

# Manchester Country Club

## Snapshot of an old New England design

Here in the land of steady habits, surprises usually don't sit well with folks. That's because consistency and quality are the benchmarks by which life is often measured.

While that offers an apt description of Yankee life, consistency and quality are also the traits of a golf course created in the mold of old New England design, Manchester Country Club.

They didn't bulldoze the land and move mounds of earth to create Manchester Country Club. Rather, the natural character of the land was used to create the kind of course everyone likes but is rarely built today.

At Manchester, you'll find greens that are generally small, contoured and well-protected in subtle ways. Each hole takes into account the differing skill level of players and provides numerous options from tee to green.

And at the end of the day—or more

precisely, at the end of the round—golfers can say the course allowed them to use the skills they possess and have fun at the same time.

Manchester Country Club originally was designed in 1917 by Tom Bendelow and Devereaux Emmett, renowned architects of the golden age of American golf design. Emmett also designed Congressional Country Club in Maryland while Bendelow created Medina Country Club in Illinois, both sites of past U.S. Opens. In 1935, the course was redesigned by yet another legendary architect, A.W. Tillinghast, who crafted Bethpage Black, site of this year's U.S. Open.

That history and tradition is what makes Manchester Country Club so special to the people who play it.

"Those old Scottish course designers really knew what they were doing," said club president Gordon Daring. "The character of the course lends itself to enjoyable play for

men and women golfers of all skill levels."

Daring says the club's top priority is maintaining that character and keeping the existing layout in top condition rather than looking to make radical changes that could detract from the designers' original intent.

"What also makes the club special is the membership," Daring says. "Several generations of golfers who have played here all care deeply about the course and each other."

The course totals 6,167 challenging yards from the White markers, which are rated at 69.7 with a slope of 126. Manicured bunkers placed strategically about the fairways and greens demand concentration and skill.

This year marks the start of new era at Manchester Country Club as assistant professional John Cook takes over as head professional after the retirement of longtime pro Ralph DeNicolò. Cook says the course offers an interesting variety of holes, each providing a new and different challenge.

One of the course's most scenic holes is the 14th. It's a straightaway par-5 that starts from an elevated tee. Cook calls it a high-risk, high-reward hole with bunkers flanking the fairway. For long hitters, the goal is to find the bottom of a two-tiered fairway, which gives you a chance to reach the green in two—that is, if you dare. The green is guarded in the front by two bunkers and a pond. Cook says the safe play is to lay up short of the pond and hit your third shot from 150 yards.

Another top-rated hole is the 18th, a par-3 that plays 192 yards from the Blue tees. Here, you're faced with out-of-bounds on the right, water to the left and a tricky up-and-down if you muscle it over the green. Once you reach the green, even more work awaits on the double-tiered putting surface that offers plenty of slope.

But the most difficult hole is the 6th, an intimidating, dogleg-right par-4 and the highest rated hole at Manchester. From the tee box, the



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<b>2008 Club Champions:</b>	<b>Men:</b> Chas Boggini <b>Women:</b> Carolyn Horvath
<b>Course Record:</b>	62 – Paul Ryiz (1983)

fairway appears tight and narrow with stately pines along the right rough and out-of-bounds on the left. A good drive will leave you between 150-175 yards from an elevated green protected on both sides by bunkers.

Aside from offering a playable course in top condition, Manchester Country Club focuses on the enjoyment of members and daily players, particularly women. The active Ladies Club schedules a full season of events from April through October for women of all skill levels.

The course also hosts the renowned Manchester Open, one of the season's premier golf events, with top area amateurs and professionals competing in the mid-summer tournament. In 2008, Manchester's own K.J. Camera won the event.

In addition to competitive daily fee rates, for those looking to join, Manchester Country Club offers a variety of membership categories, including seniors, women, juniors and everyone in between. The club recognizes the changing times for the game of golf, and has responded in creative ways. For example, a Senior Family plan is now available, and the popular Young Executive program takes into account the modern demands of the workplace. Many plans now allow extended payments over 10 months.

These kinds of innovations certainly make Manchester Country Club a desirable course to join and an enjoyable one to play.



*The 18th hole is a 192-yard par-3.*