

## History from page 10

but the history of this enchanting club dates back almost 80 years to two determined young men and some rolling Michigan farmland.

Joseph Mack, the proprietor of a printing business, and Norval Hawkins, a sales manager for an automobile manufacturer, purchased the Miller Farm on Maple Road as a real estate venture. The pair then discovered the magic of golf and decided to convert the land into a golf course.

Mack and Hawkins formed a club and sold the land to the membership at cost (there were 140 members who paid \$250 each to join). Oakland Hills Country Club eventually held its first meeting on Oct. 16, 1916 and Mack was elected president.

Ross, the renowned golf course architect of the early 20th century, was also retained. And starting in 1917 he built the South Course around what are now the 10th and 11th holes.

The South Course was formally opened on July 13, 1918. A large, red barn stood on the left side of the first fairway, the two-story Miller Farmhouse served as the first clubhouse — there were showers and 100 lockers in the basement — and an old chicken coop functioned as the pro shop for the course's first golf professional, Walter Hagen.

Early in 1922 members voted to build a clubhouse for \$275,000. When it was completed in August of that year, the cost had escalated to \$650,000 and members were solicited for extra funds in order to furnish the Colonial-style structure.

The original clubhouse had accommodations for 48 overnight guests, but it was common for members to stay at the club for weeks at a time. Some of these guest rooms were retained until 1968 when a major second-floor renovation was completed providing additional space for the club's growing membership.

The Spicer and German farms, directly north across Maple Road, were purchased in 1922 to add another 18 holes. Work was completed on this North Course in 1923 and play began in 1924.

The North Course was operated as a second course for members for the first several years, except for major tournaments like the U.S. Open when it serves as a parking facility. During the depression years it was turned into a semi-private club before Robert Trent Jones redesigned it and reverted it to its original status as a second private course for Oakland Hills at the beginning of the 1969 season.

The Maple Road "barrier" that separated the North and South Courses was eliminated by the construction of an arched, aluminum pedestrian bridge. The connector, which was delivered already assembled and erected in less than three hours, measured 210 feet long, 11 feet wide and weighed 40,000 pounds.

As for this year's tournament, the South Course will play at 6,974 yards, 22 yards less than it did for the 1985 event. The 18th hole will also play as a 465-yard par-4, 15 yards longer than in '85.

## Caddys, from page 18

The 38-year-old Clarkston resident has been working at Oakland Hills since 1972 and has had the opportunity to caddy in the last five major events hosted by Oakland Hills.

In 1972, at the tender age of 13 years, Betts got his first taste of the big tournaments life when he caddied for Tommy Aaron in the PGA Championship. The excitement grew throughout the tournament and culminated with a 17th-place finish by Aaron.

"Back then, it was the last tournament in which the players had to use the local caddys," explained Betts, who grew up in Southfield and would ride his bike to Oakland Hills to work as a caddy. "It was really exciting. They had a lottery draw and they would choose the name of one of the golfers then pick a caddy to work with him. It got pretty exciting when they called the big names like Nicklaus and Palmer. It's something I'll never forget."

Betts also caddied for Dan Sikes in the 1972 PGA Championship, Dow Finsterwald (Arnold Palmer's college

room mate) in the 1981 Senior Open, Jack Nicklaus during the practice rounds of the 1985 U.S. Open and for Jim Alford in the 1991 Senior Open.

"It's been pretty exciting and I've been very fortunate," added Betts. "They have all done fairly well. They have all made the cut and gone on to make some money."

Betts began working as a caddy at Oakland Hills in 1972 and was the Caddy of the Year in 1974 and 1975. He joined the staff at Oakland Hills in 1977 and has been a staff member ever since. Betts became the Caddy Master in 1991. He is currently in charge of all outside operations including cart operations, bag drops, the ranger program and the caddy house for the kids.

"We're separate from the golf pro," explained Betts. "Everyone has to go through me to get on the golf course. I set all the carts and caddys. We have 50,000-plus rounds a year with 13- to 14,000 guest rounds so it keeps us very busy here."

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