

# Golf course up to par nationally

By Thomas Clouse  
Staff Reporter

The newly-opened Woodland Hills Golf Club has fairways that are heaven to hit from, but for weekend hackers, the rough is rough.

The course, which opened June 15, was carved out of agriculture land and a tree farm. It provides one of the most beautiful and challenging public courses in eastern Nebraska.

Ron Young, president of Woodland Hills, said the golf club, located 4 1/2 miles south of Eagle, has gained national recognition.

"We have been nominated as the best new public course in the U.S. by Golf Digest," Young said.

The results of the awards will be given in the January issue of the magazine, and "I think we have a good chance of winning," Young said.

The course was designed by Jeffrey Brauer, who helped design Chicago's Kemper Lakes course, home for the Professional Golf Association's Kemper Open.

"We are the only public access golf course that offers bent grass fairways in the Midwest," Young said.

Young explained that bent grass is a type of grass that most golf courses use on greens.

Rick Reynoldson, head professional at Woodland Hills, said golfers "love" hitting off of the bent grass fairways.

"This course offers a nice change of pace from the other public courses," Reynoldson said.

The fairways and greens are in excellent shape for such a new course, but the rough is formidable. In places the fairways are bordered by waist-high growth making it difficult to locate stray shots.

Even golfers who normally walk around courses may want to rent carts, since the walk between holes is a workout in itself.

The front nine holes include a mix of short and long par-4s, two par-3s and a challenging par-5 for a total of 2,870 yards and a par total of 35.

Most holes are bordered by large trees and undergrowth; large grass and sand bunkers near the green are a constant threat.

The back nine holes play more difficult, with deep, dark tree stands, huge sand bunkers and three holes over water.

The back nine includes five medium length par-4s, two par-3s and two par-5s which total 2,991 yards and a par total of 36.

The scenery is spectacular and the course is excellent if the player can keep the ball in play, but a couple years are needed for growth in some areas to mature.

Although new, the greens are soft and allow good ball speed, but they

are sometimes hard to read.

Young said the club plans more work, including the planting of more trees, wild flowers and native grasses.

"We don't figure it will ever be done. We will always be making improvements," Young said.

Woodland Hills is currently finishing the paving of cart paths and draining lakes to allow later dredging, making them deeper and cleaning out 35 years of silt, Young said.

He said the course attracts 25 percent of its business from Omaha.

"We've done more business than we ever dreamed. Over a thousand rounds are played each week," Young said.

The course green fees on weekends are \$12 and \$18 for nine and 18 holes, respectively. Green fees for week days are \$9 and \$15 for nine and 18 hole rounds.

The course also has discounts for senior citizens (over 62), which cost \$7 or \$12 for nine or 18 holes and juniors (17 and under) can play for \$6 or \$10.

Reynoldson said the course does require sleeved shirts.

"We don't allow tank tops or cut-off shorts," he said.

If Woodland Hills can fill in a few holes and let areas of rough mature, it will become the eastern Nebraska golfing hot spot.

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