

On the Career Fast Track

By Rick Traver, CGCS

With all the hoopla about Tiger Woods and the PGA Championship, the other two major golf events being held in Minnesota this summer haven't gotten the attention generally afforded events of this magnitude. One of these is the 3M Championship which was held at the TPC of the Twin Cities in August, and the other is the Solheim Cup, which is coming to Interlachen Country Club in September. This article introduces the Superintendent of Interlachen, and his name is Matt Rostal. Matt has been a member of the MGCSA since 1993, is 36 years old and another of the young and successful superintendents on the Minnesota scene.

Matt's career is definitely on the fast track. Having graduated from St. Cloud State in 1989 with a Finance degree, it took very little time for Matt to figure out that banking and finance was not his "cup of tea." Matt's cups have to do with putting and his "tee" is for supporting a golf ball just prior to smoking it down the fairway.

Matt started working at Interlachen in the grounds department in 1990, and decided to go back to school at the University of Minnesota for turf. He graduated there in 1995 and was promoted to spray technician shortly thereafter. In 1998 he became the assistant superintendent at Interlachen, and when John Katterheinrich left in March of 2001, Matt was made the interim superintendent. The interim title was dropped in October of that same year. As Matt put it "two years ago it was my goal to become a superintendent and I never would have imagined it would be at Interlachen."

Interlachen, ranked #38 nationally, has a long and prestigious history. Having been incorporated in December of



MATT ROSTAL

Superintendent at Interlachen CC

1909, the name Interlachen was chosen because it means "between lakes", as is its namesake in Switzerland, Interlaken. Interlachen has had several distinguished architects. The original design, by William Watson, carried Interlachen to 1919 when Donald Ross was called upon to submit a completely redesigned layout. The course is basically the same today with a revision to #1 and #3 by Robert Trent Jones in 1963. Major tournaments held at Interlachen include, the Western Open in 1914, the Trans-Mississippi in 1916, and the 1930 U.S. National Open, that saw Robert T. Jones

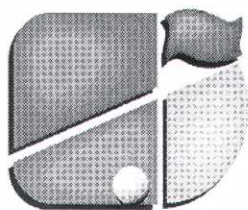
Jr., complete his "Grand Slam." In 1935 Interlachen CC saw the introduction of "Minnesota's own Patty Berg" who at the age of 17, played in the Women's National Amateur golf Championship. Other events include the 1942 U.S. Open, canceled due to WWII, the 1986 USGA Senior Amateur Championship and the 1993 Walker Cup Matches.

Matt has been married for six years to "a wonderful and understanding woman who knows my role and responsibilities as a superintendent extremely well." They are the proud parents of a new baby girl, born in June. Matt mentioned how this might put more emphasis on his time management. Personally, speaking as a father of a 5-year old, he has no idea.

Matt's short-term goals are to provide the best-conditioned golf course he can for his membership and for the players in the Solheim Cup in September. Long term he is excited about making preparations for the 2008 U.S. Women's Open. Beyond that he is unsure; however he is completely happy and satisfied at Interlachen.

Matt feels that our industry has a strong and positive future. He feels that our associations needs to continue to be proactive with legislative issues and continue to be stewards of the green industry.

Having only talked to Matt on the phone it is easy to understand why he was hired as superintendent at Interlachen. I found him to be very personable. I wish him well as he takes on his tasks of managing a major track in our golf community.



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