

Thursday March 14th 2013 9:30AM

It's 30 degrees, the wind is howling but Keith says it's like a spring day compared to Mt Everest...

We review everything that has been done in January...Keith has some fine tuning for the fairway bunkers and the green surrounds on 10... He raises and lowers the greenside bunkers... small green expansion on 10 pushes the green further back... fine tune the tees on 11, fine tune the fairway bunkers on 18....

The back 1/3 of the 13th green is being flipped up front, it's too flat so they are adding back to front slope... bunker behind green, mound behind that... the mound behind the green is to hide passing cars, in the driveway, from players view when you stand in the fairway...

All in the early stages...

We tour the course with Keith, Rich and Robert (our new foreman) to review drainage issues... nothing major but a lot of little tweeking..

A lot of paint lines on the ground and a lot of work for the TDI crew to get set in the next week..

Thursday March 21st 2013 9:30 AM

Sodding crew is here and they are sodding 1st tee, 5/13 and 18 forward tees.... Keith approves the 10th green and green surrounds... A lot of time spent on 13 green, Keith approves the 2 bunkers on the left side of the green, the left side fairway bunker on 13 is also approved... The mound and bunker behind the 13th green seem bigger and more spacious than I envisioned... I assume it will all make sense when I see it sodded...it's 10:45 and we just got hit with a pretty good snow shower... Keith has set up a lot of work for final approval next week, we could end up with 10 fairway/ green complex, 18 fairway bunkers, half 13 green surround, the left fairway bunker and all of the approach sodded within a few days after that... Weather permitting that will be a big jump start on getting things finished.... That will leave 1 fairway bunker on 13, 1/3 of 13th green, 14th tee and 10th tee... Supposed to get snow this week, hopefully it doesn't cost more that 1 day...

Thursday March 28th 2013 10AM

I tour the course with Keith and Robbie.... It's hard not to get excited... Keith could see a bunker on the right side of 5, 13 and 15.. On 5 he would do it to add some teeth for the 5th hole tee shot and those who want to use the 5th fairway from the 4th tee.. On 13 and 15, visually they would be great from the back tees, but would really only be in play for a weak tee shot from the white tees... Those are exactly the players we don't want to penalize and who would also have a huge problem being in a bunker that far from the green..

The 13th looks great... Originally we didn't plan on a mound behind by the green, but after watching cars go by, he included it, but we did cut it down by 1 1/2 feet... Everything

has been approved and they have sodded half of 10 already.... 14th tee plans are confirmed, they will have that shaped and ready in a day...

The 10th tee plans are confirmed and it is mostly shaped... The tee and surrounds are lowered by a foot or so.. Now when you walk out of the grill you walk up the 2 concrete steps and down the other side... Hmmmm... We talk about taking them out, but it looks like a huge project, it looks like there is a huge foundation and we would need a jackhammer... For the record, I have no interest in handling a jackhammer... Upon further review, there is a chance the concrete was just poured on top of the ground... Ron brings the bulldozer over, tucks the blade under the corner and lifts... Good News, no foundation, a little work and Ron has broken it in half and is removing the pieces... Now we need to do something with the water, to make sure it doesn't drain back into the grill... A few swipes of the bulldozer, a new dry well and we're set... We'll lower the small stone wall nine inches and when you come out of the grill, it will be open space, with a moderate grade to tee level....

Friday March 29th 2013 1:10PM

Ron is at the end of the driving range, adjusting the mound... This could be my best shot... 5 minutes later, with a few minutes of instruction from Ron and my right foot firmly on the decelerator pedal, I'm in control of the bulldozer.... Moving it forward, backward, left and right is no problem... Now, how hard can it be pushing dirt around?? After all Ron and Juan dugout bunkers, tees, shaped green surrounds in that seat... Their jobs are safe... I tried to simply pile up some soil, and then smooth it back down... After 15-20 minutes it becomes clear to me I have to lower my sights... It's fun, I think if I spent a few days in the seat I would start to get a feel for it... I had great respect for the skill these guys have, but it's grown a lot after that experience... I didn't back it into the pond, which was my biggest fear...

Thursday April 4th 2013 12:30PM

It's kind of like the last day of classes before the summer break... Most everything is done, take a final or two, papers to turn in and then you get to enjoy the weather and the fruits of your labor...

14th tee is sodded, 13th green and bunkers are sodded... 10th tee will be sodded shortly after we make final decisions on cart path and grass combinations...

Keith, Steve, Rich, Robbie, Robert and I tour the back side, confirm each others punch list... Mine is 1 ½ pages, theirs is 3 pages... Mine is mostly drainage issues.. We finalize what is our responsibility and what is theirs.. What should be sodded and what should be seeded... These are tough decisions, we've spent a little more money than we planned and of course final decisions mean the course will look real good on May 1 or will still be in the growing phase... We do what we think is best for the club and the majority of the membership... Not sure we should cut corners with the final finishing work... It would be like building a house and not painting the trim because you are at or a little over budget...

A quick bite for a late lunch, sign 2 work orders and we're back on the course touring the front... Same story... It's 5:30, we've been on the course for 5 hours... Benny, the sod foreman is leaving for warmer climates... Ron took off around noon, his next job is in Colorado... We have Robert and 10 workers for the next week, then the crew gets cut to 6 workers and they expect to be done a few days after that... they tie in the sod to the cart paths and roadways and then put the new gravel down on the pathways and head off to their next jobs...

I've spent most of the past 6 months with these guys... It's no different that working on a trading floor.. We've been thrilled, we've been angry, a few f-bombs have been thrown around, a few feelings have been hurt and soothed... Tough decisions, tough negotiations... Incredible weather events, gas lines and rationing, tornadic wind activity, 5 inches of rain in 6 hours...Accepting things you're not in love with (they usually turn out great) and fighting for things you believe in... 4 different crews trying to work in the same space at the same time, more than 4 nationalities represented....The scorecard on a trading floor is the P&L... The scorecard out here is there for everyone to see and judge, and will stand for a long time...

I go back to the Keith's early statement, "You guys see this course as being one level better, I see many levels better." I thought I understood what he said, then after a few holes I started to see more.. I still never imagined the potential for this course, things he saw and that I had no idea about.. Big changes and little changes, it all adds up to something special..

I thank Steve, Keith, Robbie, Rich and TDI, for their efforts and friendship.... I deeply appreciate the opportunity, the trust and the support SPGC and the membership have offered Steve and I...

Uhhh... Rich is calling, the new irrigation on 13 is leaking, we gotta grow some grass..

Thanks.... See you in May