Upcoming Events

**February**
- 28  PKB Jr. Girls Tour

**March**
- 01  PKB Jr. Girls Tour
- 02-03  Greens Aerification
- 04  LGA Kickoff Clinic & Luncheon
- 07  Member Appreciation Breakfast
- 11  LGA First Play Day
- 17  WCMA Monthly Meeting
- 19  New Member Orientation Dinner
- 21  Super Saturday # 1

**Follow the Walker Course on FACEBOOK and TWITTER** for up to the minute updates and course information.

**BRENT JESSUP**  
PGA HEAD GOLF PROFESSIONAL

**2015 Excitement Lies Ahead!**

By now we are sure you have heard the rumors and the rumors are true! We will be closing The Walker Course this summer to re-surface our putting greens with Diamond Zoysia grass and complete several other much needed repairs and projects that have been delayed for several years.

We plan to close the golf course from June 22nd until August 15th to complete this massive project. With just under one million dollars allocated for these renovations, you will see several great improvements to your Walker Course.

Don Garrett, our golf course superintendent, will be sharing the specifics of the project in his newsletter section over the next several months as we prepare for the shutdown.

From the golf operations side, the golf staff and tournament committee are working to “squeeze in” as many of your regular tournaments before the shutdown, including match play and the club championships. The member-member will be contested after we re-open and we will reduce the total number of Super Saturday events for this year.

Since the golf course will not be available for play during that time, we are seeking and negotiating “reciprocal play” agreements with several local courses. Most of the courses we have contacted have expressed an interest in helping out. As we get closer to the closing date, details of those arrangements will be made known to the membership. If you have a specific course you would like to see included in a “play rotation,” please let us know and we will be sure to contact them as well.

The swimming pool, clubhouse grill, golf shop (adjusted hours) and practice chipping green will remain open throughout the summer for your use. The practice RANGE will be closed until approximately August 1st to complete a few projects in that area as well.

Since you will still have some access to the golf course in June and August, you will be billed full monthly dues. During July, ALL membership classifications will be billed an “inactive” fee of only $35. This dues reduction will allow you to allocate between $55.00-$90.00, (the remainder of your normal monthly dues) toward green fees at other courses you may play. Also, if you are a member of the “range club” for this year, your privileges will be extended three months (through March 2016) to compensate for the range closing period as well.

We are very excited about these projects and improvements to your facilities. There are many details to be ironed out over the next four/five months and we expect many questions to be proposed. We will do our best to answer and address any concerns you may have about the project. PLEASE feel free to contact Jeff Martin, Don Garrett, or me (Brent Jessup) with any questions you have. We look forward to this exciting time and will keep you informed as news, timelines, etc. develop within this project.

Membership by the Numbers
- Individuals: 120  Family: 119
- Non-Resident: 31
- Young Alumni: 15
- Inactive: 12  Life: 27
- Total Membership: 324

Membership Resignations
- Al & Jill Evans
- Willis Davis
- Charles & Christee Williams

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Range Club Renewals
You may have noticed the range balls are missing from the outside gazebo. We have temporarily moved the range balls inside the golf shop as a friendly reminder that Range Club renewals need to be confirmed with the golf shop staff. This MEMBERS ONLY benefit is still only $200 for the first member and $100 for each additional member on the same membership.

Since the Walker Course will be closed for a period of time this summer during the renovation project, we will be extending your privileges through the end of March of 2016 to make up for the loss of days in 2015. In 2016 we will bill the range club members’ pro-rata (April-December).

We plan to return the range balls to the outside gazebo later this month as play picks up and annual renewals are complete.

GHIN Handicap Fees
2015 USGA-GHIN handicap service annual fees are due and payable this month. Walker Course members from 2014 were billed on their January statements. If you prefer to drop this service, please contact bjessup@clemson.edu before February 15th. After the fifteenth, we are not able to credit you for dropping from the service for 2015. The cost for members is again only $30.

Non Walker Course members who also use this service were placed on “inactive hold” until we receive their 2015 payment. Non-members annual fee is $40 for the year. Please drop by the golf shop to “re-activate” your handicap.

2015 Member Event Schedule
Now that we have the complete football schedule for the fall, the tournament committee will be finalizing the tournament schedule for the year later this month. A full schedule and magnet calendar will be ready for distribution in March.

We do know the dates of upcoming events for March. Please make a note of these “soon arriving” dates for March:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 7</td>
<td>Member Appreciation Breakfast</td>
<td>Seneca Family Restaurant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 19</td>
<td>New Member Orientation Dinner</td>
<td>Madren Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 21</td>
<td>Super Saturday # 1</td>
<td>Walker Course</td>
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New Cart Fleet
Since our last newsletter in December, we received a new fleet of E-Z-Go RXV golf carts. This fleet is identical in appearance, but has several improved performance enhancements. There is a new and improved battery package that will extend the life of the carts. You may also notice they seem a bit slower, and that is to be expected since the manufacturer has reduced the cruise speed as an improved safety feature.

We are looking forward to a reduced repair and maintenance cycle and hope you will continue to take as much care of these carts as you always have. All that being said, along with improved features comes increased costs. Our new lease agreement is a bit more expensive and that will necessitate an increase in cart fees. Our last cart fee increase was back in 2011. We were able to maintain the old cart fee throughout the last lease period without an increase, but we will be increasing the cart fee $2.00 per rider for 18 holes beginning April 1st. Thanks in advance for your understanding and please let us know if you experience any unusual problems with this new fleet.

PKB Volunteers Needed
It’s time again for The Walker Course to host the Peggy Kirk Bell Girls Junior Golf Tour. The tournament is scheduled here for Saturday and Sunday, February 28 and March 1st. We need several adult volunteers to drive shuttle golf carts to help move these young ladies around the golf course. If you are able to volunteer a three-hour shift on either day; morning or afternoon, it would be a great help. Please call the golf shop to inquire about available shifts. Thanks for allowing these young ladies the opportunity to play your great golf course!

The Winner Is…
Congratulations to Ed Carrier, the winner of the 2014-2015 holiday bowl pool contest. Mr. Carrier won the jackpot of $345.00 for correctly picking the most winners (26) of the 38-game contest. Mr. Carrier won by a margin of only ONE game. Now a multi-year winner, we need to watch his picks next year and pay more attention. Congratulations Ed!
Renovation News

If you weren’t at the annual meeting of the WCMA and hadn’t heard, the Walker Course will be closing from June 22-August 15 to resurface the greens and perform some much needed improvements to course infrastructure. Projects slated to be done include:

- Replace the retaining wall at the tunnel from 1-2.
- Level/Enlarge/Rebuild several tees.
- Improve drainage in several areas in the fairways.
- Replace the cart bridges on holes 6 & 9.
- Repair several bunkers.
- Irrigation system upgrades.
- Restroom painting and repairs.
- Cart path repairs.

Understand that we are not doing a complete renovation or redesign of the course. We are merely fixing as many issues as our budget will allow along with the resurfacing of the greens.

As for the greens, they are now 20 years old and in need of repair. We have significant organic matter buildup that disrupts the flow of air and water in the rootzone and contamination from bermudagrass. It is time to do something before they fail in a hot summer and we lose them. Like many courses in the southeast, we are moving away from bentgrass to a warm season grass, with the hope of providing more quality playing days throughout the year while reducing the risk of catastrophic failure from heat and humidity with bent. Therefore we are planning to resurface them with Diamond Zoysia. Diamond is the grass that was planted on the chipping green last May. Many courses have selected an ultradwarf bermudagrass when making this transition. However, it requires more sunlight than bent or Zoysia and performs poorly in shady sites. With the amount of shade that we have on several holes, Bermuda was not a viable option for the Walker Course. Also, Diamond Zoysia is slightly more cold tolerant than the ultradwarfs. We feel like Diamond is best for our conditions.

I’ve received many questions regarding Diamond Zoysia and I’ll attempt to answer some of them here:

Q1. New Bermuda greens that I have played were extremely firm. Will our new greens be that firm?
A1. New Bermuda greens that are sprigged can be very firm for the first couple of years while a healthy amount of thatch builds up to supply some cushioning. With the Diamond Zoysia, it will be sodded instead of sprigged, therefore it will have some thatch initially that comes with the sod. While you can expect it to be firmer than the bentgrass, it should not be so firm that you can’t hold a well struck shot.

Q2. Will you be changing the contours or shape of any greens?
A2. No. Our budget does not allow for significant changes to the greens. Unfortunately, it is not as easy as just pushing the greensmix around. The surface contours of a USGA green must match the contours of the underlying gravel layer and drainage system for it to perform properly. Like we did when we reseeded #16 two years ago, should we see incorrect depths of mix (too shallow or too deep), we will try to rectify those issues as best we can. In those cases however, it would very slightly change the surface grades. Also, any low areas on the greens that hold water will be corrected to allow for proper surface runoff.

Q3. I’ve heard this grass is slow in the summer. Is that true?
A3. In comparison to the ultradwarfs, yes, it is typically slower at that time of year. However, when compared to the typical speeds we see with bentgrass here at the Walker Course during the summer, Diamond should at least meet or exceed the speed of our bent in July and August. With bentgrass in the summer, we are managing for the health and survivability of the grass first and foremost, with speed secondary. With Diamond, it thrives in the heat of summer, so we will be able to be aggressive with it in regards to mowing heights and work for speed. As for fall, winter and spring, the only issue with speed is not letting the greens get too fast since Diamond does not grow as aggressively in those times of the year.
Superintendent’s News Cont’d:

Q. I’ve heard these warm season grasses are cheaper to maintain. Are you just doing this for cost?
A. Many people claim that the warm season grasses are less expensive to maintain. For example, fans will no longer be needed for air movement in the summer since Diamond likes the heat. This will save us $8,000 in electricity costs each year. Also, we will save some labor by not having to wilt watch and hand water greens 4-5 days each week during the warm months. Fungicide costs should be lower as disease is less of an issue than it is on bentgrass. But certain costs will increase. We will perform more light, frequent topdressing which will cause expenditures for sand to increase. More sand will cause the mower blades to dull quicker, which will result in less life on mower blades and bedknives. And because the greens will go dormant during the winter months, we will have to paint them during that time of the year. There are other examples as well. At the end of the day, I do expect that we may see some savings. But that is not what is driving this change. Again this grass is more sustainable and should give us more good putting days annually.

Q. I noticed you covered the chipping green with a big black tarp when it got so cold in early January. Are you going to have to do all the greens like this when it gets cold?
A. Yes. On extremely cold nights, we will cover the greens to provide protection from the cold. Typically, this will be when nighttime lows are forecast to be below 23 degrees. Diamond is a little more cold tolerant than Bermuda, so we may use 21 or 22 degrees as our indicator to cover. Other factors such as wind and the high the next day are also considered when deciding to cover. The covers would be removed the next day, unless the highs are only reaching into the low 40’s and forecast to be near 20 the next night. Most courses report that this isn’t a big factor to limiting play as very few rounds are played when the temperatures are this cold.

I’ll address a few more questions next month, as well as some things to expect once we re-open. In the meantime, if you have a question you would like to see answered, send me an email at dgarret@clemson.edu.

Winter Update

We have spent a lot of time the last 2 months doing underbrushing and thinning overgrown trees. We have also repaired the sinkhole under the cartpath on hole #17. This work entailed excavating the sinkhole area to remove the old logs and stumps that were buried years ago during construction and have been decaying leading to the settling. Once they were removed, we filled the hole with soil. Traffic has been diverted and will remain this way to make sure all of the soil settles before replacing this section of cartpath. We have also completed the bulk of our winter weed spraying program.