

One of the First Lessons for Junior Golfers is “Care of the Course”

The First Tee of Pittsburgh and the Greater Pittsburgh Golf Course Superintendents Association join together to teach young golfers etiquette and respect for the course.

BY KEITH A. HAPP

The First Tee of Pittsburgh (FTP) and the Greater Pittsburgh Golf Course Superintendents Association (GPGCSA) joined to host a Pittsburgh Junior Golf Weekend on April 29 - May 1, 2011, at the Bob O'Connor Golf Course at Schenley Park, the home of the First Tee of Pittsburgh, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The course is situated in the heart of the city and overlooks the downtown area.

The primary purpose of the Junior Golf Weekend was to promote golf as a great activity for area youth and families while helping everyone learn about the FTP code of conduct: respect yourself, respect others, and respect your surroundings. More than 70 junior golfers participated in the event. The portion of the program centering on respecting your surroundings was presented by members of GPGCSA. Local superintendents educated the kids on proper golf course etiquette and also had an opportunity to explain and demonstrate the role of the golf course superintendent.

Representatives of GPGCSA conducted a free “Care of the Course” clinic. Association members Eric Wygant (superintendent at Shannopin Country Club) and Darrin Batsky (former superintendent at Chartiers Country Club, currently a Helena representative) presented sessions on divot repair, divot filling, and ball mark repair. Each junior golfer received a free ball mark repair tool courtesy of GPGCSA. These future golfers learned that part of playing this great game is how you leave the course for those who play after your round is finished. They listened intently about how maintenance activities are conducted and how healthy grass is



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Representatives of the GPGCSA conducted a free “Care of the Course” clinic for juniors. It is never too early to learn golf course etiquette and how to care for the course. More than 70 junior golfers participated in junior golf day.



Eric Wygant, CGCS, conducted a session on divot replacement and filling a divot with a sand/seed mixture.

Junior golfers learned the importance of course care, not only when they play, but also for those who play behind them. The future golfers were quite interested to learn how to fix a ball mark. Darrin Batisky demonstrated the proper technique.



produced for the game of golf. The superintendents stressed that their job was to grow healthy grass so that when a divot is replaced or a ball mark on a putting green is repaired, it will heal rapidly. Simply replacing a divot or filling a divot properly with a sand/seed mixture can make a difference with respect to course presentation and its playability. The Rules of Golf and the elements of fairness were closely associated to the care of the course and the lessons the superintendents presented. The kids had a great time and learned important lessons: particu-

larly, that leaving the course better than you find it is part of the game.

One of the most impressive aspects of this clinic was that these representatives from the Golf Course Superintendents Association volunteered their time to conduct this clinic. The weather in the Pittsburgh area had been very wet and cool — not the best conditions for grooming fine turf this season for playing the game. Taking time to work with these kids was time away from their courses, but their presence gave the kids a chance to learn about the golf course superintendent's role in

golf course operation. The kids came away from the sessions knowing that a golf course superintendent does much more than just mowing the grass. As stated by the superintendents in attendance, "It is about giving back to the game, and who knows, some day one of these kids may be on the Board of Directors at my club."

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