

Scholarship Scramble Set for Somerset on June 23

By JAMES BADE

Superintendent, Somerset Country Club

Somerset Country Club was established in 1919 when some of the members from Town and Country Golf Club of St. Paul felt their club was becoming too busy. To create a certain atmosphere Somerset was formed with the goal of not having any tee times. The members picked out a great piece of land on which to build their course just south of downtown Saint Paul in what is now Mendota Heights. They hired one of the best architects of that time, Seth Raynor, who rose to prominence with C.B. MacDonald. Mr. Raynor designed while Holm and Olson florists of Saint Paul transformed the old farm and apple orchard into a nice place to play golf.

Like many old clubs Somerset has seen its share of changes over the years. However it usually still feels like the same place it was in the 20's and 30's. With the exception of 4 holes the lay out is basically the same. Raynor mimicked famous golf holes of St. Andrews and other European courses. SCC most famous hole is the Par 3 fourth hole. It is called a Redan Hole and looks just like another Raynor hole, the Par 3 seventh at Shinnecock Hills. One of the holes that gave the pros fits at the U.S. Open in 2004. It is the biggest green on the course at 11,000 square feet and is never on the most requested walk-mowing route. SCC's present 9th hole is modeled after the Road Hole, which we are in the process



No. 11 at Somerset Country Club

of restoring to some degree. Oddly enough, a non-original hole is often considered Somerset's signature hole. The second is a 500-yard Par 5 going up a good sized hill. The walk up the hill can be tiring but the views of the Minneapolis skyline from the second

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Rising Cost of Fertilizer-

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natural gas accounts for 70-90% of the production cost of ammonia. Thus, with U.S. natural gas prices increasing significantly since 2000, average U.S. ammonia production costs rose by 172% from fiscal year 1999 to fiscal year 2005.

While fertilizer prices have risen, many U.S. producers were faced with negative margins due to the severe escalation in production costs. High natural gas prices have caused 26 U.S. ammonia plants to close permanently since FY 1999. Several plants also remain idle.

As a result of ammonia plant closures, U.S. ammonia production fell by more than 42% since FY 1999. Consequently, the U.S. fertilizer industry, which typically supplied 85% of farmers' domestic nitrogen needs from U.S.-based production during the 1990s, now relies on net nitrogen imports for more than half of new nitrogen supplies.

This situation also impacts phosphate fertilizer production, as average U.S. production costs for ammonium phosphates increased by 20% from 1999 to 2000. These costs are expected to show continued increases as ammonia prices have risen further.

Somerset CC-

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green and third tees is well worth it. Somerset has been thinning out green ash trees to create many vistas it once had.

After World War II the golf course was in need of a face-lift so Stanley Thompson, who was flamboyant in his own right, was hired to do the job. Some of you may know Mr. Thompson's work from the North Oaks Golf Club. Most of his work was re-contouring the putting surfaces and bunker work. It was the era of the bulldozer so one change was the lowering of Somerset's 3rd green by 7 feet! Unfortunately some of that work was done with little regard for topsoil. If you are a long ball hitter, you'll find Somerset's par five reachable in two strokes, but it can come back to haunt you in the four pars, with more than a couple over 450 yards from the back tees. One last thing to keep in mind if you play are the false fronts if the greens are fast.

I am sure you have heard enough about me over the past few years but I am very fortunate to work for good members and to be surrounded by a great staff that makes me look good. What makes my mechanic, Kim Huebscher, special is his attitude. He realizes what we are trying to accomplish and he is very approachable by young kids (or old ones like me) who break things accidentally. Jason my long time assistant is a very hard worker and when it comes to reshaping tees with a skid-loader, he's at the top of the list. Josh is a new young gun from the University of Minnesota turfgrass program, he knows his stuff and gets along with the staff well. And then there is Jose who arrived from California right before the Halloween Blizzard of 1991. Thankfully, for me, that didn't chase him out of town. He is indispensable to my assistants and me, because he knows exactly what we want done, and can accomplish everything well the first time. Finally, Sheree the gardener greets all of our members with a smile, and her gardens set the tone for a great day at the club. Enjoy!

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