

Stouffville Sun-Tribune

SPORTS

Ballantrae Golf Club opened Tuesday

Long, hard winter put hold on golf season

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What a difference one year makes.

Last year at this time, golfers were out on the fairways at public golf courses in Whitchurch-Stouffville thanks in large part to some co-operation from Mother Nature who produced unseasonably mild temperatures in March.

But this year, those courses are still in a holding pattern, due largely to Old Man Winter, who remained around this neck of the woods after dumping snow and ice pellets last week.

Not to mention some large amounts of rainfall afterwards.

The end result are golf courses still in the process of drying up.

"We're really itching to open," conceded Roy Chin, Maples of Ballantrae Golf Club head pro.

"A couple of weeks ago we had targeted an April 19 opening. Right now though, we're waiting for the course to dry up. No one wants to play in sloppy conditions."

Chin noted their situation is compounded by the fact the course is located in a higher elevation in the Oak Ridges Moraine.

As a result, their course requires a few extra days to dry.

In looking at the upcoming weather forecast for the week, Chin is keeping his fingers crossed they might be able to open some time next week.

But that will once again depend on Mother Nature being in a co-operative mood.

"Last year was a lucky year," he said in reference to the course's early March 23 opening in 2012.

"This year it's really back to normal."

Citing there's no physical changes made to the

club's 18-hole championship course, Chin said they made one alteration to their nine-hole executive in which they've added a bridge.

As a result, players can now use power carts on that course.

For those hoping to get an early start on the season, Chin suggested they call the course to get further updates.

While the Maples of Ballantrae is still feeling the effects of the recent snow and rain, Ballantrae Golf Club opened its doors for business Tuesday.

Tanya McGee, club manager, credited their excellent drainage system in helping them dry up the 18-hole public course from the wet weather experienced last week to open in what she described as their traditional time frame.

But it is a far cry from last year when they began business March 31.

'Last year was a lucky year. This year it's really back to normal.'

"We usually try to open around the middle of April," she said. "But everything is weather dependant."

Although the course is open, McGee was quick to note golfers can only walk the course.

For those hoping to use power carts, she said it will be weather dependant.

If the course dries up sufficiently, they will allow carts to be used by the weekend at the earliest.

Those looking to get in some early golf at Ballantrae will not see any physical changes to the course, McGee said.



SUN TRIBUNE FILE PHOTO

It won't be long before you're back playing area public courses in short pants and sleeves. Ballantrae Golf Club opened this week.

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