

SEDFIELD 2.0

Greensboro's Donald Ross classic and host course of the Wyndham Championship has always been an enjoyable test of golf. Now, with new Bermuda green complexes and a host of other changes around the club courtesy of McConnell Golf, Sedgfield is ready to play with the big boys.

RALEIGH, N.C. (August 2012) — When McConnell Golf purchased Sedgfield Country Club in early 2011, its new owner recognized significant improvements to the longtime host site of the Wyndham Championship would be necessary in order to help restore the club to its former glory. Numerous, well-publicized upgrades were made prior to the 2011 Wyndham, while others are ongoing.

Most significantly, with an eye on having Sedgfield'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 — McConnell Golf CEO John McConnell decided to convert Sedgfield's green complexes to the more heat-resistant grass strain Champion Bermuda.

McConnell said the decision followed considerable research and after his company sought the advice of its maintenance supervisors and Sedgfield's advisory board. Golf course architect Kris Spence oversaw the nearly half-million-dollar project, which included enlarging the second green in the back for a better pin position and modifying the front of the 17th green. Spence also added bunkers around the greens on No. 5 (two new bunkers back right and one front left) and No. 15 (behind the green) to better reward great shots and penalize bad ones on the tournament's two par 5s. The bailout area left of the 15th green will now feature heavy rough rather than a closely mown area.

When defending Wyndham Championship and U.S. Open champion Webb Simpson returned to Sedgfield for media day in late June, he rolled a few lengthy putts across the club's ninth green toward his most recent pair of silver trophies. Simpson unwittingly offered the crowd in attendance a taste of what may be in store for the field during the 2012 tournament by stroking his second putt all the way off the front of the green.

“With Bermuda greens, Sedgfield becomes one of the great golf courses on the PGA Tour,” said Simpson, “It's going to be really a good thing for the tournament. As a player we love things that are challenging. [Sedgfield] was difficult before. Now it's going to be even more difficult. I think it's safe to say that the days of 20-under par are over. I've always loved Sedgfield, but I'm really looking forward to playing the Wyndham on the new greens.”

In addition, two-time Wyndham Championship winner and 2012 Ryder Cup captain Davis Love III said he was equally pleased about the decision: “Changing the Sedgfield greens to Bermuda grass is great news for the members at Sedgfield, but it's also great for the Wyndham,” said Love. “I thank Mr. McConnell for having the vision and

leadership to make this change. The new greens will allow the course to be played the way Donald Ross intended most of the year. I look forward to playing Sedgefield's new greens."

Champion Bermuda grass greens are emerging as the go-to choice for many of the country's finest warm-weather golf clubs such as Seminole and East Lake. After McConnell reached the decision to transition the club's greens in the months prior to its 2012 PGA event, he sent head course superintendent Keith Wood down to Juno Beach, Fla., to visit venerable Seminole and see what major champions like Ernie Els and Graeme McDowell had been raving about.

"Just to see what the top of the bar was," said Wood. "This is what the best of the best looks like, so I can get that mental picture in my head and try to reproduce that as I'm moving forward. What I noticed about [the Seminole] greens was that they are receptive to very good golf shots out of the fairway. You can get the ball to sit where you wanted to and stay. But if you miss, and you have a chip shot around the green, it was really, really dicey.

"That's the way we want it to play [at Sedgefield]. It's the architecture around here. We want these green surrounds to stand out and have balls rolling off the green if somebody hits a bad shot, whereas before, with the bent grass in August, someone could drop-kick a 5-iron and it's going to stop close to the pin."

Wood echoed Simpson's belief that the days of nearly everyone in the Wyndham field shooting a low score are over. And he made assurances that the new greens are in tip-top shape for the 2012 Wyndham Championship even though the greens re-opened just two weeks before the tournament.

"This very first year — and this is coming mainly from conversations I've had with others superintendents that have switched to Champion — during the first year when you open, [the greens] are the best they're going to be, because they are so new they're going to be so firm and they haven't had a chance to develop any sort of thatch or grain issues," said Wood. "Everything is going to be just absolutely perfect. I am anticipating this year being one of our best years as far as the putting quality on the championship, without a doubt."

Wood was not even concerned during a two-week stretch during the middle of the summer in which temperatures around the Triad consistently hovered around triple digits. "This is the first time I've not been afraid of a heat wave," he said. "With Bermuda grass, you can get rough with it when it's growing in the summer. With bent grass, you have to hit it with kid gloves. You better make sure it's really soft punches and that you make sure you're doing things exactly right or you're going to kill it. It's so nice to play offense. With that bent grass we're always playing defense."

OTHER SEDGEFIELD IMPROVEMENTS

Wyndham Championship fans will enjoy an enhanced sense of arrival at Sedgefield with the completion of extensive landscaping along Forsyth Drive and the entire clubhouse exterior and interior. Designed by Leo Dowell Interiors in Charlotte, the updated interior brings fresh, vibrant color schemes to the main level of the clubhouse, while the stunning white stairwell is adorned with black-and-white photos of past tournament champions, as well as historical photos of the golf course and clubhouse. An extensive makeover to the Conference Room now offers a gorgeous setting for 20-person business meetings. Finally, the new Fitness and Family Activities Center and Pool features the latest in state-of-the-art strength and cardio equipment complete with Cardio Theater, men's and women's saunas, massage therapy, and a new Greenside Café featuring outdoor dining overlooking the ninth hole from a greenside patio, and a 25-meter pool from the poolside patio. The club's new fitness center will house the Irwin Smallwood Media Center during the Wyndham Championship.

MORE MCCONNELL 2012 MAKEOVERS

During the Rex Hospital Open, **TPC at Wakefield Plantation** in Raleigh unveiled a subtle yet substantive facelift courtesy of McConnell Golf. An interior renovation to the 32,000-square-foot clubhouse gives the entire building a brand-new look and feel. Following the tournament, TPC Wakefield's practice facility began a complete renovation of the chipping green, and the practice target and fairway area. There are plans to add a teaching center to the practice facility as well, which will include indoor hitting bays and video teaching technology that will bring a whole new dimension and an elevated experience at Wakefield Plantation.

Treyburn Country Club in Durham also recently completed a nearly yearlong renovation just in time for the spring golf season in tandem with Tom Fazio's architectural firm and Spence construction team. The first and most vital aspect of the project was to replace the decades-old, Penncross bent grass greens with a newer, more heat tolerant 96-2 bent grass which provides a much better putting surface during the summer months. While reseeding the greens, they were rebuilt to their original specs, while also providing better drainage to each complex. Also, every bunker on the Treyburn golf course was upgraded with new drainage and the best white sand available, and several new bunkers were added. In some areas, the bunkers were re-designed or moved to increase their relevance and provide better visual shaping of the holes that is synonymous with Fazio golf courses, while others were added for strategic purposes. Treyburn's two-decade-old practice facility also received a face-lift.

TOURNEY TIME THIS SUMMER

The Wyndham Championship concludes a busy summer of top-flight tournament action. Clubs from the select McConnell Golf stable played host to the Web.com's Rex Hospital Open (**TPC Wakefield**), North Carolina Amateur (**Treyburn**), American Junior Golf Association (AJGA) FootJoy Invitational (**The Cardinal**) and The Cardinal Amateur.

###

About McConnell Golf

McConnell Golf (www.mcconnellgolf.com) offers pure golf for the true golfer as a privately held company offering unlimited access to 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 at any of its eight award-winning courses: Raleigh Country Club in Raleigh, N.C.; Cardinal Golf & Country Club in Greensboro, N.C.; Treyburn Country Club in Durham, N.C.; Old North State in New London 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 TPC at Wakefield Plantation, 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 individual club memberships, as well as innovative corporate and national/international memberships that deliver unmatched access to the top courses in the Carolinas

Contacts:

Martin Armes, 919-608-7260, martinarmes@nc.rr.com

Brad King, 336-306-9219, king@bradkingcommunications.com