

By: Cheryl Justak, Publisher, Golf Now! Chicago

## *Medinah! Nothing Could Be Finer ....*

Major excitement returns once again to the world-class Medinah Country Club! The PGA of America, Medinah Country Club and the Greater Chicagoland Communities unite to bring you the 88<sup>th</sup> PGA Championship. Get ready for a magical experience on August 14-20 ... one that you won't want to miss!

### ***MEDINAH GETS READY TO DELIVER A MAGICAL EXPERIENCE!***

The primary focus and common thread running through all of the planning efforts for this year's PGA Championship is on "the experience", according to Medinah's General Chairman, Art Frigo. "Wanting everyone to feel like a VIP", the "delight" factor will be in full force and felt at every turn -- not only for the players, their families, and their caddies, but for spectators, the media, corporate sponsors, and volunteers as well. From comfortable-seated busses bringing fans directly through Medinah's main entrance for a view of the esteemed Medinah clubhouse, to a media tent staged on the 14<sup>th</sup> fairway, this is a rare opportunity not to be missed by anyone!

### ***"BEHIND THE SCENES" PLANNING***

The detailed planning of the 2006 PGA Championship at the famed Medinah Country Club located in Medinah, Illinois has well been underway for the past several years. Orchestrating a successful major event of this magnitude is the ultimate in golf event planning. It's hard to imagine what goes on behind the scenes to plan and execute a major golf tournament such as The PGA Championship – one of four PGA of America's major tournaments.

It takes long hours of hard work and many months of coordinating efforts of various diverse groups who play strategic roles; including Medinah's 23 membership-headed committees of volunteers, neighboring communities, and numerous business organizations involved in the successful execution of this event...just to name a few. For example, the organizational process alone for securing the multitude of volunteers needed, including the screening-process, uniform-ordering, training and position-scheduling, starts well over a year out.

## ***ROLES OF PGA “MOVERS AND SHAKERS”***

One of the “movers and shakers” charged with creating a successful event this year is Tournament Director, Michael Belot. Newly-appointed to the position in April 2005 by the PGA of America, Belot has also served as operations manager for the 2002 and 2004 PGA Championships. He, along with several other primary department staff members, have been on-site at Medinah since that time, working out of a well-equipped satellite office building, constructed for the planning and execution of the 2006 event and future tournaments.

Belot is uniquely qualified to be tournament director for this event given his successful experience at Hazeltine National Golf Club in Minnesota and Whistling Straits in Wisconsin. A native of Kohler, Wisconsin, Belot, 27, joined the PGA of America in 2001 as an operations manager for the 2002 PGA Championship in Hazeltine. Following his graduation from the University of Minnesota, he assisted with event coordination in the Golden Gopher athletic department. In Belot’s new role as tournament director, he oversees marketing and public relations, budgeting, community and government relations, to name a few; and also serves as a liaison between various groups such as Medinah’s executive committee heads, the PGA of America, and local community representatives.

Another “player” close to the action and excitement with an important role in the “delight” factor is Medinah’s Head PGA Golf Professional, Mike Scully. Scully and his team of several hundred golf professionals and caddies are responsible for the coordination and maintenance of the players’ practice facilities, getting the players and their caddies to and from the course facilities; to the registration, training and lounge facilities for the 300+ caddies and caddie volunteers. Scully and his team will be working round the clock to provide a high level of personal assistance – much like concierges at fine hotels -- to the tournament players and their caddies throughout the event.

Even though Medinah hosted the 1999 PGA Championship and is certainly no stranger to hosting major PGA events, Scully and other key department heads are leaving no stones unturned, as he and many others made the trip to Baltusrol Golf Club in New Jersey during the 2005 PGA Championship. The ultimate goal was to gain greater hands-on experience and to learn “what works and what doesn’t work” from their committee head counterparts.

### ***VIEW OF CHAMPIONSHIP COURSE NO. 3***

The championship Course No. 3, designed by Tom Bendelow, was carved out of an oak tree forest with rolling terrains. It opened in September, 1928 and has since hosted three Western Opens (1939, 1962, 1966); three US Opens (1949, 1975, 1990); one US Senior Open (1988); and one PGA Championship (1999). Upon completion of this year's PGA Championship, plans will be underway to get Course No. 3 ready for 2012 when it plays host to the Ryder Cup matches.

Following the close of the 1999 PGA Championship, Medinah decision-makers felt that Course No. 3 needed a face-lift. The renowned golf course architect, Rees Jones was selected to do the redesign project in 2002. The redesign included removing some 300 trees to eliminate blind areas, especially on holes 1 and 8, regrassing all the greens with a new strand of bent grass, building 7 new greens, rebunkering 66 course bunkers to create "classic, old-style bunkers that were deeper and had more character", as well as relocating some bunkers closer to many of the greens.

One of the most significant changes to the golf course was the relocation of the 17th green back to Lake Kadajih's bank. With the winds of the lake playing havoc on this 197-yard par 3, hitting a relatively flat green surrounded by two ominous bunkers, and getting up and down, can be extremely difficult.

Lastly, multiple tees were added to make it fairer for the membership, and a state-of-the-art irrigation system was installed to cultivate thick sumptuous rough areas that are "juicy and deeper". From the championship tees, the course now plays at 7,508 with a rating of 78.1.

### ***TICKET INFORMATION ON ATTENDING THE EVENT***

The PGA Championship perpetually features the strongest field in golf. Recent champions include 2005 PGA Championship victor Phil Mickelson, Vijay Singh, Rich Beem, David Toms, Tiger Woods, Paul Azinger, Nick Price and John Daly. Past champions include such legends as Walter Hagen, Gene Sarazen, Ben Hogan, Gary Player and Jack Nicklaus to name a few.

Consistent with the PGA's mission of growing the game of golf and attracting golf's diverse audience, the PGA Championship has designed 19 different ticket packages to suit specific needs. The most popular and best value ticket is the \$300 Weekly Session Ticket Packet, which gives the ticket holder access to the exciting Championship grounds at Medinah for all seven days of the event, complimentary offsite parking and shuttle services, and a complimentary copy of the official 2006 PGA Championship program.

One of the better values among the ticket offerings is the “Junior” ticket, which is for young people ages 17 and under accompanied by a ticketed adult. These tickets cost \$30 for championship rounds (Thursday-Sunday) and \$15 for Monday-Tuesday-Wednesday practice rounds where fans are invited to take photos and ask players to sign autographs.

**Fans who want tickets may go to [www.pga2006.com](http://www.pga2006.com) or call toll-free 1-800-PGA-GOLF.**