

White Bear Grounds Crew Looking Forward To 97th Trans-Mississippi Championship in July

Superintendent John Steiner Bubbles About the Way His Staff Is Getting Course Ready for This National Competition

By RALPH TURPINEN
Trans-Mississippi Golf Association

Now in his 32nd season as golf course superintendent of White Bear Yacht Club, John Steiner, CGCS, obviously has been involved in a variety of golf activities in this northern St. Paul suburb.



One of the projects he *really* is pleased about as well as looking forward to is the 97th Trans-Mississippi Mid-Amateur Championship to be played July 10-15 at his course.

"We're really enthusiastic about having White Bear as the site of this year's tournament, and all of us are looking forward to the

challenge," Steiner said. "From our end of things, I'm really pleased about the way our staff is getting the course ready for the tournament."

For example, he notes that Jimmy Jablonski, who is in charge of White Bear's bunker restoration program, "has been going bonkers about our bunkers. He wants to have them in tip-top shape."

"An excellent golfer himself, Jimmy has been spending a lot of time on his specialty -- preparing bunkers -- and practically all of them should be completely renovated by the time the tournament gets underway," Steiner said.

Assistant Superintendent Brad Marty, whom John calls "the lifeblood of our irrigation system," also comes in for a lot of praise for the manner in which he has been organizing a variety of duties.

"I could go on and on about everyone on our staff, because each person is ready, willing and able to do good work," Steiner said. "Whatever has to be done, we'll do it."

Eventually the ground crew's biggest challenge will be coping with whatever kind of weather will develop during the tournament and what effect it will have on the greens, as well as the pressure some 160-plus golfers will produce during the week-long tournament.

With a practice round on Sunday, July 9, followed by two full days of qualifying on Monday and Tuesday, plus two more full days of match play in the Championship Division as well as the Senior Division on Wednesday and Thursday, golfers will give the course a solid test. The pressure eases considerably later in the week as players are eliminated before the 8 a.m. finale on Sunday. Of course, a



White Bear Yacht Club Superintendent John Steiner, CGCS

careful review of tee maintenance, divots, speed and smoothness of greens and size of the rough will provide a daily tests.

"We naturally want our course looking the best for the tournament, but we also want it to be in excellent shape when our members return for their regular play," said Steiner, who got started in the turf management business during the summer of 1969 following his junior year at White Bear High School. That's when he did some maintenance work for his uncle who was building a course in Indian Wells, Calif.

Following his 1970 graduation from high school, John worked on White Bear's grounds crew while studying at the University of Minnesota where he earned his Bachelor of Science degree with a major in turfgrass science in 1976. Then he worked full-time before being selected as superintendent in 1979.

The tournament itself will present some excellent competition.

Three former Trans-Miss champions including defending titleist Mike Podolak of Oxbow Country Club in Oxbow, N.D., a suburb of Fargo, are in the field.

Podolak, who also was the USGA Mid-Amateur champion in 1984 and played on the 1985 Walker team, won the 1999 Trans title at Oklahoma City by edging Dan Dunkelberg of Fort Worth, Texas on the 22nd hole. Mike also was runner-up in the 1994 Trans at Minikahda. Dunkelberg, who also will be at White Bear, captured the

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Industry News

David Solga Receives Professional Certification

David J. Solga, superintendent at Giants Ridge golf and Ski Resort, has been designated a Certified Golf Course Superintendent (CGCS) by the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA).

Solga has been the superintendent at the Biwabik course since 1995.

To become certified, a candidate must have at least three years' experience as a golf course superintendent, be employed in that capacity and meet specific post secondary educational requirements and/or continuing education units (CEUs). The candidate must then pass a rigorous six-hour examination covering: knowledge of GCSAA and its certification program; rules of golf; turf-grass management; pest control; safety and compliance; and financial and human resource management.

Richard Meyer Joins Precision Turf

Precision Turf & Chemical, Inc. announced the addition of Richard Meyer to its sales staff. Richard is no stranger to the professional turf management industry. He has served as assistant superintendent to Spring Hill Golf Club during the "grow-in" and various other projects throughout his career. Richard's knowledge and expertise is valuable to our providing continued customer satisfaction and will be calling on the metro areas as well as the southern Minnesota golf clubs.

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1998 Trans title at Cherry Hills in Colorado.

Also entered is 1992 Trans champion Randy Sonnier, Deerwood,

Texas, who also is a former Walker Cup player as is Dick Siderowf, a two-time British Amateur champion from Westport, Conn.

Among Minnesota contenders is Gary Jacobson, Plymouth, current state mid-amateur champion.

James Gardner, CGCS, at The Wilds in Prior Lake, is among the 168 entrants in this year's Championship.

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