

2010 Trans-Miss Championship

Summer championship returning to Denver Country Club

You have surely stood the test of time and largely because the volunteers who have worked on behalf of the Association have played by the rules and the true spirit of the game. You've had some great champions over the years and in so many ways, you have championed the cause of amateur golf. The Denver Country Club is just the right age to be the perfect venue for this centennial celebration

- USGA Past President Judy Bell, champion of both women's and amateur golf, wrote those words in a letter to the Trans-Mississippi Golf Association prior to its Four-Ball Championship during the Association's 100th year in 2001.
- The course gleamed, the membership beamed with pride and golfers teed off on a brilliant Colorado day – Sept. 11, 2001.
- Then the planes hit the buildings...and the world changed.
- Amid all the chaos some seemingly unimportant things were cancelled. Things like golf tournaments including the Trans Four-Ball at Denver Country Club.
- In 2010, the Association, which supports aspiring students in their pursuit of turf management degrees, returns to the venue yet again, this time to hold its 107th annual Championship and the Club is anxious to host and finish some business from 2001.
- "Our Club, and especially the membership, is very happy to have the Trans come back here," says Trans Director Gary Potter, long a member at Denver Country Club and a four-time club champion.

'A perfect paradise'

- Denver Country Club traces its roots clear back to 1887 when it was formed as the Overland Park Club to promote horse racing. Members of the Club were among 13 that met in June of 1901 and formed the Trans. In 1905, to "embrace a much broader athletic mission," the Club moved to its current location in the Mile-High City's southeastern section.
- William K. Brown, 1919 Denver CC club champion, called the site "a tract of well wooded natural creek bottom...a large part (of which) was a perfect jungle of trees and undergrowth and wild rose bushes. There were extensive stretches of cattails and watercress, and small swamps – a perfect paradise for birds, water snakes and small boys." And, as Old Tom Morris' former assistant James Foulis designed, it was a fine place for a golf course.
- On the banks of Cherry Creek, Denver Country Club has become the oldest such organization west of the Mississippi and its membership has enjoyed a tradition of sporting excellence that few clubs in the United States rival. In its second set

of Articles of Incorporation (dated Dec. 5, 1901), the words "to encourage and perpetuate sports" are written. And the Club has done that through horse racing, tennis, swimming, figure skating, ice hockey and, of course, golf.

- "We have the 18-hole golf course, we have 10 tennis courts...six are outdoors, we have an ice skating rink that is open from October through March, we have hockey leagues and eight hockey teams," says Patrice Piralla, who's been with Denver Country Club the last 17 years and served as general manager since 2007.
- The golf course became a regular stop for the Trans-Mississippi Golf Association, hosting its first Trans event in 1910 as Harry G. Legg won his second of four straight titles in a field that included a "national record" 264 entries. George Von Elm won the title there in 1921 and the Trans returned to Denver CC in 1946 after a three-year hiatus for World War II as Skee Riegel was the winner. In 1980, Raymond Barr won his Trans title at Denver Country Club. The 2001

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Greetings

Dear Trans-Miss Supporters,

■ My tenure as president of the Trans-Mississippi Golf Association is drawing to an end. It has been a great two year labor of love for me. I certainly appreciate the support and participation of our Trans-Miss directors and the professional assistance from our administrative staff. But most importantly, I appreciate the financial support of our member golf clubs and the dozens of donors that help to fund our annual turf scholarship awards. The combination of all of these has helped to make the Trans-Mississippi Golf Association a vital and important organization in the golf industry. So, to everyone I extend my heartfelt thanks!

■ Over the last few years, the Trans-Mississippi Golf Association and the Turf Scholarship Fund have experienced some notable changes and accomplishments:

- Eleven of our current 36 Trans-Miss directors were added to the board of directors in the last three years, giving our governing body new ideas and energy. Our retiring directors continue to be involved with "life director" status.
 - The communications with our members and supporters has been enhanced by a full-color Transcript newsletter that tells our story and with a new website that gets our message to all that want to hear it.
 - Our championship golfers continue to experience professionally administered competition on some of the nation's very best and welcoming venues.
 - Our annual Turf Scholarship awards have increased in number and by 80% in amount.
 - Our Turf Fund portfolio is over one million dollars enabling us to continue on our mission to help education tomorrow's best golf course superintendents.
 - Building a stronger relationship with universities offering degrees in turfgrass management, including the start of Trans-Miss scholar alumni clubs.
 - A concerted effort to enhance our member club roster so that more clubs and golfers have a role in funding our scholarship program.
- Our goal to award at least \$150,000 in annual scholarships is in sight, but it will take some dedication and hard work by our volunteer directors. A capital campaign is planned once our national economy improves and the golf industry is stronger. Until then we will continue to award a significant amount each year.

■ I am most excited about the Trans-Mississippi Championship. The 2010 version will crown our 107th champion while he takes his place with the greats of the amateur game. But this champion will be the first one

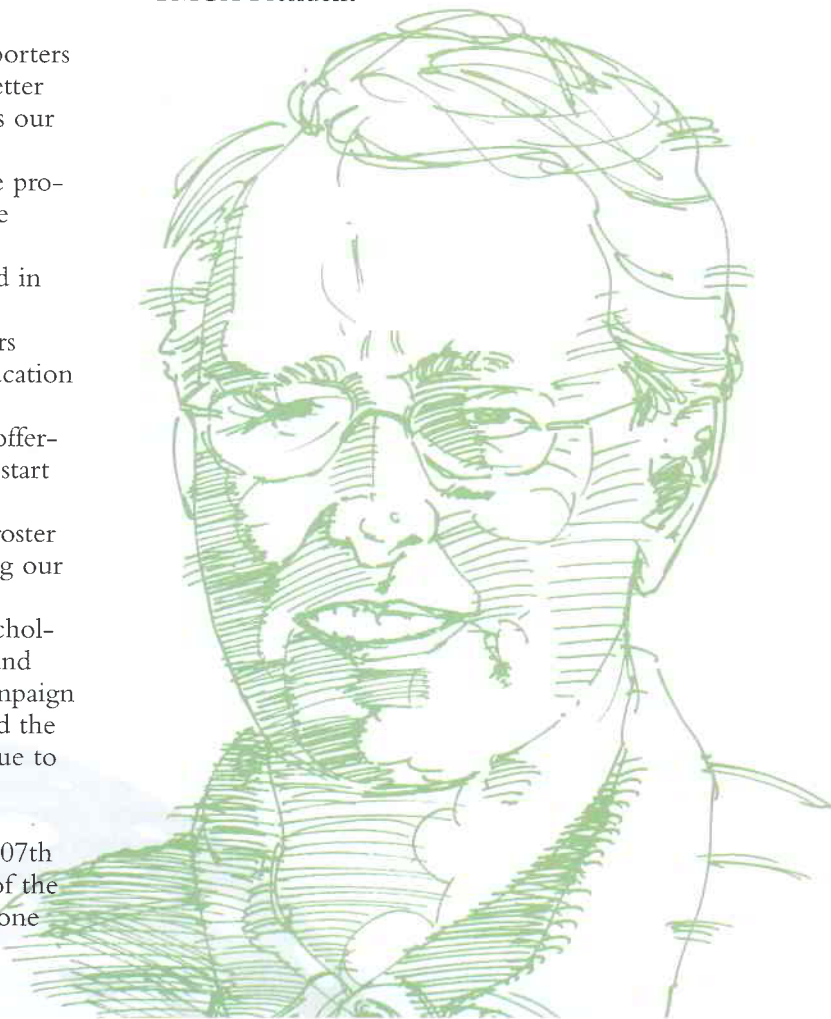
determined using a stroke play format instead of match play. This change is being made because, frankly, we needed to make it more practical and affordable for our players to travel to and from the championship. And for the first time in 20 years, players under the age of 25 will be allowed to participate. In other words, the college kids are back on the tee! We are excited to see the level of interest from the top college and amateur golfers and we expect to have a premier field at Denver Country Club in July.

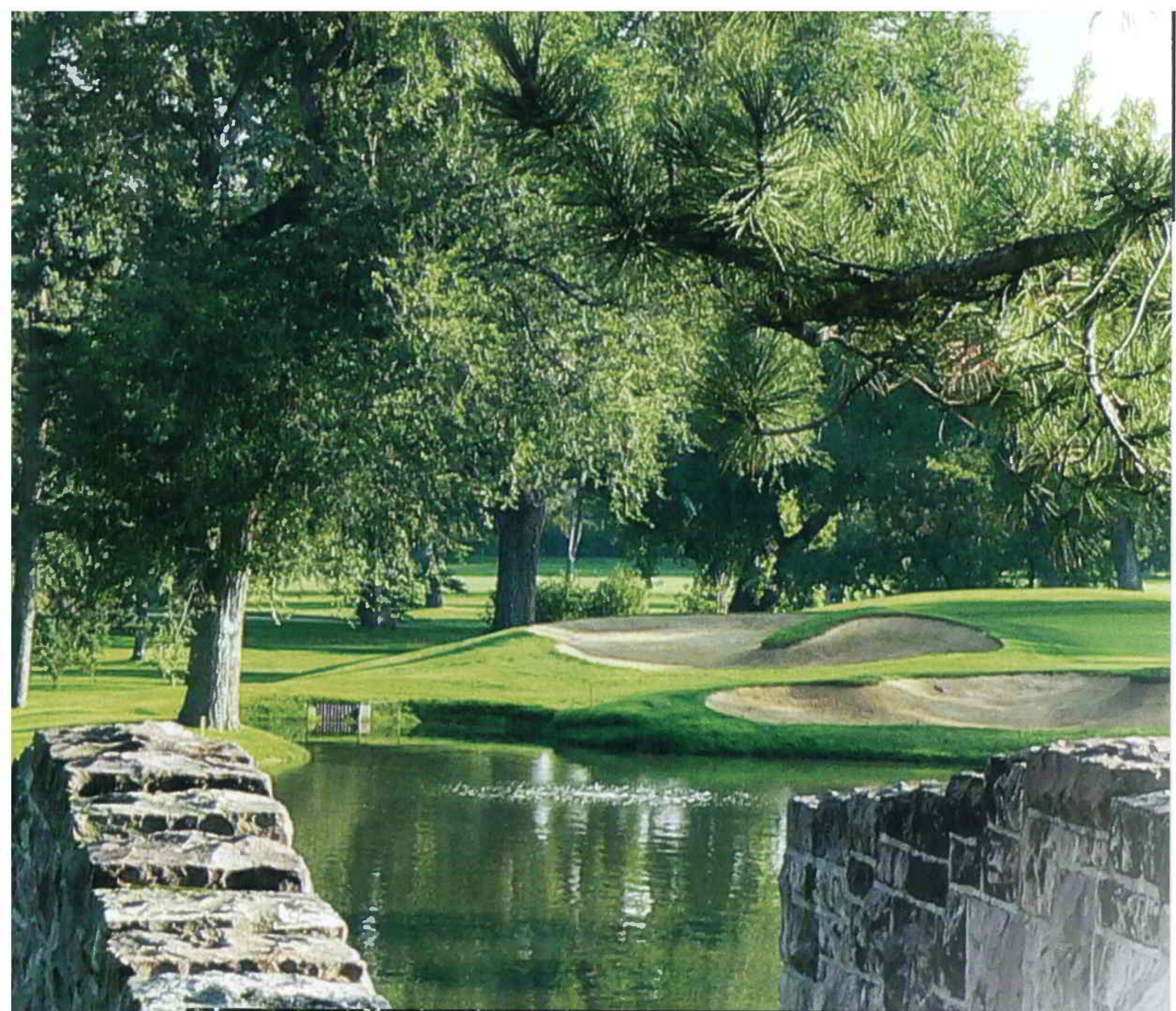
■ By now we should all be seeing the first signs of spring and anticipating another fun and successful golf season. Thank you for your support of the Trans!

Best wishes,

Hank Wilkinson

Hank Wilkinson
TMGA President







marily Poa Annuua and creeping bentgrass, fairways are ryegrass/bluegrass over-seeded with bent, tees are ryegrass and bentgrass, and roughs are primarily rye and blue.

■ “There is some movement in the property, it is flat in some areas, but there is some movement,” says Brooks, in his fourth season at Denver Country Club after a stint with a golf management company in Denver and having served as superintendent at nearby Cherry Hills Country Club, site of the 2009 Trans Four-Ball championship. “The green complexes are what create the most interest on the golf course. There is some movement in them that really creates the challenge...”

■ Cherry Creek is a “gorgeous” feature running through the property, according to Brooks. Water hazards in the form of ponds and lakes also come into play on the fifth and 14th holes and the course has 75 bunkers to further challenge competitors.

■ The course’s front side includes the challenging uphill par-4 fourth hole. “The green has about three tiers that make it a very interesting hole,” Brooks says. The par-4 ninth is one of the original golf holes on the course. Though the hole is primarily flat, the original green design slopes away from the player. “As you approach that green it slopes away from you so it doesn’t receive shots real well,” Brooks advises.

■ Brooks says No. 11, a 453-yard par 4, offers a challenging tee shot over Cherry Creek and the approach shot is to a well-guarded green. “It’s a gorgeous hole,” he says. Brooks calls the short, par-4 16th hole “challenging” with its severe dogleg left and relatively small green with a “pretty good slope from back to front.” “If green speeds are up that can be a real challenging shot into that hole,” he warns.

■ Brooks says he thinks players with a hot putter and good short game might fare well during this summer’s Trans Championship.

■ “We’re not real long, so if you hit it in the fairway and you’re putting well and have a good short game you’re probably going to have a good week,” says Brooks, who owns a turf degree from Penn State.

Summer in the Rockies

■ So competitors in this year’s field, which should now include some of the best college-aged players in the country, may not benefit as much from the high-altitude, ball launching Colorado air you always hear about during television golf coverage.

■ “We’re just an understated golf course...you don’t probably hit driver, if you’re trying to score, more than four or five times,” Potter says modestly.

■ The altitude will have its effects on golfers as they work their way around the course and remaining hydrated is important, even if it is difficult to remember in the comfortable climate.

■ “With the high altitude you really need to make sure you drink plenty of water,” says Piralla. “And there will be lots of water to drink out on the course.”

■ Denver’s July weather calls for highs in the upper 80s and lows in the upper 50s on average. But it can be unpredictable due to the city’s proximity to the Rocky Mountains just west. Storms in the afternoon are commonplace that time of the year and can be severe.

■ “It’s always nice weather that time of year,” Piralla says. “But there are thunderstorms in the afternoon.”

■ Denver Country Club, with its proximity to the Cherry Creek area, offers many off-the-golf-course opportunities, including the very popular Cherry Creek Mall, and many high-quality restaurants and hotels to choose from, according to Piralla.

■ “Our location is just great,” he says.

■ Of course Trans competitors are mainly interested in golf, and Piralla says their experience at Denver Country Club this summer should be a memorable one.

■ “We’re very excited to show the Club, the course and how we do things here,” says Piralla, whose resume includes stops at Castle Pines (Colo.) Country Club and The Vintage Club in Indian Wells, Calif. “I think we are all very excited about it. (Competitors) will find a very friendly membership and staff who want to help in any way they can.”

Four-Ball Championship would have been the course’s fifth Trans Championship.

■ The Club has hosted a number of key golf events including the Curtis Cup, the Western Amateur, the Pacific Coast Amateur and the Denver Open, which was a stop on the PGA Tour. The Club boasts golf greats ChiChi Rodriguez and Bob Goalby among its list of champions.

Greens are complex issue

■ Over the years, parkland Denver CC has undergone “tweaks” by such noted architects as Donald Ross (1914-22), William Flynn (1923-24), Harry Collis (1925), William Diddle (1957-59), Press Maxwell (1963-65), Ed Seay (1975-78) and Bill Coore (1985-2001). Several minor modifications were also made at the suggestion of A.W. Tillinghast in 1936.

■ For the 2010 Championship, the course will be stretched to just north of 6,800 yards at a par of 70. According to superintendent Doug Brooks, the course’s greens are pri-

Trans transitioning to stroke play

Format change, college players debut this summer at Colorado course

- The times they are a changin'.
- For the Trans-Mississippi Golf Association that means a change in format for its annual Championship as for the first time in the storied history of the tournament, this summer's event at Denver Country Club will be conducted under a stroke play format. And the championship division is going from a strictly mid-am field to the return of college-aged competitors.
- Bold moves for a traditional event that boasts the likes of Jack Nicklaus, Ben Crenshaw and Bob Tway as past champions.
- "Since 1901 the Tran-Miss has been a part of building the rich golf history of the United States. The Trans-Miss has always been proactive in reacting to changing times," says Trans board member Gary Potter, who served as Denver Country Club president in 1994. "Starting this year, the stroke play tournament will bring the century-old camaraderie and competition of the Tran-Miss to a new generation of golfers to enjoy and carry on for the next century."

Meeting time, cost concerns

- With that tradition-rich history that dates back to the early part of the 20th century when it was a competition between just a couple Midwestern golf clubs, the Trans membership grew to about 15 clubs and its annual championship became a match play stalwart on the golf calendar. By the early 1920s the event began to attract players with national reputations.
- "Back in those days, with match play, the country club people would make a week of it," Potter says. "They'd ride the trains, have the parties each evening and play golf during the day."
- Modern amateur golfers (the Trans went to a mid-amateur field for its Championship in 1987), how-

ever, are ruled by busy business/career schedules and taking off a block of days to compete in what can become a week-long event in a successful match-play run is more and more difficult. Travel costs also became a concern.

- "As we went to some of the historical sites the cost to travel was really an impediment to the players coming," Potter says. "Our mid-amateurs are generally still working people. Taking the week off to play in the Championship seemed to be a detriment to getting a full field."

- With the decision made to bring college-aged players back into the Championship, the transition to stroke play also makes it easier to attract top college golfers as they set up their summer schedules, according to Potter.

- "We realize for the college players a full week, with the qualifying, then not knowing when they might be beaten, the real cost of their travel can create problems," Potter says. "We calculated that a stroke play event, where people knew when they were arriving and when the tournament was over, would meet both of our concerns."

- This summer the 144-player field will have a Denver Country Club practice round on July 12. The 54-hole Championship will then be contested July 13-15 with no cut.

'A lot of ways to shoot 68'

- Potter joined the Trans board of directors in 1979 and a year later the Championship was held at Denver Country Club and was won by Raymond Barr. Potter has been a Trans board member ever since. "We did about everything ourselves in those early days," the Denver attorney recalled. "We took in about 300 entries, decided what 200 were going to play, set the pairings up, did the newspaper articles." Potter chaired the Four-Ball Championship committee in 2001 as the event came to Denver CC during the Trans-Miss's centennial

year. But the event cancelled due to the 9/11 tragedy.

"We had a great turn-out and Jack Nicklaus was going to come to town, but unfortunately 9/11 occurred the first day of the tournament and that was that," Potter says. The longtime Denver CC member who has won the club championship and senior club championship on multiple occasions says the layout will be a challenge for stroke-play competitors this summer.

"The courses we play for the Championship, Denver Country Club and next year Kansas City Country Club, don't favor the college players, their distance, their strength and their ability to over-power a golf course are diffused a bit by a little bit shorter, a little bit tighter golf courses," Potter advises. "I think there are a lot of ways to shoot 68. The guys who are in their 30s and 40s have ways to do it as well as the kids who over-power a golf course."

The competitive course record at Denver Country Club is 65 at a par of 71. The championship will play to a par of 70. Potter says low scores are possible on the layout, especially by the quality of field expected for the Trans.

"We had the Western Junior there four years ago and the low round was 66. For 72 holes I think 10 or 11 under par won," Potter says.

"That was a very quality field and it held up. We're not going to do anything to make it harder."