

Golf Update for the KML, Summer 2020

written by John Mueller | September 19, 2020

"To be the hub for different forms of golf in the Keweenaw"

This year has seen several changes with golf activities at the Lodge. With the focus on being a resort-oriented golf course that is an amenity for Lodge guests, along with being an amenity for the general public, the condition of the golf course improved (*with the greens being in excellent shape*), the Outdoor Activity Center (OAC, *formerly called the Pro Shop*) was staffed each day of the season, and we had more rounds played at the golf course than the previous year – This is all while providing a quality wilderness experience for our guests.



The golf course opened on June 1st this year (*pushed back from*

May 19th), with the Outdoor Activity Center operating 8am – 6pm for the entire season. Golfers have been able to check in for their tee time at the Outdoor Activity Center, and make tee times online via our only tee time system (provided by [Lightspeed Golf](#), formerly [Chronogolf](#)).

We managed the operations throughout the season so we could provide better customer service. With our first tee time each day being 8am, and our last tee time 6pm, we were able to staff the activity center with team members that could answer questions about the golf activities, as well as the [biking](#), [hiking](#), and [running](#) activities.

The [OAC staff](#) catered to our qualities in being a [historic wilderness resort](#) that focuses on providing an [outdoor experience](#). We have incorporated being [fun, joyous, and adventuresome](#) by introducing alternative forms of golf to the Keweenaw (e.g. [FlingGolf](#), [Speed Golf](#), [Disc Golf](#)), we have freshened up our merchandise offerings, and enhanced the experience for our customers overall.





Resort Golf Course

As part of being a resort-oriented golf course, we did not hold a tournament or have members this year. This allowed us to focus on our primary target market, which is the guests that stay at the resort.

It was wonderful to see people stay at the cabins, and have both their golf clubs and their bikes with them ([read more about the biking operations this summer](#)). They would ride in the morning, and play 9-holes in the afternoon. Or they would play golf one day, and ride and hike the next day. Having biking and hiking trail access from the property, and a golf course out their cabin door, has allowed Lodge guests to easily take advantage of what the Keweenaw and the Lodge have to offer without having to use their cars.

This year we did not hold golf tournaments. We did have one tournament planned this year, however, the organizers decided to hold the tournament at another golf course after we reiterated to them the COVID-19-related rules we had in place this season at the Lodge. When we made it clear to them that we were going to enforce these rules, they decided it was best for them to hold the tournament elsewhere (*it is wonderful that they were still able to be play the tournament this year in the Keweenaw as the tournament is for a good cause – education and broadening the minds of young people in the Keweenaw*).

Also as part of focusing on being a resort-oriented golf course,

we did not offer golf memberships (*actually, the past membership model was more of an annual season pass model*). And this year was the last year we will have golf cart storage. This is a gradual phase-out of the services that do not pertain to operating a successful resort-oriented golf course.

These changes are focused on making the golf course better and to focus resources efficiently and effectively overall on the overall outdoor activities at the Lodge.

Number of Rounds

That said, we had more rounds this year than we had the previous year. Earlier this month we surpassed the number of rounds we did in 2019. This is even the case when we opened later this year – June 1st in 2020, vs May 22nd in 2019. In 2019, we did 2,900 rounds of golf, and we are now above that number in 2020. At the current rate, and with an October 15th season-end-date, we will be around 10% more in number rounds this year when compared to last year.

The most number of rounds we did in a day was 95, with our goal being to have 30-50 rounds per day. Having 30-50 rounds per day, and with 15-minute tee time intervals, we can provide a quality wilderness experience for golfers.

Online Tee Time Sheet

This season we moved to having the tee time sheet online. The online tee time application we implemented has been provided by [Lightspeed / Chronogolf](#), and has allowed golfers to book tee times via our website, as well as make it easier for our staff to enter tee times.

Last Day of the Season

We plan to keep the golf course open until October 15th this season, depending on the weather. Last year that was also the plan, and we made it to October 11th before the weather indicated we should close for the season. We hope to make it to October 15th this year.

Outdoor Activity Center

This season we had the Outdoor Activity Center (OAC) open and staffed. The OAC building was formerly called the Pro Shop. We changed the name to reflect the multiple activities we now have in the building – the building is the hub for all the outdoor activities at the Lodge, including biking, hiking, and trail running during the summer.



Throughout the season we added merchandise in the OAC that included golf-related merchandise, which went along with the

biking, hiking, and running KML-related merchandise. This included golf gloves (with the KML logo on the ball marker), two different types of ball marker (with one made out of copper by a local artisan), KML divot repair tool, golf shirts, golf windbreaker and hats, a KML logo golf ball, and more.

Golf Course Maintenance

We continued to execute our golf course maintenance strategy, where we work to make the **greens excellent**, the **tees ok**, and the **fairways as they may be**. We received wonderful compliments from people that understand where the golf course has come from, and where it is going. The golf course maintenance crew (*Bill, Karl, Ron, and Martin*) did a wonderful job with the greens, and continue to improve the tees and the fairways.



We were able to run our two pumps successfully this season, with the well pump on hole 6 pumping 60 gallons-per-minute, and the Lake Superior pump working at 50-60 gallons-per-minute. The well on hole-6 was replace last year and the Lake Superior pump hadn't run for two years. So it was great to get the Lake Superior pump working in late June. This helped us get 100-120 gallons-per-minute to help with the recovery of the pond after watering the golf course. The crew were reliable and enjoyed improving the course. That isn't easy when you have to get up early each day and get things ready before the first tee time.

Our golf course maintenance crew has done an exceptional job this season in keeping the course in great shape. We strive to have the greens in excellent shape, good tee-boxes, and finally

decent fairways. We have gotten positive responses from players returning to play from the previous year. They state the ***“course has never been this good in the past”***. We continue to prepare for the upcoming winter in order to prevent snow mold and other casualties that could possibly harm the course in the future.

In preparation for next year, this past week we aerated and top dressed the greens as we had good weather.

Sanitizing the Carts, Pool Noodles

As part of adapting this year with the COVID-19 and executive order situation, we spent more time carefully sanitizing the carts before and after each use while also having pool noodles in the cups for the entire season. The pool noodles were 2-inches above the cup, as we felt it was necessary to keep people from putting their hands in the cup. We kept with that setup for the entire season to ensure that golfers and our staff were kept safe and healthy, as we have people from all around the world visiting the resort and playing a round of golf. It would have been nice to hear the ball go in the cup this season, but we felt it was best to hear the hitting of the pool noodle to increase the probability of keeping guests and staff healthy and to ensure the resort could stay open the entire season.



FlingGolf

This season we offered guests a new style of golf that is a hybrid between lacrosse and golf: [FlingGolf](#). At the beginning of the season we purchased an array of FlingSticks which golfers could rent. We saw foursomes have all FlingGolfers, and foursomes have a mix of traditional golfers and FlingGolfers. Not only was FlingGolf fun and family friendly, it allowed for a unique alternative to golf, broadening our golf options to guests. We received positive feedback from guests as well as staff on how enjoyable FlingGolf is at the Lodge.



Foot Golf

Another project we are working at the Lodge as is it relates to golf is Foot Golf. We had planned to provide Foot Golf as an option this season, but were not able to finish a design that would work on the golf course. With the hilly and challenging terrain of our course we feel Foot Golf is perfect to include as another golf-related activity at the Lodge. Originating from the Netherlands, Foot Golf is a combination of soccer and golf. Players can play alongside other golfers allowing for the creation of a multi-use course.



We continue to work on routing a Foot Golf course that will benefit golfers. We want all types of golfers to play without interruption from others, and of course to simply have fun playing a difference form of golf while staying at the Lodge.

Disc Golf

In addition to the improved shape of the golf course, our maintenance staff has worked on maintaining the [Disc Golf](#) course on the opposite side of the property. In recent years, the disc

course was rarely maintained on a regular basis, which lead to the overgrowth of vegetation. This caused the course to not be as enjoyable to play. With the Disc Golf course better maintained, and providing Disc Golf rentals at the OAC this year, many of our lodging guests, as well as those who love to explore the area, have been able to enjoy the Disc Golf course multiple times.



Looking Forward: The 2021 Season

Looking forward to the next season, and implementing what we have learned the past two years, here are several changes will be making at the golf course:

- Promoting exercise / walking. New pull carts.
- Implementing the Foot Golf course
- Increasing the awareness and activity of Speed golf on the golf course
- New golf carts. We are working on making arrangements for the new fleet of golf carts, as our lease with our current cart fleet expires this season.
- No tournaments at the Lodge. The golf course is open to play by resort guest and the general public via tee times.
- No golf cart storage at the Lodge, and private carts will

not be allowed on the golf course in order to have a uniform fleet of carts at the Lodge.

- No alcohol on the golf course. Golf is an outdoor sport, and golfers at the Lodge are encouraged to focus on playing golf. Having an alcoholic drink at the Lodge is encouraged at the Lodge after the round (e.g. “19th hole”).
- Greens fees will increase in 2021 as we continue to implement the plan of being a financially sustainable golf course and outdoor activity operation. As well, we will be simplifying the rates as they will be the same 7-days a week (*the same green fee rate on the weekends / holidays and the weekdays*).

	Regular Rates	Resort Rates*
Green Fees		
9 Holes	\$30	\$25
18 Holes	\$40	\$35