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Sharf course rated among best in state

By **Jeff Samoray**, *OU Web Writer*

Golfers in the Oakland University vicinity needn't go far to find a top course to play. In its exclusive state-by-state rankings, "Golf Digest" ranked OU's **R&S Sharf Golf Course** 21st among Michigan's 855 golf courses.

The 18-hole championship course and state-of-the-art practice facility, which opened Aug. 25, 2000, was designed and built by nationally renowned golf course architects Rick Smith and Warren Henderson. The par 72-course is 7,103 yards long, has a 100-foot range in elevation, and is adjacent to the 18-hole Katke-Cousins Golf Course.

"The rating really lends credibility to our facility," said Bill Rogers, golf and managing director of OU's R&S Sharf and Katke-Cousins courses. "The 'Golf Digest' ranking is very prestigious – many golfers travel to play courses based on the rankings. The magazine has a team of raters that go around the country to play different courses, and many of them have been here. The Sharf course also has gotten its reputation by word of mouth."

Smith and Henderson used their expertise to create an aesthetically pleasing course that enhances the golfing experience.

"The architects did a fabulous job in creating a pleasing visual aspect," Rogers said. "The course has tremendous undulation and topography and good elevation changes. You can stand at the tee box and see the entire hole in front of you, which allows you to establish your strategy. And the golfer's eye also sees the variations in color. The tee area is a light green, the fairways are a forest green, and the rough is emerald green. The heather color changes three times a year, from brown to reddish brown to tan. Oftentimes you'll also see wildlife such as deer on the course. Golfers who play the course often are elated with their experience."

The course also plays fairly for the common golfer, yet presents a challenge to the championship player, Rogers said.

"The architects broadened the fairways on the right side of all the holes," Rogers said. "This opens it up for those who fade or slice the ball so you find yourself in a playable place. Accuracy on your approach to the green is immensely rewarded. The putting greens are very fair, fast, undulating and challenging.

"The course was very well thought out by the architects from the visual aspects to the fairness of play, which is why it gets rave reviews from golfers either the first or 10th time it's played."

In September 2001, the Sharf course hosted the Lincoln Mercury Classic, a Michigan PGA event. This year, Sharf will host the Michigan Open qualifiers on May 19, the Michigan PGA Sponsors Outing on Sept. 3. In September 2004, R&S Sharf and Katke-Cousins courses will host official PGA Ryder Cup activities.

R&S Sharf and Katke-Cousins golf courses are open to OU students, faculty, staff, President's Club affiliates and their guests. Katke-Cousins also is open to OU Alumni Association members. The courses are open Tuesday through Sunday from March through November (weather permitting).

Visit the **OU Golf and Learning Center** Web site for more information on the courses, including fees, tee times, outings and course regulations. Visit the **Oakland University Alumni Association** and President's Club Web sites for information on memberships and the wide range of benefits members enjoy.

SUMMARY

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