

GAME CHANGER

Sedgefield owner McConnell Golf made a bold decision last year to convert the club's green complexes to Bermuda grass just months before the tournament. But the praise was unanimous and tournament organizers say they are more excited than ever heading into this year's event.

RALEIGH, N.C. (AUGUST 2013) — Wyndham Championship Tournament Director Mark Brazil says it is a different Keith Wood he has witnessed patrolling the Sedgefield Country Club Ross Course in the weeks immediately prior to this year's Wyndham Championship in Greensboro.

"I can see that Keith's step is [more confident] this year," said Brazil of Sedgefield's head golf course superintendent. "He's got a little bounce in his step I didn't see around this time last year."

When Wood's employer, McConnell Golf, purchased Sedgefield Country Club in early 2011, the Raleigh-based company immediately began making significant improvements necessary in order to help restore the club to its former glory.

In June 2012, with an eye on having Sedgefield's Donald Ross-designed golf course ranked among the state's Top 10 within the next five years — and preventing the club's maintenance staff from having to worry about hot weather and its effects on bent grass greens every summer — Wood and his staff began converting Sedgefield's green complexes to a more heat-resistant strain of Bermuda grass.

"This time last year there was still a little nervousness," Brazil said. "It makes tournament directors nervous, too, when we are killing greens in June and we've got to play a golf tournament in mid-August. I know Keith was stressed out and I was stressed out as well."

To a player, however, the praise for last year's greens was across-the-board unanimous: "I still haven't heard one negative word about this place from any of the players," said Brazil. "Sedgefield has become one of their favorite golf courses on tour. It's the only Donald Ross course they play and it is has got a phenomenal reputation."

Even after torrential Sunday rain last year led to a Monday tournament finish, and after champion Sergio Garcia had received the Sam Snead Cup and his winner's check for \$936,000, he looked over toward his longtime friend, Brazil, and the Spaniard posed a single question.

"Sergio looks at me and says 'how in the world did [the greens] get so good so fast, with this much rain?'" recalled Brazil. "That says a lot about Keith's ability and his staff."

McConnell Golf Vice President of Golf Operations Brian Kittler said the new greens and numerous other changes around Sedgefield Country Club are all part of the McConnell Golf motto: “We take very seriously our creed, which is ‘pure golf for the true golfer,’” said Kittler. “We want to make sure our members enjoy the same perfect conditions that the world’s best golfers enjoy week in and week out. There is no better example of that than Sedgefield Country Club.”

Brazil said Wood is not the only person around Sedgefield who feels much more confident headed into the 74th Wyndham Championship. “Last year was difficult just because they were brand-new greens,” said Brazil. “Keith had basically two months and change to grow them in. I know good and well that he is now in the process of dialing this place in exactly the way he wants it.

“I am more excited this year than ever,” he said. “I think Keith would tell you this is the year that he’s got the chance to make this place perfect.”

McConnell Golf at 10 Years

McConnell Golf’s mission during its first decade of existence has been to offer all areas of the Carolinas some of the finest private golf and country clubs. McConnell Golf offers pure golf for the true golfer as a privately held company offering one membership and access to eight private club experiences at world-class facilities and golf courses designed by legends Donald Ross, Pete Dye, Tom Fazio, Arnold Palmer, Greg Norman and Hale Irwin. Founded in 2003, McConnell Golf provides members a quality golf experience among 153 holes of championship golf at eight properties: Raleigh Country Club in Raleigh, N.C.; Treyburn Country Club in Durham, N.C.; Old North State Club at Badin Lake, N.C.; Musgrove Mill Golf Club in Clinton, S.C.; The Reserve Golf Club in Pawleys Island, S.C.; Sedgefield Country Club in Greensboro, N.C; and Wakefield Plantation in Raleigh, N.C. All clubs are maintained and serviced to the highest standards with an emphasis on true golf, complete service and absolute quality. McConnell Golf offers numerous unique membership opportunities that are tailored to young families, avid golfers, corporate executives and culinary enthusiasts. Membership offerings include individual club memberships, as well as innovative corporate, national and legacy memberships that deliver unmatched access to the top courses in the Carolinas.

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