



Photo: Jeff Blume

## CASE STUDY: SUGAR CREEK

### Golf for all

Members at Sugar Creek Country Club will soon be able to play on the newly renovated Robert Course (one of the three sets of nine holes at the club), which not only includes new golf holes, tees, greens and fairways, but a new set of short tees designed to accommodate players of all skill level.

The club's general manager, Gordon Wagner, says that the renovation with Jeff Blume, ASGCA, has proved an ideal opportunity to take the club's oldest—and, previously, least desirable—nine holes of golf, and turn them into something fun.

"The plan has been to make the course more appealing to everyone—children,

families and older players, particularly those that are considering downgrading their membership," he explains.

Wagner first came across the concept of multiple tees after reading an article in *Club and Resort Business* in 2015 by Bill Donohue, which talked about kids' tees, short tees, quicker tees and so on. "The article mentioned a successful initiative at a club in Michigan, which not only built in new short tees, but changed its program so that for three to four days a week, the course was designated for short tees," Wagner explains.

"It was committed to growing participation, and the club's board

and membership really got behind the initiative. I looked at what they had achieved and thought it was genius!"

While he is hopeful about the appeal of the new short tees at Robert Course, Wagner recognizes the importance of communicating changes to members, and encouraging them to get behind it. "Members need to know what it is all about," he says. "The club has to be completely committed, which means programming, programming, programming—nine hole night competitions, nine hole par three events and more. Ultimately, it's about giving players a sense of freedom that they've never experienced before."