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Granite Club tweaking short-game facilities

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Over the last few years, officials at the Granite Golf Club were pondering how to better utilize a five-hole short course area at their 18-hole private Stouffville-area facility.

Bring in a highly renowned Canadian golf course architect in Tom McBroom and it did not take long for club execs to decide what would evolve.

In the end, practice still remains the name of the game at the club, on the York-Durham Line northeast of Stouffville.

But it will be in a more state-of-the-art presentation through the creation of a Short Game Academy.

To be officially unveiled next month, the Short Game Academy was constructed by removing two holes from the club's under-utilized five-hole short course and converted into a 3.7-acre practice area.

"It's the largest dedicated practice facility I have ever created and certainly the most interesting and varied," McBroom, who designed the club that opened in 2001, said in a media release. "At most established clubs, space is at a premium, so to have a chance to work with nearly four acres presented an opportunity to create a very special and unique short game practice area."

When the Short Game Academy opens it can play host to 20-plus golfers to work on their chipping, putting and sand trap play.

It can also serve as an area for group clinics or camps.

Encompassing the Short Game Academy is an 8,500 square-foot, United States Golf Association putting green; two 6,000 square-foot target chipping greens and a fourth 6,000 square-foot green surrounded by two large traps for sand play.

Not included is a 7,600 square-foot putting green on the other side of the clubhouse.

Phil Scully, the club's course superintendent, said creating the Short Game Academy enables golfers to work on whatever short game situation they want, leaving no stone unturned.

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"We started with a blank canvas and tried to create a space where members and guests will be able to create their own customized practice experience," he said. "We have designed it so you can practise any shot you can imagine without telling you where to go. There are an infinite variety of shots out there. You can practise shots from one to 50 yards on bluegrass or bent grass or from the sand."

"(It's) designed to complement all of our facilities and programs as we create an engaging learning environment that fosters a passion for the game for players of all ages and abilities," said Dan Campbell, the club's director of golf. "It creates the ideal environment to learn all fundamentals of the short game and the ability to adapt them to on course conditions, so members enjoy their time on the golf course."

The club now features a three-hole short course, a practice range that will be upgraded down the road and an 18-hole course.

The club is also home to a number of industry leading initiatives including: the Canadian Junior Golf Association Family Tees Program, Golf Canada's National Junior Golf Development Center and a Provincial Training Centre for the Golf Association of Ontario's Under-19 Team Ontario athletes.

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