

Tahoe City Golf Course celebrating 100 years

By Kurt Althof

Tahoe City Golf Course, the oldest course at Lake Tahoe, will celebrate its centennial anniversary during the 2018 season with a variety of events and specials.

Designed by May "Queenie" Dunn-Webb, golf pro and course manager in 1918, this year's celebrations pay tribute to female athletes, pioneers and North Lake Tahoe History.

To kick off the special season, May 11-13 green fees for 9 holes will be 50 cents, a typical rate for golf after the turn of 20th century.

On June 8, the course will host putting and driving contests for all ages using hickory stick putters and throwback equipment. Following the contests, Tahoe historian Mark McLaughlin will deliver a historical presentation on the Tahoe City Golf Course. Admission is free and subject to space available.

On June 9, the course will host the Two Bills Heritage Golf Tournament with proceeds benefiting the Red Cross and the Tahoe City Recreation Association.

On Aug. 19, in a nod to female-influenced beginnings, the greatest female golfer of this generation, Annika Sorenstam, will provide a junior golf clinic and demonstration followed by a Q&A and photo session.

Following the demonstration, the course will host its inaugural family golf tournament encouraging generations to come together and form teams for this special community event.

Throughout the season, every Tuesday (excluding July 3) will be May Dunn Day, offering a 9-hole lady's rate of \$19.18. Similarly, every Thursday (excluding July 5) is Throwback Thursday with 9-hole pricing of \$19.18 all day for all golfers.

In addition to specials, the course will be the temporary home to a portion of golf historian Rick Lund's extensive collection of historical golf equipment and memorabilia. The exhibit's centerpiece will be a junior golf club made by and carrying the May Dunn-Webb name.

Tahoe City Golf Course, originally the Tahoe Tavern Links, has a rich history in the Sierra. At the turn of the century, a railroad spur line brought guests to the Tahoe Tavern in Tahoe City. As the Tavern and the sport of golf gained in popularity a portion of the Tavern's extensive holdings were set aside for a golf course. The Tahoe Tavern commissioned the course in 1917, designed and built by May "Queenie" Dunn-Webb of the infamous Scottish golf family, the Dunns. First built as a 6-hole course with sand greens, the Tavern Links became 9 holes and 2,765 yards in 1921. The 9-hole tract has remained ever since, although the actual layout was altered in the 1940s.

The Tahoe City Golf Course was host to big money games in the 1950s, with players such as Bing Crosby, Bob Hope, the Mills Brothers, Ken Venturi, Harvey Ward, Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, Sammy Davis Jr. and Andy Williams.

For 100 years the course has provided a fantastic golf experience for everyone, from the rich and famous to aspiring junior golfers. The course has also given back to the community since its inception, hosting numerous charity events, including the first ever fundraising tournament benefiting the Red Cross in August 1918.

Through several sales of the Tahoe Tavern, its outlying and separately deeded parcels were divvied up among the partners.

Through this process the golf course became the property of Gordon and Pat Hyde in 1946. Just two years later, in 1948, the Hyde's sold to Carl Bechdolt Jr. and wife Elsie. The course remained with the Bechdolt family until February 2012 when a consortium of public agencies led by the Tahoe City Public Utility District purchased the course, converting it into a public municipal course for the enjoyment of the community and its visitors.

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