

Golf 2022 Season Recap

written by John Mueller | October 17, 2022

Saturday, October 15th was the last day of the 2022 golf season. We had a wonderful golf season, with outdoor enthusiasts enjoying the fun, joyous, adventuresome atmosphere of a resort course in the wilderness. A dry summer with little rain had our team working the irrigation system to keep the course in great shape. The golf course approximately 3 inches of rain from June 1st to September 15. We finally had some late seasonal rains brought the whole course back to lush green in October. The Outdoor Activity Center (OAC) and golf course maintenance crews did an excellent job providing a unique experience for people playing this historic course.

As with [2021](#), there were multiple reports that *“the course is in the best condition they I’ve ever seen”* have been common all season.

The [Outdoor Activity Center](#) (OAC), was staffed every day of the season, utilizing the historic cabin structure next to hole 1 tee box. Our rounds were down from previous years; however, our revenue was around the same as previous years for golf – while providing 15-minute tee-time intervals so that individuals do not feel rushed. Our goal is not to increase the number of rounds, but to provide a fun, joyous, and adventuresome experience for golfers. Thus, we are happy when we are seeing that one of our biggest compliments from golfers is that they are able to enjoy a quality wilderness experience at the top of the Keweenaw. Wonderful! We are trying to get people closer to nature, including when they are walking and playing the golf course.

The golf course opened on June 1st, with the OAC operating 9am – 5pm for the entire season. We scaled back the hours (previous

year was 8am – 6pm), and this change had a positive result with maintaining the golf course and providing golfers with a quality experience. Golfers were still able to check in for their tee times at the OAC and make tee times via our online tee time system (provided by [Lightspeed Golf](#)).

We managed the operations throughout the season so we could provide optimum customer service. With our first tee time each day being 9am, and our last tee time 5pm, we were able to staff the activity center with team members that could answer questions about the golf activities, as well other activities (e.g., [biking](#) and [hiking](#)).

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](#) and [Disc Golf](#)), we have freshened up our merchandise offerings, and enhanced the experience for our customers overall.

Starting in the [2020 season](#), we made the decision to be a resort-oriented golf course. This meant no longer holding tournaments, having memberships available, or golf cart storage. This decision was made so we did not have resources being diverted from our primary reason of operations – being a resort (as opposed to a country club). This allowed us to focus on our primary target market – the guests that stay at the resort.

As with the previous two years (2020 and 2021), this year we continued to see people stay in cabins, and have both their golf clubs and their bikes with them. They would ride in the morning, and play 9-holes in the afternoon. Or they would play golf one day, and ride and/or hike the next day. Having biking and hiking trail access from the property, and a golf course out their

cabin door, allows Lodge guests to easily take advantage of what the Keweenaw and the Lodge have to offer without having to use their cars.

The E-Z-GO RXV ELiTE carts continue to be a strong addition to the quietness at the resort, and providing golfers a new experience for getting around the course at the Keweenaw Mountain Lodge. These carts are powered with Samsung SDI Lithium Technology batteries, providing golfers excellent mobility without sacrificing the wilderness golfing experience. Each EZ-GO ELiTE was also equipped with GPS technology which allowed us to prevent the carts from driving on greens, tee boxes, or through the rough, which helped us maintain the condition of those sensitive areas, as well as the carts themselves. [\[read more about our fleet, here\]](#)

Last season, we brought in a new technology to focus on how the sport was started – walking a round of golf. However, this year we had technical difficulties with the Tempo Walks (Club Car's robotic caddie), and they did not go out on the golf course (we are working with Club Car on getting this back on the golf course in 2023 so that golfers can enjoy the Lodge golf course while walking the wilderness of the Keweenaw. [[read more about our Tempo Walks, here](#)]

Even though the Tempo Walks did not work for us this season, we did see an increase in people walking the golf course and using the [CaddyTek](#) EZ-Fold Pushcarts.

And our Callaway club rentals continued to be a solid addition to providing golfers the ability to play quality clubs.



Our golf course maintenance crew did an exceptional job this season keeping the course in great shape, especially since we had staff members leave before and during the season, and we had a limited amount of rain during most of our playing season (approximately 3 inches of rain from June 1st to September 15th). The core crew worked exceptionally hard to irrigate and mow the turf keep the turf in good shape.

Long-time golf course superintendent, Bill Alband, retired at the end of the 2021 season. However, he was willing to help out in 2022 on a part-time basis this season (marking his 27th year working at the Lodge). This was very important for the golf course maintenance crew as the person that was hired to fill Bill's shoes left before the golf course opened for the season. This meant that Bill spent the summer teaching John Mueller the ins-and-outs of nuances for maintaining the Lodge course (*i.e.*

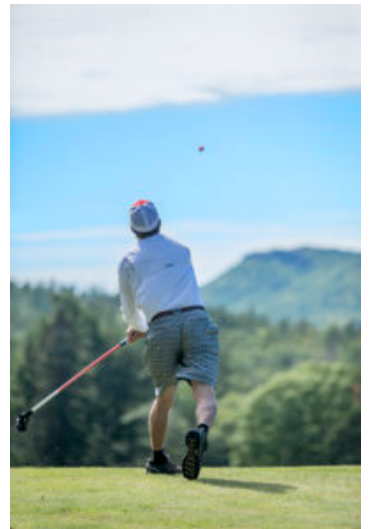
co-superintendents). Long-time Lodge team member, Ron Koski, did a wonderful job keeping the grass mowed, with the help of seasonal help (Aidan and Mason).

We strive to have the greens in excellent shape, good tee boxes, and decent fairways. We were able to accomplish that with the golf course maintenance crew. This is evident in the positive responses we received from golfers.

Now that the season has come to a close, the grounds crew is preparing for the upcoming winter in order to prevent snow mold and other casualties that could possibly harm the course in the future.

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Fling Golf



This season we continued to offer guests the opportunity to play [FlingGolf](#) – think golf, but using a Lacrosse stick to throw the ball instead of hitting it with a club. We had an array of FlingSticks available for rent at the OAC. Not only was FlingGolf fun and family friendly, it allowed for a unique alternative to golf, broadening our options to guests. We received regular, positive feedback from guests as well as staff on how much fun FlingGolf is at the Lodge.

Wildlife and Nature on the Golf Course

An aspect of the Keweenaw Mountain Lodge's golf course that is regularly commented on by guests is the likelihood of seeing wildlife on and around the course. Whether it be crows sounding a "wake-up alarm" around the cabins, painted lady butterflies feeding on nectar from the viburnum planted in front of the lodge, deer eating apples from the apple tree along the Hole 4 fairway, or the occasional black bear that strolls through our campus, one-on-one encounters with wildlife really emphasize for people the surrounding wilderness landscape and connect them personally with our environment. These are just a couple of the many examples of wildlife encounters around and on the golf course this past season.

A pair of Sandhill Cranes nested on the course again this year. Their nest was not successful; however, they remained on the course throughout the season until they migrated south. They became very accustomed to the golfers and golf carts and provided some great opportunities for photos.

A pair of Merlins (a type of small falcon), nested in a pine tree between Holes 8 and 9 this season. They successfully fledged three young. A windstorm in early September forced them out of their nest because a large branch fell through it. Fortunately, the young were developed enough to fly and all survived.

As usual, there continues to be a healthy population of squirrels and chipmunks on the property. Near the end of the summer, an immature red-tailed hawk discovered this fact and took up temporary residence near the OAC. It was, on multiple occasions, seen gliding low among the trees, then snagging an unsuspecting chipmunk or squirrel for its meal.

We recognize the value of maintaining healthy ecosystems and

getting the chance to encounter wildlife in such ways. To help protect our environment while preserving the natural heritage of the game of golf, the Keweenaw Mountain Lodge has joined the [Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program for Golf \(ASCP-Golf\)](#). ASCP-Golf is an education and certification program developed by Audubon International to help enhance the valuable natural areas and wildlife habitats that golf courses provide, improve efficiency, and minimize potentially harmful impacts of golf course operations. The ASCP-Golf program takes stock of and then develops a plan for improvement around six key environmental components: Environmental Planning, Wildlife and Habitat Management, Chemical Use Reduction and Safety, Water Conservation, Water Quality Management, and Outreach and Education.

While much of our effort to gain this certification will occur without much notice by guests. When you visit us over the next year there are some aspects you might see. For instance, we have already started an effort to convert some of the areas of rough to help local pollinators and aid in Monarch butterfly migration by planting native wildflowers and grasses. If you see work being done on the course and are not sure what it is, please ask. We are very excited to talk about the future of the ASCP-Golf at the Keweenaw Mountain Lodge.

Looking Forward: The 2023 Season

Looking forward to the next season, here are several items we will be focusing on in 2023:

- Continue to promote exercise / walking, by carrying one's bag, using a pull cart, or using a Tempo Walk
- Increase the awareness and activity of Speed golf on our golf course
- Evaluate, design, and implement a Foot Golf course

- Increase the awareness of the wildlife and nature associated with the golf course
- Moving through the process of [becoming a certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Golf Course](#)

Until June 1st next year, the golf course is now closed and being put to sleep for the winter.





[John Mueller](#)

founder, golfer, runner, professor, entrepreneurship