

## GROWING THE GAME

***McConnell Golf has steadily stamped its signature on some of the most storied private golf courses around the Southeast. With its latest addition, Raleigh Golf Association, McConnell Golf now set its sights on the growth and improvement of public-access golf in North Carolina's Capital City.***

**RALEIGH, N.C. (April 4, 2016)** — In the past 13 years, Raleigh-based McConnell Golf has purchased a dozen private golf club properties around the southeast.

On Monday, McConnell Golf announced that it would be making its mark on the public golf sector with the addition of Raleigh Golf Association (RGA), a 27-hole public golf facility in south Raleigh. Founded in 1929, RGA is the second oldest golf course in the Raleigh area and equally popular among senior, women and junior golfers — having played host through the years to a variety of corporate, fund-raising, tournament- and league-play events. McConnell Golf has a 10-year lease with RGA.

McConnell Golf Owner and CEO John McConnell grew up on a farm in Virginia playing public golf, and said he is excited about returning to his roots.

“The main reason that I am doing this RGA deal is that it gives (McConnell Golf) a great opportunity to help grow the game of golf for those who may not be club members or have a regular golf course to play,” McConnell said. “I grew up on a farm and played the public courses and fell in love with golf when I was paying a couple of bucks for green fees.

“I want to offer a place for kids, beginners, seniors and others from all kinds of walks to have a place that helps them enjoy the game.”

RGA is walker-friendly, with minimal distances from green to tee and the facility's 27 holes — each nine averages less than 3,000 yards from the back tees — offer unique challenges for all levels of player. Said McConnell: “What I really like about RGA is that these 27 holes will not cause you to quit the game, as they are very fun holes and not that challenging — which is the problem with most modern courses.”

At RGA, McConnell said he plans to establish the first McConnell Golf Training Center, where the company can offer expert training at very reasonable rates.

“We will offer a great venue for high school golf as well,” McConnell said. “(The RGA addition) is truly an opportunity for us to give back to this community. I want it to very affordable golf, a fun venue, and fast paced for those that time is an issue.”

Founded in 2003, McConnell Golf has steadily grown into one of the country's most highly regarded, independent country club ownership companies. In February, Charlotte's Providence Country Club became the 12<sup>th</sup> private golf club property in the McConnell Golf stable, which now includes a total of 225 private golf holes around the Carolinas and Tennessee.

McConnell Golf's collection of clubs in North Carolina includes Raleigh Country Club and TPC at Wakefield Plantation in Raleigh, Sedgefield Country Club Ross Course and Dye Course in Greensboro, Old North State Club in New London, Treyburn Country Club in Durham, Brook Valley Country Club in Greenville and The Country Club of Asheville. In South Carolina, McConnell Golf owns The Reserve Golf Club in Pawleys Island and Musgrove Mill Golf Club in Clinton, and McConnell Golf also manages the Grande Dunes Members Course and Ocean Club in Myrtle Beach. In Knoxville, Tenn., McConnell Golf recently purchased venerable Holston Hills Country Club.

Holston Hills is one of four McConnell Golf courses designed by the legendary Donald Ross, while other layouts in the company selection bear well-known designer names such as Arnold Palmer, Tom Fazio, Pete Dye and Greg Norman.

Despite RGA being a public golf facility, McConnell said his latest addition fits the company mold. "Raleigh is a growth area and (RGA) is the second oldest course in the region and is a classic design," he said.

Through the years, McConnell Golf has bolstered its burgeoning reputation in the golf industry by investing significantly in improvements and upgrades at its clubs. McConnell Golf Vice President of Agronomy Michael Shoun said the company's general practices and discounts on materials would translate into immediate improvements at RGA.

"We're excited about (RGA), because I really think that we can take that course and step it up a level compared to what it is today, and give people who are not able to go to the private clubs the chance to play a good, quality public course," Shoun said. "We're going to be able to do some things there that they've never been able to do."

McConnell said he hopes the RGA addition will help change the perception of public golf around the Capital City and beyond. "Bottom line, I want to eliminate those same old negatives that people say about golf: too costly and takes too much time," McConnell said. "This is a game to be enjoyed for a lifetime. The best family times ever can be created playing golf."

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### **About McConnell Golf**

With the recent additions Providence Country Club in Charlotte, NC and Holston Hills in Knoxville, TN, McConnell Golf ([www.McConnellGolf.com](http://www.McConnellGolf.com)) now owns 12 18-

hole, private golf courses plus one nine-hole course around the southeast. McConnell Golf's stable of clubs in North and South Carolina also includes Raleigh Country Club in Raleigh, NC, Sedgefield Country Club Ross Course and Dye Course in Greensboro, NC, TPC at Wakefield Plantation in Raleigh, NC, Old North State Club in New London, NC, Treyburn Country Club in Durham, NC, Brook Valley Country Club in Greenville, NC, The Country Club of Asheville (NC), The Reserve Golf Club in Pawleys Island, SC, and Musgrove Mill Golf Club in Clinton, SC. McConnell Golf also manages the prestigious Grande Dunes Members Club and Ocean Club in Myrtle Beach for LStar Development.

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