Essex Golf & Country Club Celebrating One HI undred Y ears

Classic golf course scores 100 (years)

BY LINDA DURANCE SPECIAL TO THE STAR

A golf course is not the kind of thing that strikes one as being portable, yet the Essex Golf & Country Club was relocated no less than three times in it's first 20 years.

Many members of the century old Essex Golf Club (as it's commonly called) will tell you it has persevered because of wise management and members' sheer determination

that comes from loving the game.

The club was founded in 1902 under the name of Oak Ridge Golf Club, on farmland in the old Town of Sandwich. The nine-hole course spanned 3,400 yards. The region's economy was flourishing then, with Windsor as the headquarters for the number one automobile manufacturer, Ford Motor Company. In 1910,

more land was needed

for the growing Oak Ridge membership, so 40 acres of land was purchased at the corner of Prince St. and College Ave. and a new nine-hole course was underway. During construction, Oak Ridge members played at the Walkerville Country Club, which was on the land now occupied by Walkerville Collegiate. When the new Prince Rd. course opened in the spring of 1912, Oak Ridge and Walkerville memberships

In the mid 1920's Windsor had grown so much, club members felt the country club didn't feel very 'country' anymore and farmland was purchased in the Town of LaSalle. The legendary Donald J. Ross was retained to design and build the 6,500-yard course and construction began in 1928. The name was changed to simply, 'Essex Golf & Country Club' on

merged and the new club was called

The Essex County Golf and Country

July 1, 1949. The clubhouse was modeled after an English Tudor-style country house whose ambiance is still present today. Walter Hagen, Al Watrous and Horton Smith are just a few of the great golfers who played the Essex Golf Club regularly.

At a time when the "gentlemen's club" was at the height of fashion, Essex Golf & Country Club admitted the first lady member, Kate Duncan,

the year was 1915.

This club is always evolving," says general manager, Barry Morgan. "Kate Duncan was the beginning of what has become a full-fledged family club today."

Indeed, women will have approximately 20% of the 36,000 of rounds played on the course this year.

For generations, Essex Golf & Country Club has provided a strong challenge to some of the best players in the world. In 1976, Jerry Pate won the Canadian Open in a competition there, which included Arnold Palmer, Ben Crenshaw, Jack Nicklaus, Tom Kite, Tom Watson and Ray Floyd.

Dick Carr has been a member for more than 60 years and was co-chair of the 1976 tournament along with Howard Wellington and Jim Bartlett.

Many of the same players are returning for this tournament, says Carr. They loved this course and it will be great to have guys like Tom Kite and Ben Crenshaw back.

In 1983, Essex hosted one of the newly formed PGA Tournament Series Events called the TPS Essex International Golf Classic.

In 1998, the world's attention was focused again on Essex during the \$1.2 million Ladies Professional Golf Association (LPGA) duMaurier Classic. Brandi Burton won first place prize. The field included LPGA Hall of Famers Nancy Lopez, Joanne Carner

The golf club's membership undertook a massive renovation project that same year improving the practice range, maintenance buildings, sewer systems, and parking lot and club-The legendary Donald J. Ross house facilities.

and Beth Daniel.

In 2002, the club will highlight its centennial year by hosting yet another world famous tournament. The \$1.6 million PGA AT&T Canada Senior Open will be held at Essex Golf & Country Club from July

"We look forward to hosting this tournament," says Morgan. "It's a wonderful chance to showcase our course to the golf world. We'll be

Congratulations Essex Golf & Country Club

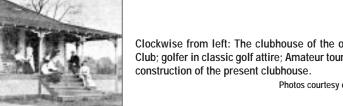
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A Look Back in Pictures



Clockwise from left: The clubhouse of the original Oak Ridge Golf Club; golfer in classic golf attire; Amateur tournament of 1934 and the

Photos courtesy of Essex Golf & Country Club







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