with what we went through with the earlier construction and, of course, they were very knowledgeable about how to maintain the original 18."

Construction of the Marsh Nine—which weaves around an attractive but challenging marsh on a couple of holes—began early last year with clearing and grubbing. During the summer, greens and fairways were shaped, and seed was planted.

"By and large the weather cooperated splendidly, and the new greens and fairways came through the winter in good shape," Kientzle said. "This Spring we completed the final touches, then had a couple of trial weekends of actual play to see where any changes might be made. Overall, everything went smoothly."

Designed by Joel Goldstrand, the St. Louis Park, Minn., golf architect who did the creative work on the original 18 holes, the Marsh Nine resembles its forerunners (now called the Lakes and Woods Nines) in several respects. But it also has some distinct differences.

Built on similar rolling terrain through a forest of pines, birch and maples, the Marsh Nine also has four tees on each hole.



Signature Hole
Par 3 Fifth on Marsh Nine

Yardages range from 2594 yards (red tees) to 3073 (white), 3230 (blue) and 3423 (championship) for a par 36, generally the same distances as the Lakes and Woods Nines.

"The overall atmosphere is much the same, and that's what we wanted to accomplish," said Kientzle. "There are some broader vistas, some of the greens are more undulating and some of the hills are a tad steeper.

"It will take a couple of years, like the original course, to obtain desired maturity, but we're most pleased with what we've accomplished thus far," he said.

Now it remains to be seen if the Marsh Nine will gather the acclaim that the first 18 did. And that's quite a challenge.

After all, The Pines has captured several honors:
1991—Named one of the top five new resort courses built in the United States;
1993—Rated the No. 1 public golf course in Minnesota;
1994—Ranked as Minnesota's fourth best course;



New Pines Clubhouse

1994—Captured a 4½-star rating in the 1994-95 edition of *Golf Digest's* "Places to Play" and selected in the top 35 courses in the United States and Canada. Only six other courses received 5-star ratings.

But early reports on the Marsh Nine are favorable: Conversations with several persons who participated in the "trial events" indicate that it's probably the toughest of the three nines, has several challenging holes and an attractive signature hole (the par 3 fifth) and, in several instances, more trees come into play.

Another new feature at The Pines is its two-story, three-winged clubhouse, which has an unusually attractive new pro shop, a bar and grill, a dining room, men's and women's lockers and a huge deck that overlooks a continually running waterfall alongside the ninth hole of the Woods Nine (formerly the 18th hole of the old course).

"More and more people are now recognizing that our new clubhouse is open to the public to purchase golf equipment and apparel in the pro shop," said Mark Ronnei, Grand View's general manager. "In addition the public can come for breakfast, lunch and dinner and can schedule meetings or weddings or other social events."

With approximately 6,000 square feet of space on two floors, the building also has a huge storage area for carts on the lower level.

Among those particularly pleased with the new clubhouse is Kevin Cashman, head professional: "Our new pro shop not only allows us to order and display much more merchandise, but now it's easier to register golfers and direct them to our three nines as well as other clubhouse facilities."



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