

SPORTS

Swinging into a new golf season

Tiger, Mike Weir help make spring busy on courses in Markham, Stouffville

BY MICHAEL LAUGHLIN
Correspondent

The arrival of spring means many things to different people.

To some, it signals a time to work on the garden. For others it's a time to begin spring cleaning.

For golfers, it's a long-awaited sign that's welcomed with open arms.

For those who did not have the luxury of playing somewhere during the winter months in warmer climes south of the border, it's been a long wait to swing a club on the links.

Within the boundaries of Markham and Whitchurch-Stouffville, the public golf courses have or are about to open their gates.

Local golf professionals from the various courses note the start to this year's season is about average.

They said the time line for opening is usually the first weekend of April to the middle of the month, although the ultimate decision goes to Mother Nature.

Were it not for some wet weather in the form of snow and rain in recent weeks, some courses might have been opened sooner as Old Man Winter was gentle this year by dumping little snow.

But whatever the scenario, there's always a loyal group of golfers who will come out in herds, no matter what time of the season the courses open.

"I think the golfers are really excited about this year," notes Brad Hunt, head professional at Parkview Golf Club in Markham, whose links opened two days earlier than last year. "People have been phoning us all season."

Hunt says he wouldn't be surprised to see more golfers coming out this year.

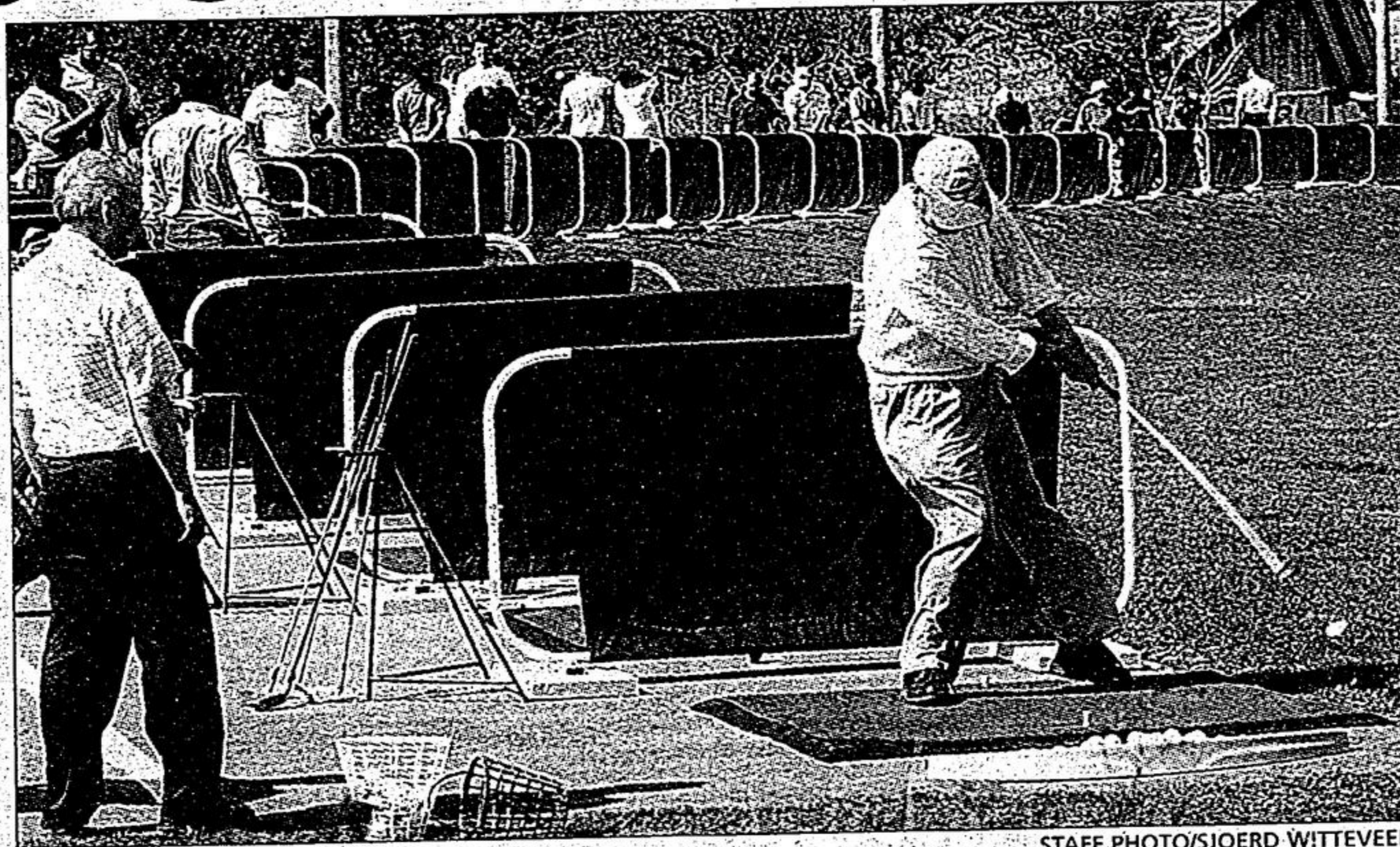
"Golf has grown in the last five years. People are coming out more and more every year," he cited.

"The real golfers are already out, and they are always happy," added Wayne Cameron, director of golf at Claremont's Four Seasons Country Club. "The golfers have all been ready to golf this year. They seem really excited."

Hunt points to his reservations list as proof of golfers enthusiasm. His tee times are already booked solid, which is impressive this early in the year. Even more impressive is the fact that golfers must reserve a time two weeks in advance.

"My advice is to call now if you want to play," advises Hunt. "Something tells me that the courses phone lines will continue to ring for the rest of the season."

In explaining the surge in the game's pop-



STAFF PHOTO/SJOERD WITTEVEN

The arrival of spring has golf enthusiasts out in full force on the links or driving range. Here, Sam Lew (far left), watches as his friend Raymond Fung hits a ball off the mat at the Fairtree Golf Centre on Hwy. 48 and Denison Avenue.

ularity, Kevin Thistle, director of golf operations at Angus Glen Golf Club in Unionville, feels there's several reasons.

One, he said is the media's portrayal of the game and in extolling the exploits of several of the game's superstars such as Tiger Woods and in Canada, Mike Weir.

In doing so, he notes the younger generation are getting into the game whereas 10 years ago, the game might have been viewed as being for the older generation.

"Guys like Tiger Woods make it a cool game to play for younger people," said Thistle. "And Mike Weir has Canadian people excited to play the game."

"My advice is to call now if you want to play."

Thistle also feels the work of the Royal Canadian Golf Association and Professional Golf

Association in the United States have encouraged more youngsters to take to the links through their youth programs.

"In the last five to eight years, kids are starting the game earlier."

Here's a rundown of local courses that are open to the public within the vicinity of Markham and Whitchurch-Stouffville.

ANGUS GLEN GOLF CLUB

Location: 10080 Kennedy Rd. (northwest corner, Kennedy Road and Major Mackenzie Drive)
Telephone Number: (905) 887-5157.
Web Address: www.angusglen.com.

Course layout and fees: North course: 18-hole, 7,514-yard par 72 to open. South course: 18-hole, 7,400-yard par 12 open. Green fees: Monday to Friday \$175. Saturdays and Sundays \$175; after noon \$120. Holidays \$175; after noon \$120. Golf Academy and club rentals on site as well as full driving range, chipping greens and putting greens. New clubhouse open, new tee deck on hole 18 south, new putting greens.

BALLANTRAE GOLF CLUB

Location: Highway 48; just north of Aurora Road.

Telephone Number: (905) 640-6333.

Web Address: www.ballantraegolfclub.com

Course layout and fees: 18-hole 6,808-yard par 72. For 18-holes: Monday to Thursdays \$65, Fridays-Weekends-Holidays \$80. Power Cart \$28, Pull Cart \$6.50. For nine holes: Monday to Thursdays \$45, Fridays-Weekends-Holidays \$45. Power Carts \$18, Pull Carts \$6.50. New Pro shop. Also multiple play packages available. Practice facilities on site.

BUSHWOOD GOLF CLUB

Location: 10905 Reesor Rd. (10th Line).

Telephone Number: (905) 640-1233.

Web Address: www.bushwoodgolf.com.

Course layout and fees: 18-hole, 6,450-yard par 72 set to open April 13, as well as executive course. Spring rates: Monday to Fridays \$35, Weekends \$45. Normal Rates: Monday to Fridays \$38, Weekends \$48. Seniors and Juniors: Monday to Fridays \$28 (excluding holidays). Nine-hole, 3,200-yard par 31 executive course: Spring rate Monday to Fridays \$11, Weekends \$13. Normal rate Monday to Fridays \$13, Weekends \$15. Pro shop and clubhouse on premises, club and cart rentals and practice facilities available. Changes include new tee decks and re-sanding bunkers.

FOUR SEASONS COUNTRY CLUB

Location: Brock Rd. two kilometres south of Claremont.

Telephone Number: (905) 649-2436.

Web Address: www.ontarioweddings.com/4seasons.

Course layout and fees: 18-hole, 5,700-yard par 69. Monday to Fridays \$40; After 3 p.m. \$35; After 5 p.m. \$25; Weekends and holidays \$50; After 1 p.m. \$45. Seniors discounted \$5 off regular tee times; Juniors discounted \$10 off regular tee times. Membership packages available. Clubhouse pro shop, club rentals and practice facilities on premises. Changes include new tee decks. The course is already open for the season.

GLEN CEDARS GOLF CLUB

Location: Seventh Concession, RR5, Claremont.

Telephone Number: (905) 294-4457.

Web Address: www.golfglencedars.com

Course layout and fees: 18-hole, 6,525-yard par 72 set to open April 10. Fees until May 13: Monday to Thursdays \$47.50; Fridays \$52.50; Weekends and holidays \$57.50. After May 13: Monday to Thursdays \$47, Fridays \$52.50 and Weekends and holidays \$55. Twilight rates: after 2 p.m. \$40, after 4 p.m. \$30, after 6 p.m. \$20. Chipping and putting area on site, small area to hit your own balls and retrieve. Includes club-

house, pro shop, full bar, restaurant and snack bar on site. Club and Cart rentals available. Changes include renovations to pro shop.

MAPLES OF BALLANTRAE GOLF CLUB

Location: 14248 Highway 48, Stouffville.

Telephone Number: (905) 640-6077.

Web Address: none.

Course layout and fees: Course open. Championship course: 18-hole, 6,715-yard par 72. Fees: Monday to Thursdays \$44.86; Fridays-weekends-holidays \$54.21; Twilight, Weekend (after three p.m.) \$37.38; Monday to Thursdays \$33.64; Everyday after 4:30 p.m. \$22.43. Executive course: a nine-hole, 1,469-yard par 29. Rates: Junior Monday to Friday (after 12 p.m.) \$29.21; Senior Monday to Fridays (before 12 p.m.) \$31.25. Regular fee: \$14.95; 18-holes \$25.23. Changes include renovations to clubhouse; 8th hole has a new bridge. Club and cart rentals available. Clubhouse and pro shop on site.

MARKHAM GREEN GOLF CLUB

Location: Ninth Line just south of Hwy. 7.

Telephone Number: (905) 294-6156.

Web Address: www.markhamgreengolfclub.ca

Course layout and fees: nine-hole, 3,004-yard par 35. Fees for nine holes set to open April 12. Fees: weekdays \$26; 18-holes \$45; Twilight weekdays (after 6 p.m.) \$18.25; 18-holes; Weekends \$29; Twilight weekends \$21; Junior weekday \$17; Junior 18-holes \$29; Junior weekends \$22. Power cart \$18; Power cart 18-holes \$29. Club rentals available. Licensed snack bar on site. Chipping and putting range on premises along with warm up driving net. No changes to course.

PARKVIEW GOLF CLUB

Location: 6402 Steeles Ave. E., Markham.

Telephone Number: (416) 293-2833.

Web Address: www.parkviewgolf.com

Course layout and fees: Upper course: 18-hole 6,400-yard par 71. Valley course: 18-hole 5,860-yard par 71. Fees for both courses: Monday and Tuesdays \$38; Wednesday to Fridays \$44; Saturday-Sunday-holidays (until 12 p.m.) \$56; After 12 p.m. until 4 p.m. \$48; twilight (after four p.m.) Monday and Tuesdays \$28; Wednesday to Fridays \$30; Saturday-Sunday-holidays \$36. Power and pull cart rentals available, along with club rentals. Inside full lounge, outside patio. Putting and chipping area also on site. Short iron practice facility. No changes have been made to the course.

ROLLING HILLS GOLF CLUB

Location: Warden Ave. one km. North of Stouffville Rd.

Telephone Number: (905) 888-1955.

Web Address: www.clublink.ca

Course layout and fees: Championship course: an 18-hole, 6340-yard par 72. Weekend prime \$48; Weekday prime \$36; Regular \$36; Opportunity \$29; Twilight \$29 (five hours before dark); Dusk \$17 (three hours before dark); Challenge Course: an 18-hole, 4,456-yard par 70. Weekend prime \$40; Weekday prime \$30; Regular \$30; Opportunity \$20; Twilight \$20; Dusk \$15. Classic Course: an 18-hole 4010-yard par 62. Weekend prime \$30; Weekday prime \$25; Regular \$25; Opportunity \$20; Twilight \$20; Dusk \$13. Club and cart rentals available. All three courses are now open to the public. All courses open.

UNIONVILLE GOLF CENTRE

Location: 44 Main Street, Unionville.

Telephone Number: (905) 477-1148.

Web Address: none.

Course Layout and fees: 18-hole, 2,103 yards for men and 1,799 yards for ladies par three. Fees: Weekdays \$21; Weekends \$25; Junior and Senior weekdays \$16.50. Weekday dusk (after 5 p.m.) \$16.50; Weekend dusk \$18.50; Weekday twilight (after 7 p.m.) \$12.50; Weekend twilight \$12.50. The course is already open. Club rentals \$6. Pull cart rentals \$4. Driving range, putting and chipping areas on site. No changes to the course.

With files from Mike Hayakawa

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