

Nemadji GC Adds Three-Hole Par-3 Course For Juniors

By **MARK S. CARLSON**
Nemadji Golf Course

Because of the growing popularity in the sport of golf, traffic on many courses has become congested. This popularity, caused by increased coverage of such young golfers as Tiger Woods, has increased the number of beginners and juniors coming out to the golf course. In order to accommodate junior and beginner golfers, Nemadji Golf Course in Superior, Wisconsin constructed a three-hole Par-3 course. This 450-yard course allows beginners and juniors to learn the game and improve their skills while avoiding the frustration that may build up if they tried to play on a regulation course before they are ready.

In the past decade alone, Nemadji has experienced tremendous growth in many areas which necessitated the building of a 3-hole, Par 3 course. In 1976, Nemadji was an 18-hole course with approximately 15,000 rounds played that year. In 1998, Nemadji is a 36-hole course, with both the East/West and North/South courses receiving a 3½-star rating in *Golf Digest's* "Places to Play." Not to be outdone by the excellent conditions of the actual course, the service staff at Nemadji also received recognition, earning a Service Ace Award. Over 5,300 public and resort golf courses in the United States, Canada, Mexico and the Islands are eligible for a Service Ace Award. Of the 5,300 courses that were eligible, only the top 50 received a Service Ace Award, and Nemadji was 33rd in this ranking. Because of the excellent condition of the golf course, and the high caliber of service, by the end of 1998 there will be an estimated 78,000 rounds of golf played on Nemadji's 36 holes.

In addition to this increased general play, Nemadji's junior program has skyrocketed within the last five years. In 1995, there were only 60 juniors in the summer junior golf program. In 1998, there are 192 juniors participating in the Nemadji Junior Golf Program. The junior program started out as a simple league, which would only give juniors the chance to come out and play on the golf course. Through the past few years, the junior program has evolved into much more than that.

Nemadji realizes that junior golfers are the future of golf. The fine tradition of honesty, integrity and pride that has been a trademark of the game of golf can only be continued if the young golfers of today are properly educated in etiquette, swing basics and on and off-course behavior. Nemadji Golf Course is dedicated to providing area juniors with all of the available opportunities that will help them increase their skill and their appreciation of the game of golf. At the beginning of the summer there are two junior clin-

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Nemadji's Par 3 course features water, sand traps and all other hazards encountered on a regulation-sized course.

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Nemadji—

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ics offered to area junior golfers. Each clinic is divided into five sessions. These sessions cover etiquette and rules, putting, chipping, basic full-swing mechanics and course management. Nemadji also provides clubs to juniors who are just starting out and may not have clubs. The clubs that are handed out to the juniors are clubs that have been donated by the public and cut down by the Nemadji staff. Offering a free driving range token for every club donated encourages these generous donations. All of these efforts, along with the junior golf program, help to promote the game of golf to area juniors.



Unusually tricky bunker featuring sand and a tree!

Nemadji's Junior Golf Program aims to provide the proper education to area juniors so that the game of golf can continue its fine tradition into the future. Rather than being a simple league, the Nemadji Junior Golf Program now consists of five skill levels. Level One teaches beginners etiquette, rules and basic swing mechanics. Once the basics have been learned, Level Two takes them to the Par-3 course where the juniors receive on-course instruction and experience. Once they have graduated to level 3, they play 3-6 holes on one of the regulation courses. This builds on the foundation that was started in Level One. Once in Level Four, they play a full nine holes on the regulation course. When their scores are low enough, they move to Level Five, where they play a full 18 holes and their scores are below 100. With over 190 kids participating in the five different levels, the course and driving range would not be enough physical space for all of the kids. The rapidly expanding junior program was one of the driving forces behind building the three-hole Par 3 course.

The work on the Nemadji Practice Course began in the summer of 1997. Designed and built by Derek Van Damme of Madison and Steve Flagstad, Nemadji superintendent, the already 36-hole golf facility utilized the space of an old, rarely used practice area for the new course. Construction was completed in June 1998. The cost of construction was \$50,000, with \$12,000 of that cost donated. A

portion of the donated funds came from two tournaments that are held annually to help raise money for junior golf. The Lenroot Maetzold Golf Fundraiser Event and the Mertz Mortorelli Junior Golf Fundraiser raise approximately \$8,000 every year for junior golf. The 1998 revenue of the Par 3 course will be approximately \$8,000.

The Par 3 course has all of the hazards of a regulation golf course, from bunkers to a water hazard. The layout and length of the course can provide a challenge even to experienced golfers, but it is also easy enough so that juniors and beginners do not get frustrated. There are different sets of tees that can be used by experienced or beginning golfers. Using these different tees, and playing the course three times, allows a golfer to have a 9-hole round of golf that is comparable to that of a round played on a regulation course. Golfers can buy green fees for 2-hours (\$5) or for a whole day (\$8), with reduced prices for juniors (\$2 for two hours, \$4 for the whole day). All juniors participating in the Nemadji Junior Golf Program receive a free season pass to the Par 3 course, and all juniors not involved in the program can purchase a season pass for only \$29.

Since the opening, the Par 3 course has gained in popularity. Besides being used by the juniors, the general public has also increased play on the Par 3 course. This is attributed to the Media Day Event and the incorporation of the Par 3 course into a tournament. The Media Day event allowed members of the local media to come and play the new course for free, allowing for more publicity of the course. The Lenroot Maetzold Golf Fundraiser Event, one of the two tournaments that are held annually to benefit junior golf, introduced the general public to the Par 3 course. The course was incorporated into the tournament round, making the tournament a 21-hole tournament instead of an 18-hole tournament.

The building of the Par 3 course has proved to be a worthwhile endeavor. Not only does it give the general public a different place to play and practice, it also gives juniors and beginners a place where they can build a foundation with all experiences of a regulation course. The Nemadji Practice Course teaches not only the skills of the game, but also allows juniors and beginners to experience the social aspect of golf.

*Make Plans to Attend
the October 5th MGCOSA
Monthly Meeting
at the new
Chaska Town Course*