

Golf 2023 Season Recap

written by John Mueller | November 20, 2023

Saturday, October 15th was the last day of the 2023 golf season, our standard day for ending a golf season each year. We started the golf season on June 1st and ended October 15th as planned.

We had another wonderful golf season, with outdoor enthusiasts enjoying the [fun.joyous.adventuresome](#) atmosphere of a resort course in the wilderness – along with further education of how the golf course now plays a role in the Lodge's dark sky activities. Individuals can play the historic golf course during the day, taking in the nature in the wilderness. And in the evening be able to stargazing. The new design of the [scorecard](#) highlights this.

The Outdoor Activity Center (OAC) and golf course maintenance crews did an excellent job providing a unique experience for people playing this historic course throughout the season.

We continue to focus on being a resort-oriented golf course, focused on lodging guests as a priority, while also allowing the general public to play the course. In 2023 we continued to refine our uniqueness, with this year understanding better how to be a historic wilderness golf course which gets people closer to nature while playing golf. This entailed encouraging walking the course, testing a new flag stick (wooden), testing various mowing strategies, and testing new organic fertilizers and fungicide for snow mold and dollar spots.

Outdoor Activity Center (OAC)

As a reminder, we do not have a pro shop, but rather an **outdoor activity center** since we offer multiple outdoor activities at the resort – not just golf (e.g., [biking](#) and [hiking](#)). The

[Outdoor Activity Center](#) (OAC) was staffed every day of the season, utilizing the historic cabin structure next to hole 1 tee box during the golf season – a transition made in 2020.

The golf course opened on June 1st, with the OAC operating 9am – 5pm for the entire season. Tee times were also from 9am to 5pm. This was the same as the previous season. However, we did add an additional guideline in 2023, where golfers had to be off the golf course by 7pm. This is so guests can walk the golf course during the evening daylight hours, and scout for where they will stargaze when darkness falls – playing golf during the day and stargazing at night.

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](#)).

New Score Card Design

In 2023, we redesigned the scorecard. In the new design, we used more recent pictures of the golf course and integrate pictures and information about how the golf course is also part of the dark sky park.

In addition, we changed the par of hole 4 from a par 5 to a par 4. The hole is less than 400 yards, and most par 5s are 500+ yards.



The new scorecard design – front -back

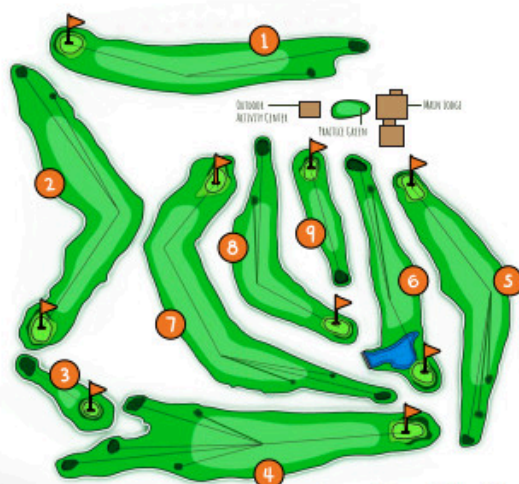


USGA rules shall govern all play except
where modified by the local rules
(see website)

Date:

Hole	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Out
Iron	394	395	119	395	372	313	485	318	177	2,968
Copper	341	329	108	295	275	280	407	263	163	2,461
Par	4	4	3	4	4	4	5	4	3	35
Handicap	5	1	9	2	3	6	4	7	8	

Scorer: Attestor:



Course Designer: Ochoa Potter



For more details on each hole, scan the QR code.

The new scorecard design – inside

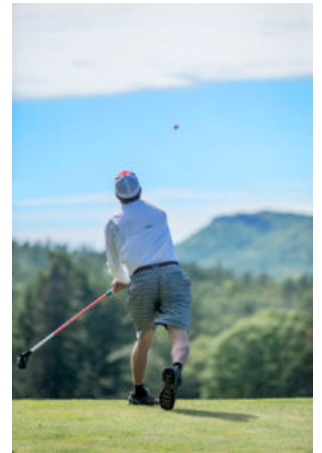
Tee Time Intervals and a Limit to Daily Rounds

In 2022 we went from 10-minute tee-time intervals to 15-minute tee-time intervals. This year, as we limited the daily rounds to 44 rounds a day to ensure that golfers felt they were in the wilderness, we decided to move to 20-minute tee-time intervals.

This is different than other golf courses. Golf courses in urban areas work off of 7-8-minute tee-time intervals. So 20-minute tee-time intervals and a limit of 44 rounds a day is something counter to most golf courses. We feel the tee-time intervals and the limit of 44 rounds is necessary to ensure guests understand

and feel the wilderness aspect of the historic wilderness golf course at the Lodge. This also means that individuals are not rushed, and have no anxiety when playing the course – ensuring a fun.joyous.adventuresome experience.

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.

Electric Golf Carts – Quiet

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. [\[read more about our fleet, here\]](#)

But we encouraged walking first this season.

Tempo Walks

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](#)] – last year we didn't have the tempo walks working. And this year we did. We led with walking, and had more walkers than in any of the previous 4 years. Walking activity continues to increase.

Using the [CaddyTek](#) EZ-Fold Pushcarts.

Rental Golf Clubs

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



In 2024 we are looking to add to our rental clubs along the theme of our historical nature. We are looking having a set or two of hickory sticks available for rent.

Two Tee Markers

We moved away from a four-tee system to a two-tee system: Iron and Copper. This makes the course simpler and more straight forward for golfers and for the maintenance crew.



Flags

We moved away from color-coated flags (blue, white, and red) to a rustic & wilderness oriented flag embroidered with the main KML logo – which is representative of the brand and image of the Lodge. [These flags are made by [Prestige Flags](#)]



Wooden Flagsticks

We tested out the wooden flag sticks on holes 1 (5-foot) and 9 (7 foot) greens. And then bought all of them. In 2024, we will have all wooden flag sticks, 5-feet high on the greens. 5-foot flagsticks is what the golf course had when it originally opened (history). [These flagsticks are made by [Cheesebrough](#)]





Golf Course Maintenance

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 Albend, 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, sadly passed away in April. He loved being out on the golf course and working the mowers – fairways and rough mowing. This season, Mason Codre returned for a 2nd year and helped to fill the void of Catman's passing. He stepped up to handle more of the prep work in May, and focused on tees and rough mowing. Naya Mueller stepped into a new role at the Lodge and mowed the fairways. Mowing fairways became an evening job, as we were able to do that once the golf course were finished playing for the evening by 7pm.

Snow Mold

Snow mold was prevalent in May, with the interesting weather we had over winter – where experienced rain at least once a month, which traps moisture under the snow. With a week of 60 degree weather in mid-April, snow mold took hold. When all the snow had

melted after a late snow fall May 1st, we saw 30-40% of each green scarred with snow mold. We let nature do it's job, and the last day of May saw 90 degree weather to encourage growth. Even with a good healthy growth on the green the last 10 days of May, we still saw a scarring on the greens when we opened June 1st. It took another 3-4 weeks before we saw the greens back to the quality putting surface that we wanted to see for the season.

Bruce Williams visit in May to inspect the course. This was his 2nd year to visit and provide advice on how to improve the playing surface on the Lodge course.

Craig Moore, from Marquette Golf Club, also helped out this season. He provided advice on fungicide applications, and helped apply several applications of a test fungicide in the fall (October and November).

During the summer / fall, we did several sprays with fungicides (for snow mold, dollar spots, and moss). We also did several granular applications of fungicides and insecticides (for cut worms).

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. Especially, with the snow mold experience when the snow melted in April / May.

Aerating and Topdressing the Greens

The team was able to aerate the greens in one day. We closed the course on [Sunday, September 17th](#), and we aerated all 10 greens. We then spent the following week top dressing the greens to fill in the aerated holes with sand. The aerating of the greens in September is to improve the probability the greens will be good next season (in 2024).

AERATING AND TOPDRESSING THE GREENS

The Keweenaw Mountain Lodge aerates and top dresses the greens every September when the weather is appropriate.



Aeration is a long-term strategy which ensures the greens are in good health and playing well for the 2024 season and beyond.



- Controls organic matter.
- Relieves soil compaction.
- Stimulates root growth.
- Improves drainage.



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Resources

We improved our resources for golf course maintenance in 2023. We purchased a Foley reel grinder and a Foley bedknife grinder to be able to keep our mowing units in better shape. Having mowing units that are sharp helps keep the grass healthy when cutting blades of grass. As well, we purchased a Bobcat mini-excavator to do special projects around the Lodge, including on the golf course.

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.

Island in the Pond on Hole 6 Removed

Started to removed the island on hole 6 in November – no snow in November – Martin, and John. [Updated 2023-12-24: Chris and John finished removing the island]

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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.

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 is a member of 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
- Outreach and Education

Much of our effort to gain this certification will occur without much notice by guests. However, when you visit us over the next several years there are some aspects you might see. For instance, 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 and bee population.

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.

[[Learn more about the application](#)]

[[Read the 2022 Golf Season Recap](#)]

Looking Forward: The 2024 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
- Continue to improve the historic nature of the golf course
- Continue to improve the wilderness nature of the 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](#)
- Wooden flag sticks (5-feet)
- New tee markers, made by our team

Until June 1st, 2024, the golf course is now closed and has been put to sleep for the winter.

[a historic wilderness golf course]

– *not a golf course in the wilderness* –

UPDATE December 24, 2024

With no snow on Christmas Eve Day, Chris and John finished up removing the island in the pond on hole 6.



[John Mueller](#)

founder, golfer, runner, professor, entrepreneurship