

An O&E guide to Whispering Willows

My intent in this article is to give the contestants in this weekend's Observer & Eccentric Golf Tournament a brief plan on how to play each of the 18 holes at Whispering Willows Golf Course.

Whispering Willows is not a lengthy course (6,250 yards). It has rolling terrain and medium-sized greens, and is in fine condition for a public course. This plan of attack is not just for the five-handicap, but for the 25-handicap as well.

HOLE NO. 1 — A 475-yard, par-5, straight away without trouble. The long hitter may reach in two, the short hitter (180-yard tee shot) in three. The green slopes severely from back to front.

Everyone should try to putt uphill, or count on three-putting. Play for par here.

HOLE NO. 2 — The No. 1 handicap hole: 455-yard par-4, with woods on both sides and a hill that falls down into a pond in front of the green. The drive is the key — it must be in play or a bogey (or worse) is inevitable. The green is big with a medium break.

The 20-handicapper should play for a bogey.

HOLE NO. 3 — A very good 445-yard par-4, wide open with only a few small trees that may interfere. The golfer with a 250-yard tee shot will still have to hit a good three or four iron to reach the green in two. Bunkers guard the green front and back.

Short hitters will have to use two woods. Fifty percent (at least) of the field will bogey here.

HOLE NO. 4 — A par-4, 345-yard dogleg to the left, this hole can be played much shorter by hitting the tee shot

right at the green. That will leave a pitch to a small green with a mound in the center, which makes for a very tricky putt.

This should be a birdie hole.

HOLE NO. 5 — A great uphill, 204-yard par-3 with trees right and left. There are bunkers on both sides of a large green, with many good pin positions. Long hitters should use a two or three iron off the tee, short hitters a wood.

Lots of bogies can be expected here.

HOLE NO. 6 — Like No. 4, this is a 358-yard, par-4 that doglegs left but can be played shorter by hitting right at the green (saving 30-40 yards). The green is banked, which allows the player to hit right at the flag without worrying too much about a lot of roll.

An easy birdie hole for the long hitters. No. 6 is an easy par for all players.

HOLE NO. 7 — A short (135 yards) and straight par-3 shot from an elevated tee to a 7,500-square-foot green.

An easy par with little possibilities, but the putt could come from 60-70 feet away.

HOLE NO. 8 — A 374-yard par-4, straightaway with out of bounds from tee to green along the left side. Some tee shots will catch a bunker on the right edge of the fairway. Green slopes down from back to front.

This is a good birdie hole as long as you don't have to putt downhill.

HOLE NO. 9 — This is the second best hole on the front nine: 390 yards, par-4 straightaway. A creek crosses the fairway at 240 yards and is down a hill. The creek drains into a lake on the right side of the fairway only 200 yards



golf
Gary Whitner

from the tee.

Don't use a driver off the tee. Long hitters should try a three or four iron, short hitters a four or five wood. The second shot is slightly uphill to a green bunkered on the right, left and left front. The green is a good one, with several tricky breaks in it.

Bogey this hole and you won't lose too many strokes to your competitors.

HOLE NO. 10 — A straight 460-yard par-5 without much trouble other than a green that slopes severely from front to back.

Plays like a par-4 for longer hitters. An easy par for all contestants.

HOLE NO. 11 — Don't let the distance on this par-4 — 358 yards — fool you. Trees line both sides of the fairway, with a small valley 150 yards from the tee.

Don't use a wood off the tee. There's a big green to shoot at, provided the tee shot is in the fairway. Play this one for par.

HOLE NO. 12 — There are trees right and left and even one in the center of the fairway of this 317-yard par-4. There's also a slight dogleg left.

The tee shot must be in play, 150-160 yards and straight. The green's a small one, but a tee shot in play makes this a birdie possibility.

HOLE NO. 13 — This is the easiest

hole on the course, only 305 yards for a par-4. A long hitter can drive it on or to the fringe of the green. The short hitter should only have a short pitch shot to the green.

Some good pin positions will make birdies a little more difficult. Still, this hole is no trouble.

HOLE NO. 14 — Play your tee shot to the right and you'll be okay here. It's a 370-yard par-4, straight away, with lots of room to the right but out of bounds to the left. A good tee shot leaves a five iron to the green for the high handicap and a nine iron for the long hitter.

The green has some subtle breaks in it that make the birdie attempt tougher. But birdies are a definite possibility — just don't hit to the left.

HOLE NO. 15 — This is a super 219-yard, par-3 from an elevated tee to a large green. A creek crosses the fairway 50 yards in front of the tee, where it really doesn't come into play. But it also runs along the left side of the hole, where it can penalize a hooked tee shot. On the right side are trees from tee to green. Par here is very good.

HOLE NO. 16 — It's out of bounds all the way down the left side and woods line the right side for 185 yards on this 494-yard par-5. The tee shot is most important here; the fairway

opens up after 200 yards. The green is well-trapped on right and left and plays very tricky.

Very few will hit this green in two shots. Play it for par.

HOLE NO. 17 — Short but well-bunkered front and back describes this hole, a 156-yard par-3. A five or six iron to a five wood could be used, depending on the strength of the player. You don't want a sidehill or downhill putt. This green has been four-putted before in this tournament.

HOLE NO. 18 — Remember one thing on this 402-yard par 4 — keep your drive to the right. Out of bounds lines the left side, from tee to green. A

good tee shot still requires a three- to a six-iron second shot, perhaps even a five wood.

The green is well-trapped, with good pin positions that make three-putting a distinct possibility. Par is a good score here.

Scores should be better than the handicap if players don't attack certain holes. However, the course can play as if it's 6,800 yards if the player is careless.

Gary Whitner is the golf pro at Livonia's Whispering Willows, site of the O&E Golf Tournament. Whitner also serves as treasurer for the Michigan PGA.

Falcon runners win Schoolcraft Invite

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"We're excited," said the Farmington coach. "Dan just got back and he's capable of running with those kids."

But can the young Falcons overhaul defending state champion Redford Catholic Central?

"It's a possibility," said Young. "We have a good chance to be one of the top teams in the state — hopefully."

The Falcons could very well meet CC if they gain an invitation to next week-end's Haslett Invitational. If not, the two teams may not see each other until the state finals (Saturday, Nov. 3).

"We haven't heard anything yet on Haslett," said Young, "but we'd like to see them."

IN THE GIRLS MEET. Northville won the team title with 105 points followed by Redford Union (127), Livonia Stevenson (131) and Plymouth Salem (137).

Cindy Panowicz of Northville was the overall champ in 20:32.7.

She was followed by Pam Eldridge, Glenn; Janis Hlinak, RU; Susan Tatigian, Stevenson; Sherry Williams, Bishop Borgess; Melly Mogileski, RU; Sue Wiley, Livonia Ladywood; Denise Durrer, Salem; Katie Showick, Redford Thurston; and Lauri Runk, Farmington Harrison.

The top 10 finishers were named All-Invitational.

Pioneer sports looks to have bright future

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"There are certain things I'd like to see," he admitted. "I'd like to bring baseball and softball back."

OU MUST add one women's varsity sport by 1997 and another by 1998, bringing its total from the current four (tennis, basketball, swimming and volleyball) to six.

The facilities for baseball and softball already exist, making them natural selections. "And we don't have anything much going in the spring, other than golf," Hartman noted.

Finance, student interest and if it is a conference sport are determining factors in what new sports will be added. There is a women's club soccer team this season, but no other Great Lakes Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (GLIAC) school has women's soccer.

Other new sport possibilities are skiing and cross country. Nothing yet has been decided, but Hartman did say that "we may add before" the 1997 deadline.

MEANTIME, the emphasis remains on the basketball, swimming and soccer programs. While Lepley scrambled to find facilities to use off campus in his early years as OU's AD, Hartman busies himself finding ways to promote and help finance the programs.

"We want to do more and more promotional things with the community," he said. One of the sports OU is promoting is soccer. It hasn't been easy, however.

Four of the top 15 Division II teams in the country visited OU last weekend for its first-ever National Invitational Tournament. The crowd was sparse; indeed, OU failed to make the finals and, after the home team played in the consolation game, the stands emptied, not waiting for the championship.

"It's hard," Hartman said of their efforts to draw fans to games despite its outstanding successes. "U.S. citizens as a whole have not supported soccer. Traditionally, they have not grown up with it."

HE OFFERED no answers, other than "we're doing what we can to develop interest in soccer."

Basketball, Hartman thinks, "should attract a following. It's a traditional American sport."

But men's basketball is the one sport in which OU has not experienced much success. Hartman is counting on new coach Greg Kampe to alter that pattern.

Hartman also will continue trying to gather community support. He organized the Community Athletic Committee, which devised promotions like last year's \$1 million basketball shot contest. A roast of Detroit Pistons coach Thomas is being planned for November as a basketball fund-raiser.

OU athletes, too, are finally getting some recognition. The Hall of Honor was opened last spring to praise past OU athletic greats, and an awards banquet was held in May to honor current athletes.

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