

Municipal course offers tough test

Editor's note: The following is one of a series of articles examining the toughest hole on local golf courses.

By JOHN BOZZO

It was near 7 a.m. and cloudy when I headed toward Sylvan Glen, a municipal 18-hole golf course in Troy, for the third installment in this series.

After leaving all my golf balls and being unable to finish the 16th hole at Oakland Hills Country Club and ending an 11 on the 18th hole at Knollwood Country Club, I was anxious to redeem myself on the ninth hole at Sylvan Glen.

I vowed not to lose any more golf balls and had the strange feeling that I could hear some birds singing for me, and I didn't mean Mark Gammata as I walked toward the club house.

At Zack's professional center at the course, was found tending to some bushes at the first tee, and after a short introduction, he loaded me in a cart with a workman named Dave and pointed in the direction of the ninth tee.

Studying the scorecard he handed me before I was driven away, I noted that num-

ber nine is a 440-yard par four, which is a true handicap. The course layout on the scorecard shows a fair that over a creek, a slight dog leg to the left and an approach shot over another portion of that same creek.

A T-SHAPED formation of trees surrounded the number nine tee. An undulating fairway of mowing, moderately large hills lay the golfer at the start of the hole.

After a short warm-up, I struck a tee shot which landed on the right side of the fairway, just on the edge of the rough about 300 yards from the tee.

As I reached the ball, I could see that a large Elmwood wood was needed on the second shot, and that it should be hit with a slight hook so that I could remain in the fairway. With about 200 yards to negotiate

before reaching the green, I could see that it would be almost impossible to land on the putting surface in the regulation two strokes.

Noting my three wood lay planned, nevertheless, to land within easy pitching distance of the green. However, I began creating more problems for myself as I hit a driver about 20 yards.

One good thing about the shot is that it stopped in the middle of the fairway. I took another stroke with the three wood and managed to get the ball in the air, but only for about 30 yards onto the rough.

With 190 yards left to the green and two disappointing three-wood shots, I grabbed a long iron (number three), and prepared for my fourth shot. Getting set, I began my backswing, which got caught on a clump of sod. I lost my timing and bal-

anced, hit poorly and watched the ball as it banded up and down the hill which slopes to the creek.

I SEARCHED the near and far sides of the creek before looking into its murky water, with my trusty ball retriever which I won in a media tournament at Wabek County Club for having the highest number of strokes ready to fish out the golf ball.

I failed to find a trace of the ball. I took a drop and prepared for what would be my sixth shot, a 40-yard run-in over the creek and onto the green. Only a turny thing happened on the way to the green.

I topped the shot and landed on the opposite bank of the creek, where I would have to lift the ball quickly in order to advance any more ground.

But I received new life when I went down the hill and found the original ball a few feet from the second.

Happily about hitting my sixth shot again, I chipped it to the bottom of the sloping green, within 20 feet of the cup.

My first putt was short by a full seven feet. I rightened the grip with my right hand and knicked my eighth shot into the hole. Well, it's better than an 11 or not being able to finish a hole because of losing all my golf balls.

Maybe these birds will be really singing for me at Plum Hollow Country Club next week.

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New Katke-Cousins Golf Course

OU course has 'potential'

Editor's note: Mark Gammata is a free-lance sports writer for the Rochester Observer & Eccentric and an Oakland University alumnus. The following are his impressions of the new OU Katke-Cousins golf course, which he played on opening day.

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The word describes the recently opened Oakland University Katke-Cousins golf course—potential.

I've played other new courses and like Katke-Cousins, the fairways and greens are not mowed, but provide an excellent playable firm. But my own reaction, as well as those around me, was that the course is scenic and potentially challenging.

The course is open to students, faculty, staff and alumni with a limited number of public memberships available at \$100 apiece.

Funds for the course were provided by Marvin Katke and Harold Cousins, both Bloomfield Hills residents. Katke is a member of the Oakland University Board of Trustees while Cousins belongs to the President's Club. Between the two, they donated nearly \$500,000.

The first nine holes opened to students Friday and hundreds showed up to inaugurate the virgin course. The second nine is expected to be completed on Sept. 1.

While Katke-Cousins has its flaws, it possesses obvious possibilities. The entire course is built upon rolling landscape with few level spots. This creates added problems for golfers who have enough trouble hitting the ball on a flat surface.

THE FIRST TWO HOLES are wide open with large fairways and greens. I proved, however, that it is possible to reach the rough from the tee. The course becomes more difficult on holes three and four as it cuts into the woods, narrowing the fairways considerably.

Also shown in is a severe dogleg to the right which hides a river that cuts across the fairway.

The middle holes are out in the open again, but the distance dramatically increases. Hole number five is a 345-yard par five that is all uphill. Number six takes you reluctantly back into the woods and to the most scenic part of the course.

Number seven is a short par four, but includes a dogleg and an elevated green and necessitates accurate shot placement. Hole

number eight is the only par three, but is probably the toughest hole on the course.

THE HOLE MEASURES 175 yards, has a large green and is completely untrapped by sand. Eight is also the most artistic hole as it runs across the front lawn of Meadowbrook Hall. Eight was also my score for the hole.

Jim Lawless, director of new services for Oakland University, said the feedback from golfers playing the course was excellent. Most people had expected to find the course a little rough and it was but they also saw a great deal of potential in the layout and positioning of the holes.

There were also some shortcomings to the course that had nothing to do with the condition of the playing surface. The holes were not clearly marked. Sometimes when a hole was completed, it was impossible to tell where the next tee was located.

ALSO THERE WAS a problem finding the course itself. I knew the course was located on the grounds behind the university, but there were no signs either on campus or Adams Road to indicate where the entrance was.

There are minor faults that can be easily corrected. What won't be easy to correct is the fact that the rough provides the ball with a better lie than the fairways. This I know from experience.

The greens are treacherous, being slow and bumpy. When I hit the ball fairly, it did go in the direction I meant it to, but then again that happens even when I play on smooth greens.

These distractions were easily overlooked on opening day as the students were not happy to have a course of their own. The rates for students are a reasonable \$2 for nine and \$3 for 18 during the week. On the weekend the rates are \$4 and \$6.

For faculty and staff the cost is \$3 and \$5 during the week and \$5 and \$7 for the weekend. Guests are charged \$4 and \$6 during the week and \$6 and \$8 on the weekend. Public members are charged 40 cents less per round.

Those who played with me are looking forward to playing next year when the course will be in better shape. The Oakland University golf team is planning on holding its spring matches there.

Somerset tourney planned for August

The sixth annual Somerset Tennis Club Invitational Tournament will be held Aug. 13-15 at the Recreation Center in the Somerset Park Apartments complex in Troy. Sanctioned by the United States Tennis Association, the men's singles tournament offers over \$1,200 in prize money. The draw is limited to 32 players holding valid USTA membership cards.

Among player attractions is Jon Hainline, currently ranked number one in Southeastern Michigan. Hainline was a runner-up in the recent Cavanaugh's \$7,000 biennial doubles tournament, teaming with Dale O'Brien. Southern Conference doubles champion and winner of the Somerset Tennis Club's Invitation Tournament last year.

Also confirmed to play is Graham South of New Zealand, winner of the 1974 Sibley Shore Men's Invitational, doubles.

All qualified male players are invited to get entry forms and details from the Somerset Tennis Club's professional, Mark Schneider, at 640-3300. Written inquiries should be mailed to Box 603, Troy, Mich. 48061.

Entry deadline is Monday, Aug. 9.

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