

Palmer Hills Golf Course Bettendorf, IA



Hole 5

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Course Description and History



Hole 15

Palmer Hills Golf Course in Bettendorf, Iowa is a par-71 course.



Hole 2

Designed by William J. Spear, ASGCA, and opened for play in 1974, Palmer Hills Golf Course in Bettendorf, Iowa is a par-71 course. Featuring 100-year-old oak trees, rolling hills, meticulously maintained fairways, and a meandering creek that comes into play on 11 holes, the course offers a challenge and a beautiful setting for golfers of all levels.



Two ponds add to the picturesque landscape.



For the 11th year in a row, locals have voted Palmer Hills "Best Golf Course" in the Locals Love Us poll.



Palmer Hills also received the Quad Cities Business Journal's Best of the Region award in 2023.



Facilities and Amenities

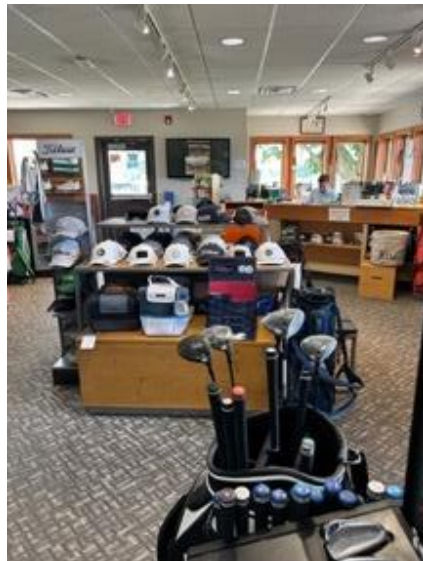
Clubhouse



The current Palmer Hills Clubhouse, built in 2006, serves as the main facility for golfers and visitors, offering various services and amenities to enhance their experience. The Clubhouse includes the Pro Shop, Palmer Grill, and the Outdoor Patio.

Pro Shop

The pro shop is stocked with golfing equipment, apparel, and accessories. It provides a range of products for golfers of all levels.



There are also quick food options for players making the turn. The golf course has spectacular views from inside the restaurant or on the deck.



Outdoor Patio



An outdoor patio area offers a relaxing spot to enjoy the scenic views of the golf course. Customers enjoy drinks and live music on weekend evenings in the patio area.

LIVE MUSIC ON THE PATIO
FEATURING MOLLY DURNIN
SATURDAY, JUNE 20 6:00-9:00 PM

ENJOY \$4 LOCAL IOWA BEERS
ON TAP OR CAN

PALMER HILLS

Pavilion

The Pavilion is a covered outside area with a grill and picnic tables. The Pavilion is near the upper parking lot, making it an accessible facility. The Pavilion can accommodate up to 150 guests, making it suitable for large gatherings.



Catering services are available from the Palmer Grill. The staff assists in planning and executing the catering to meet specific preferences.

Practice Facilities

Putting Greens



There are two Practice Putting Greens located near the clubhouse. One is near the 1st tee, especially convenient for those starting their round. The 2nd one is near the lower parking lot and is more convenient for those using the Driving Range, or those wanting to work on their game.

The greens are maintained to mimic the conditions of the course greens, providing a realistic practice environment. They are maintained to the same high standards as the course itself.



Both Practice Putting Greens are big enough to allow multiple players to practice a variety of putts or chips.

Driving Range



The driving range features 30 tees, providing ample space for multiple golfers to practice simultaneously. The surface is all-season artificial mats.

There are three target greens and a big target net for short-game practice. There are yardage signs near the tees to allow the golfers to choose the proper club for a target.



The driving range has lighting to make it possible for golfers to practice in the evening when the days are shorter.

The driving range is designed to accommodate golfers of all skill levels, offering a comprehensive practice environment to work on driving, fairway woods, hybrids, long irons, and wedges.

Short Game Practice Area

The Short Game Practice Area is located near the maintenance facility. The Short Game Practice Area was installed for the high school golf teams to practice; it is available to the public when not being used by a team. Carts are available for free for players wanting to use the practice area.

The Short Game Practice Area is a dedicated area for practicing wedge shots from various distances. A sand trap makes this area ideal for practicing all types of wedge shots.



The Forge at Palmer Hills

The Forge is an 18-hole putting course. The course covers 56,500 square feet and has four putting greens, providing flexibility in setup. Each green contains multiple holes, which are routed out and back. Tees (Cup holder stands) and holes are moved routinely to reduce wear. The greens are bent grass and roll around 11 on a Stimpmeter, which is the same speed as the main course.



18-hole rounds at the Forge take between 45 minutes and an hour for most groups. The course is accessible to all skill levels but is still challenging for the best golfers.



The Forge includes a building where customers pay for their rounds. The building also includes a concession stand, which is conveniently located between holes 12 and 13.



The Forge can be rented out for birthday parties, corporate gatherings, and special occasions.

Other Facility Features

Tree Health and Tree Nursery

Bob Sartor is a volunteer and a resident tree expert. Bob developed software to map and list every tree on public ground in the City of Bettendorf. This software keeps our tree inventory updated on removed trees, planted trees, and the condition of the trees.

Bob also treats all ash trees on public land in Bettendorf, including those on Palmer Hills Golf Course. The course has not lost any ash trees to the Emerald Ash Borer due to Bob's work.

Bob is also on the City of Bettendorf Trees R Us committee which gives recommendations to the Parks and Recreation Department on tree management. Palmer Hills Golf Course has worked closely with the committee and Bob to plant over 250 native trees in the tree nursery.



The trees grow for 4-5 years in the nursery before they are moved to the golf course. The Trees R Us committee has also purchased trees for immediate use at Palmer Hills such as replacement trees on #9 hillside by the tee boxes to replace pine trees that have died.

Vegetable Garden



A 2,400-square-foot fruit and vegetable garden was installed in 2017 behind the 7th green and adjacent to the 8th tee box. An 8-foot-high fence lined on the exterior with rabbit guard, buried about a foot into the ground protects the garden from rodents.

2024 marks the 2nd year the Palmer Hills Garden is partnering with [Tapestry Farms](#) to grow cabbage. Tapestry Farms planted approximately 400 cabbages in April and a 2nd batch of 300 cabbages in June.



Tapestry Farms is a nonprofit urban farm system, welcoming the Quad-Cities refugees. They nourish people and land, in hopes that all in the Quad-Cities community will be abundantly fed.

The cabbages are distributed to food pantries in the Quad Cities area through the Local Food Purchasing Agreement, an initiative that compensates primarily socially disadvantaged farmers' market rate for produce grown for people with limited resources.

Landscaping



Paul Marietta is a volunteer who has donated one day per week to maintaining landscape beds and developing new beds. Paul plants perennial flowering plants and helps maintain and harvest the garden vegetables. He has also built birdhouses to attract Bluebirds and Purple Martins to the golf course.



Growing the Game

Junior Golf



First Tee

In 2024 Palmer Hill and the Palmer Hills staff created a partnership. There have been several First Tee events at Palmer Hills. In 2024 220 kids went through the First Tee program at Palmer Hills.



Youth on Course



Palmer Hills and the IGA work together to allow the Youth on Course participants to play at a reduced rate. Flyers are on the Pro Shop counter to promote the program and the \$5/round rate. All Junior Program participants get one of the flyers.



Youth on Course participation at Palmer Hills is growing.

- 2021 (first year of participation) - 212 rounds
- 2022 - 839 rounds
- 2023 - 1,566 round
- 2024 - 1,533 rounds through 8/11/24

Lessons and Clinics



PEE WEES GOLF
With PGA Golf Pro Shawna Elliott

Thursdays:
June 8th-29th
5pm-6pm

Palmer Hills Golf Course
Ages 5-8
\$105

REGISTRATION CLOSES JUNE 7
www.bettendorf.org/Golf

Bettendorf
PARKS & RECREATION



GIRL POWER GOLF
With PGA Golf Pro Shawna Elliott

Tuesdays:
June 6th-27th
Ages 5-8: 4:30pm-5:30pm
Ages 9-13: 6pm-7pm

Palmer Hills Golf Course
\$105

Wednesdays:
June 7th-28th
Ages 5-8: 5:30pm-6:30pm

REGISTRATION CLOSES JUNE 2ND
www.bettendorf.org/Golf

Bettendorf
PARKS & RECREATION



Palmer Hills has four people giving golf lessons at Palmer Hills.

- Jon Waddell, PGA Head Golf Professional
- Butch Haverland, PGA Teaching Professional
- Shawna Elliott, PGA
- Alex Grell, Apprentice

All the teachers are involved in giving lessons to our young golfers. They are also involved in the many clinics available at Palmer Hills.

PGA Jr. League



Butch Haverland, PGA Teaching Professional coordinates a PGA Jr. League at Palmer Hills. PGA Jr. Leagues brings family and friends together around fun, team golf experiences with expert coaching from PGA and LPGA Professionals.

Boys and girls of all backgrounds and skill levels learn and play golf together in numbered jerseys, utilizing a supportive, two-person scramble format that encourages mentorship, builds confidence, and promotes sportsmanship.

The Palmer Panthers participate in the PGA Junior League. There are 12 players on the team.

The league includes 5 lessons that cover all facets of the game of golf.

IGA Junior Tournament



Image from iowapgajuniorgolf.com

The Iowa PGA Quad Cities Junior Tournament has been held annually at Palmer Hills. In 2024, there were 88 participants.

Scholastic Golf



Photo from https://x.com/BettGolf/header_photo



Palmer Hills hosts the High School tryouts for Bettendorf and Pleasant Valley High School Golf teams.

Palmer Hills is the home course and practice course for Bettendorf High School.

Female Golf Participation



Ladies Leagues

Tuesday Morning Palmer Ladies League – 40 members

The league begins the first week in May and ends the 3rd week in September.

The total number of rounds played by the league will be between 600-800.

Wednesday LPGA Amateur Golf Association – 16 players

The league begins the first week in May and ends the 3rd week in August.

There is a Stapleford event in September that is open to all LPGA members in the Quad Cities.



Wednesday Ladies Beginner League

The schedule was set to best meet the availability of the golfers. Two Wednesdays per month with 8-16 in attendance. The league was developed to offer a less intimidating introduction to golf for beginners.

The season's total number of ladies' league rounds is approximately 1000-1200.

Senior Golf



- Palmer Hills Men's Senior League has over 100 active members.

Their season begins the first Thursday in May and runs through the end of September.



The number of senior league rounds is between 1900 and 2100 a year.

Competitive Golf



Palmer Hills hosts various local and regional tournaments, including the Quad Cities Amateur.

Date	Event	Start Time	Number Of Player	Type
05/10/24	LPGA	8:00 AM	24	Tournament
06/19/24	PGA Junior League	2:00 PM	60	Tournament
07/03/24	Palmer Hills Junior	8:00 AM	140	Tournament
09/14/24	LPGA Stableford Event	10:00 AM	32	Tournament
09/18/24	Bettendorf High School Invitational	1:00 PM	144	Tournament

Affordable Options



Palmer Hills Golf Course offers reduced rates for seniors and juniors. We also offer Sundown and Super Sundown rates.

Rates

2024 Rates

<u>Weekdays</u>		<u>Weekends / Holidays</u>	
<i>(Monday - Thursday Fridays Until Noon)</i>	<i>Walking / Riding</i>	<i>(Fridays Starting At Noon Saturdays & Sundays)</i>	<i>Walking / Riding</i>
18 Holes	\$25.00 / \$43.00	18 Holes	\$30.00 / \$48.00
9 Holes	\$20.00 / \$33.00	9 Holes	\$30.00 / \$43.00
Seniors	\$21.00 / \$34.00	Seniors	N/A
Juniors	\$15.00	Juniors	\$30.00 <i>(Before 10:00 A.M.);</i> \$18.00 <i>(After 10:00 A.M.)</i>
Sundown	\$20.00 / \$34.00	Sundown	\$22.00 / \$36.00
* Super Sundown	\$16.00 / \$29.00	* Super Sundown	\$18.00 / \$31.00

Membership Passes



Palmers Hills Golf Course offers numerous membership options with reduced rates for seniors, juniors, and two-person families.

2024 Season Pass Rates	
<i>January 1st, 2024 - December 31st, 2024</i>	
YOUTH PASS <i>(18 & Under</i> <i>Monday - Thursday</i> <i>Friday Before 2:00 P.M.</i> <i>Saturday & Sunday After 11:00 A.M.)</i>	\$475.00
SENIOR PASS <i>(60 & Over</i> <i>Monday - Thursday</i> <i>Friday Before 2:00 P.M.)</i>	\$895.00
INDIVIDUAL WEEKDAY PASS	\$995.00
INDIVIDUAL SEVEN-DAY PASS	\$1,450.00
TWO-PERSON, FAMILY WEEKDAY PASS <i>(Monday - Friday)</i>	\$1,595.00
TWO-PERSON, FAMILY SEVEN-DAY PASS	\$2,150.00
VALUE PASS <i>(Pay For 10, Get 12 Rounds)</i>	\$300.00

Community Facility

First Green



Each year since 2018, Maintenance Superintendent Brian Hickey worked with Bettendorf Middle School to organize a field trip to Palmer Hills. At the course, Bettendorf eighth graders learn the science behind golf course management through a program called First Green. In 2023, more than 300 Bettendorf eighth graders participated in First Green.



The First Green is an outreach program of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America. First Green is a science, technology, engineering, arts, and math (STEAM) environmental program that uses the golf course as a living laboratory. The students participate in hands-on, outdoor learning stations that include lessons on wildlife habitat, soil science, environmental sustainability, mathematics, water conservation, and water quality.



First Green gets students to the course that have never been there before. The students learn some golf course etiquette from a Bettendorf High School golf coach. The students also get a chance to do some putting. The hope is to get some new golfers from the group of students that come on the field trip.



Golf courses are sometimes portrayed as being bad for the environment. The First Green program gets the students to the course to hear about the environmental sustainability practices that are used at Palmer Hills.

Charity Outings Held at Palmer Hills



Date	Event	Start Time	Number Of Player	Type
04/29/24	Pleasant Valley Educational Foundation	9:00 AM	144	Charity
05/03/24	Gildas Club	8:00 AM	144	Charity
05/31/24	Jadwin Fundraiser	9:00 AM	144	Charity
06/01/24	Quayle Memorial	11:30 AM	44	Charity
06/02/24	Heart of the lion	10:00 AM	60	Charity
06/14/24	Danny Joe Memorial	8:30 AM	144	Charity
08/17/24	Live Fit	1:30 PM	144	Charity
08/24/24	Jamie Hill	8:00 AM	144	Charity
09/20/24	Med-Force	11:00 AM	32	Charity

Business Outings Held at Palmer Hills



Date	Event	Start Time	Number Of Player	Type
05/15/24	Illinois Pipe Trade	12:00 PM	32	Business/Union
06/05/24	Chamber of Commerce	7:00 AM	200	Business/Union
06/07/24	Blaze Restoration	8:00 AM	144	Business/Union
06/08/24	Hawaiian Sizzle	10:00 AM	48	Business/Union
06/25/24	Ericksen	10:00 AM	32	Business/Union
06/26/24	Ericksen	9:00 AM	32	Business/Union
06/28/24	Ridgecrest Village	9:00 AM	144	Business/Union
07/09/24	Association of Women in the Metal Industries	9:00 AM	144	Business/Union
07/19/24	AB Marketing	9:00 AM	48	Business/Union
07/20/24	The Quarry	9:00 AM	120	Business/Union
07/25/24	John Deere Finance & Accounting	11:46 AM	32	Business/Union
08/10/24	Hawaiian Sizzle	10:00 AM	48	Business/Union
08/16/24	Logan Contractors	9:00 AM	144	Business/Union
08/25/24	Barton Solvents	1:30 PM	16	Business/Union
08/26/24	RILCO	10:00 AM	160	Business/Union
08/27/24	QCIGL	1:00 PM	60	Business/Union
09/06/24	Quad Cities Builders & Remodelers Association	9:00 AM	144	Business/Union
09/09/24	Ascentra	10:00 AM	144	Business/Union
09/10/24	Blankenship	10:00 AM	28	Business/Union
09/12/24	QC CCCU	1:00 PM	64	Business/Union
09/16/24	Gyros	12:00 PM	28	Business/Union
09/24/24	Locals Love Us	1:00 PM	144	Business/Union

Community Fellowship Outings Held at Palmer Hills



05/17/24	Lead(h)er	8:30 AM	144	Fellowship
06/09/24	VGA IA	11:00 AM	28	Fellowship
06/19/24	Sacco	9:00 AM	20	Fellowship
06/22/24	Bettendorf Class of 2004	10:34 AM	24	Fellowship
06/22/24	Moline Class of 79	9:22 AM	36	Fellowship
06/24/24	Janet Noterman	7:30 AM	20	Fellowship
07/04/24	Curtis Classic	8:00 AM	80	Fellowship
07/13/24	Assumption Class of 70	11:14 AM	32	Fellowship
07/21/24	Dreifurst	9:00 AM	32	Fellowship
07/27/24	Golfapalluza	9:14 AM	36	Fellowship
08/03/24	Ploehn Invitational	10:00 AM	52	Fellowship
08/10/24	Dan Thul	11:46 AM	60	Fellowship
08/20/24	Pohlman	12:30 PM	32	Fellowship
09/15/24	St. John Vianney	1:00 PM	100	Fellowship
10/19/24	SAU Baseball	9:00 AM	40	Fellowship

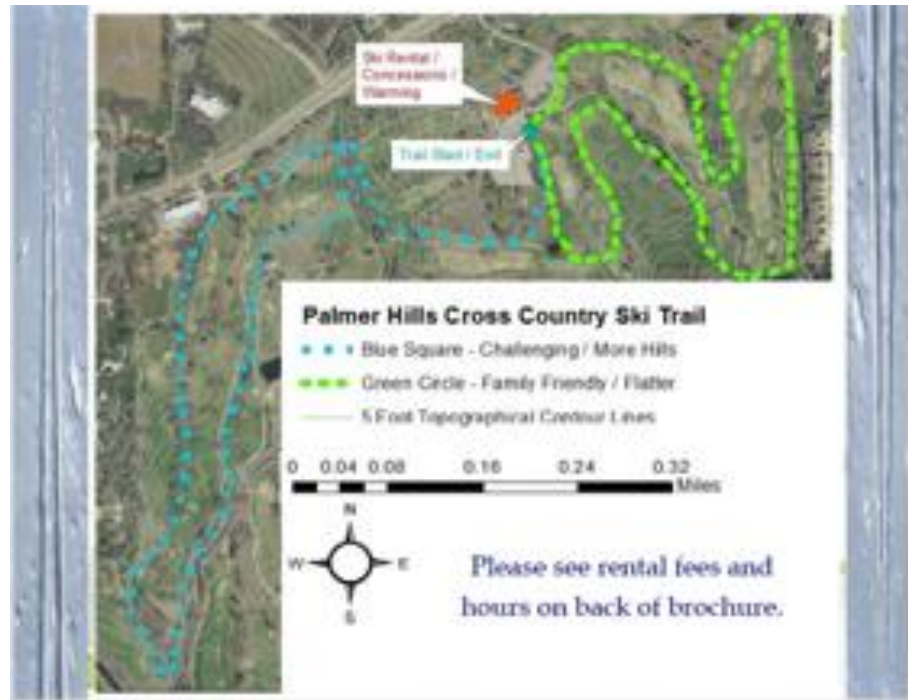
Cross Country Skiing



When the golf course is closed to golfers, if there is sufficient snow, Palmer Hills transforms into a cross-country skiing venue. The trails are groomed regularly to ensure good skiing conditions.



The trails wind through the scenic golf course, offering picturesque views and a peaceful environment for skiing enthusiasts. The course features several trails that vary in difficulty, catering to both beginners and more experienced skiers. Specific trail lengths and difficulty levels may vary depending on snow conditions and course conditions.



The cross-country skiing trails are open to the public. Equipment rental is available in the clubhouse.

Great-Horned Owl Rehabilitation

In 2016, a Great-Horned Owl got caught in some ropes around a new tee box. The maintenance staff rescued the owl. The owl was injured, so the staff contacted someone to rehabilitate the owl. Owls are very territorial, so after the owl had recovered, it was released on the golf course.



4th of July Fireworks Viewing



Palmer Hills Golf Course closes early on the 4th of July. The golf course is a popular location to view the fireworks provided by the city of Bettendorf.

The parking lot and the amenities help draw people hours before the fireworks show starts. The driving range and the Forge are activities people can do after staking out their viewing location.

Commitment to a Positive On-Course Experience:

Play it Forward

Palmer Hills encourages players to Tee it Forward to increase the pace of play and improve the enjoyment of the golfers. The scorecard lists the suggested tee based on how far a player can hit their driver. The suggested tees are also listed on a sign just outside the clubhouse near where the carts are staged.



Course Conditioning



Palmer Hills Maintenance Superintendent, Brian Hickey, has a degree in turf management from Iowa State University and has earned awards from national greenkeepers' associations. Brian has diverse course maintenance experience across the country, including 13 years in Oregon.

Brian has been the Palmer Hills Maintenance Superintendent since July 2014. He was tasked by City Administrator Decker Ploehn with making changes to the course to appeal to a broader range of players while maintaining the course as a challenge to the best players.



The greens are maintained on an almost daily basis. The greens are mowed on some days and rolled on others. In some cases, the greens are mowed and rolled.



Brian has also implemented regenerative turfgrass management. This approach reduces the reliance on chemicals while promoting soil health. It also reduces the maintenance practices that affect the turf conditions for the golfers.

Brian has reduced fungicide applications. For the first few seasons that Brian was at Palmer Hills, there were 18 applications of fungicides. There are now about eight fungicide applications a year.

When Brian started at Palmer Hills, the course was “cart path only” for as many as four days after a significant rain. Because of regenerative turfgrass management practices and drain tile installation, there has been a reduction in downtime after rain events. Now the “cart path only” usually lasts about a day, depending on the amount of rain at the course.

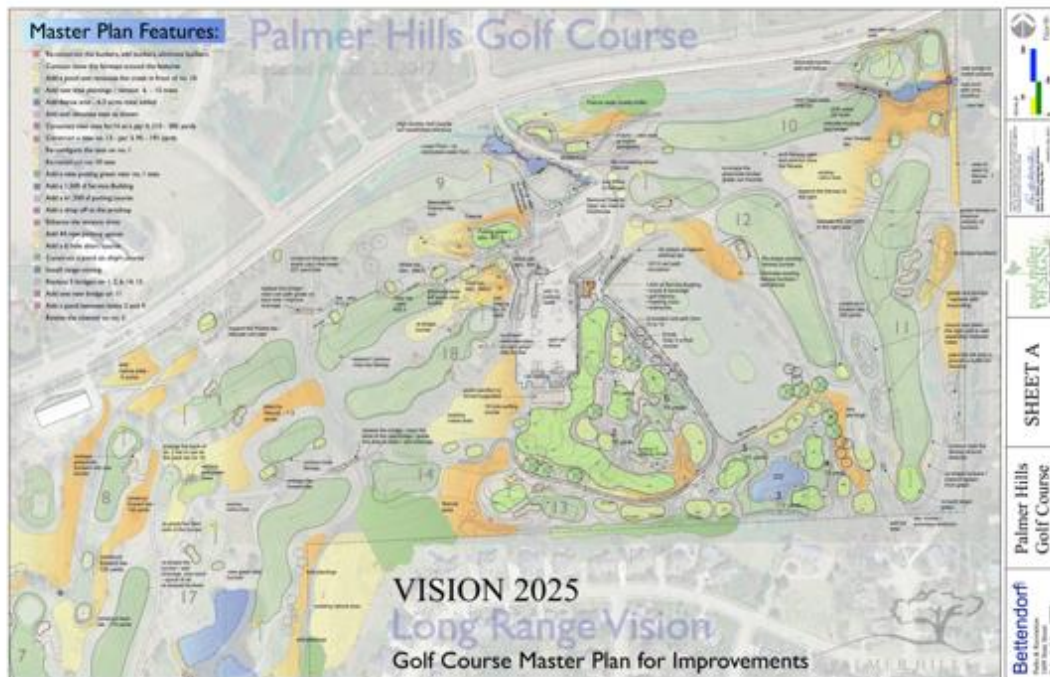


The practices Brian has implemented at Palmer Hills have led to reductions in fertilizer and labor costs. The conditions at Palmer Hills are as good as they have ever been. The staff often gets complimented on the conditions of the course.

Continuous Improvement

The Bettendorf Parks and Recreation Department has developed a long-term plan for improvements to Palmer Hills. The plan is updated as new information becomes available. The City of Bettendorf supports the long-term plan by budgeting the improvements on an annual basis. In 2024, there is \$400,000 in the budget to:

- expand and repave the entrance drive.
- repave the parking lots.
- start the on-course restroom facilities improvement project.



Some of the long-term plan items that have been implemented are:

- The addition of new tees to cater to a wide variety of skills. In some cases, forward tees have been moved closer to the hole. In other cases, tees have been installed behind the existing tees to lengthen the course.



- Putting green installed near the 1st tee.
- Nets are installed on two sides of the driving range.
- Trees were also removed to widen fairways and improve fairway growing conditions. Cottonwood and Maple trees have been removed where they were impacting course conditions.

- Bunkers have been renovated to improve drainage and consistency of the sand. Some bunkers have been added to improve the aesthetics of the course and to make players reconsider their strategy.



- In 2018, a new 13th hole was created to make room for the Forge and to eliminate a blind shot from the tee on the 14th hole. The new par 3 has 2 bunkers, a two-tiered green, and a runoff area behind the green. This is a hole that golfers who are new to Palmer Hills Golf Course will remember after their round.



Some of the long term-plan items that are in the planning phase are:

- A six-hole Chip and Putt course.
- Add a pond and remove the creek between the third and fourth holes.

Walking Golf



] Approximately 12% of rounds are walking rounds.

Palmer Hills offers pushcart rental for \$3. New push carts are added each year as older ones get retired.



Palmer Hills has Club Car Tempo Walk electric carts with GPS. The cart is hands-free for the golfer and has a cooler for beverages.



Letters



August 12, 2024

Mr. Clint Brown
Director of Marketing and Communication
Iowa Golf Association
8050 Golf House Drive
Des Moines, IA 50211

RE: *Palmer Hills Golf Course – Bettendorf, Iowa*

Dear Mr. Brown:

I am pleased to write this letter in support of the application to name Bettendorf's Palmer Hills Golf Course as the IGA 18-Hole Course of the Year.

Palmer Hills Golf Course is a beautiful, peaceful public 18-hole golf course located in the heart of Bettendorf, Iowa on land purchased from the David Palmer Family in 1971 and designed by William J. Spear, ASGCA. Palmer Hills is home to 100-year-old oak trees, rolling hills, ponds, and a meandering creek that comes into play on 11 holes. A variety of teeing options make the hills and water a challenge that is playable and affordable for golfers of all ages and skill levels.

Palmer Hills offers ladies, men, and youth golf clinics and lessons, clean golf carts, and unique to the area, The Forge Putting Experience, an 18-hole putting course. Palmer Hills Golf Course is the only municipal course that offers such a wonderful putting amenity. Also, new this year, is our brand new partnership with First Tee Quad Cities. First Tee integrates the game of golf with life skills curriculum to help kids build inner strength, self-confidence, and resilience to carry them through everything they do in life. At any given time at Palmer Hills Golf Course you can see high school teams practicing on the driving range, families putting on The Forge, The First Tee holding classes for our youngest golfers, leagues gathering for a nine and dine, and foursomes meeting up for their weekly tee time that they've probably held for decades.

1609 State Street | Bettendorf, IA 52722 | (563) 344-4000 | www.bettendorf.org



Palmer Hills also offers a relaxing clubhouse, Palmer Grill. Palmer Grill offers a variety of delicious food and beverage options for everyone with spectacular views of the golf course whether you are dining inside or outside on the deck. Palmer Grill is available for large parties inside or outside under the pavilion.

Another unique element of Palmer Hills is the Palmer Hills Garden where they grow vegetables, including hundreds of cabbage for a nonprofit called Tapestry Farms that provides food for refugees in our area. 2024 is the second year of this partnership and already this year alone there have been 400 cabbage harvested from the Palmer Hills Garden.

Next year is the 50th Anniversary of Palmer Hills Golf Course! During this time, Palmer Hills has had only three Golf Professionals, Dick Keith, George Henry, and Jon Waddell and three Superintendents, Brad Peterson, Tim Johannsen, and Brian Hickey. Jon and Brian have been leading Palmer Hills since 1997 and 2014, respectively.

Palmer Hills has won several awards: Quad Cities Regional Business Journal Best of the Region Award for Best Golf Course, Quad Cities Area Locals Love Us #1 Golf Course (10 years in a row!), and Readers Choice Award Best Golf Course, just to name a few.

Palmer Hills Golf Course is not just a city amenity, it's a community amenity. People from across our area, region, and the Midwest visit Palmer Hills and can't wait to visit again which is evident by the great reviews Palmer Hills receives (see attached reviews).

Thank you for your time, and for considering Palmer Hills Golf Course as the IGA 18-Hole Course of the Year!

Sincerely,

Mayor Robert S. Gallagher
(563) 370-2389 (cell)
rgallagher@bettendorf.org

1609 State Street | Bettendorf, IA 52722 | (563) 344-4000 | www.bettendorf.org

Reviews referenced by Mayor Gallagher are in the review section of this document.



August 13, 2024

Mr. Clint Brown
Director of Marketing and Communication
Iowa Golf Association
8050 Golf House Drive
Des Moines, IA 50211

RE: *Palmer Hills Golf Course – Bettendorf, Iowa*

Dear Mr. Brown:

I am excited to write this letter in support of the application to name Bettendorf's Palmer Hills Golf Course as the IGA 18-Hole Course of the Year.

I have been golfing at Palmer Hills almost since opening day and have worked for the city almost the entire time that this course has been associated with us. I have seen many changes over the years, and as city administrator, I have been working with our team to make this a great offering for our community and the Quad City area.

I will not go into details of all the work my colleagues have put into this golf course but suffice it to say I have had a standing tee time on Saturday at 7:42 a.m. for the last 30 years. As an avid golfer who has played on many courses around the world, I feel most comfortable considering this my home course. Palmer Hills Golf Course has been a wonderful amenity, not just for me, but for our entire community.

We take great pride that we've only had three superintendents doing all the manicuring of this course. Under the great tutelage of our current superintendent, Brian Hickey, we have made some incredible changes to the course that make it extremely playable and a great challenge for golfers of all ages.

Our current Pro, Jon Waddell, has provided outstanding leadership and guidance for the last 25 years. We have a wonderful relationship with our community that includes

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our latest offering, a First Tee pilot program, that will no doubt evolve into a permanent relationship.

On a side note, former PGA Tour and U.S. Open Champion, Jack Fleck, had two nephews who held a standing tee time on Sunday mornings. I also recall seeing Jack playing our course on several occasions. Even though all three have passed, the Fleck group still have a standing tee time on Sunday morning.

We have a rich history here, but more importantly, we have a strong community. That is why we would be thrilled to be considered as the IGA course of the year.

Thank you for listening!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Decker P. Ploehn". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Decker P. Ploehn
City Administrator
563-344-4007

dploehn@bettendorf.org



Mr. Clint Brown
Director of Marketing and Communication
Iowa Golf Association
8050 Golf House Drive
Des Moines, Iowa 50211

July 29, 2024

Dear Mr. Brown:

I am pleased to submit this letter in support of the application to name Bettendorf's Palmer Hills Golf Course the IGA 18-Hole Course of the Year.

I may be in a unique position to provide this letter of support. I am the third ward council member for the City of Bettendorf. In that position, I know firsthand the budgetary support the City makes to ensure that the course is exceptionally well maintained. Both in funding operational expenditures, and in providing ongoing capital expenditure support, Palmer Hills Golf course receives the support necessary to make and keep the course in ideal condition.

But the facility is more than just an 18 hole golf course. The Forge, an 18 hole putting facility, provides an important adjunct to the course, enabling those who, for whatever reason, cannot spend the time to play a full round an opportunity to work on putting, and to spend quality time with family and friends in a relaxed social experience. Other practice areas include a driving range, and a 40 yard chipping area. Palmer Hills provides a complete golf experience.

The facility also hosts a dining aspect, Palmer Hills Grill. Perfect for the after round soda or cocktail, or even the "dog at the turn," the grill gives golfers and non-golfers alike a place to eat, socialize, or just watch the players tee off or hit into the number 12 green.

As I said, I may be in a unique position to support this application, as I also am a season pass holder at Palmer Hills. Last year I played over 130 rounds there. I also play at most of the other area courses within a 45 mile radius. To me there is no question that Palmer Hills is one of the best maintained courses in my area. Last year the course had over 40,000 rounds, yet you could not tell it. Fairways and greens show little wear despite the play.

And the reason for such play is the fact that the course caters to golfers of all abilities. Senior and less skilled players happily use the up tees, allowing them to play a course set to their level; while the more skilled players have tees with plenty of distance to challenge their skills as well.

In short, Palmer Hills strikes the right balance of playability, accessibility, fun and challenge. Add the superb maintenance and you have a course which is a highlight in the community, highly supported, and deserving of your recognition.

Sincerely,

Gregory S. Jager

1609 State Street | Bettendorf, IA 52722 | (563) 344-4000 | www.bettendorf.org



Clint Brown
Director of Marketing and Communication
Iowa Golf Association
8050 Golf House Drive
Des Moines, IA 50211

August 7, 2024

I would like to nominate Palmer Hills Golf Course in Bettendorf, Iowa for the IGA 18-Hole Course of the Year. Having been appointed the Director of Culture & Recreation almost four years ago, my scope of supervision not only included the Children's Museum, but also Parks & Recreation and Palmer Hills Golf Course. At that time, I knew very little about golf course operations and maintenance. However, what I have learned in the last four years is remarkable. Not only is Palmer Hills a premier destination for golfers, but it also connects the community, preserves the environment, and provides outreach and collaboration with our local schools.

Although I do not play golf, I have been told the course is the best public course in the Quad City region. In the summer of 2023, the course logged over 40,000 rounds for the first time ever! Our Golf Maintenance Supervisor takes pride in keeping the course in great condition. Recently, our team has implemented a biological pond management program. Microorganisms are used to control algae growth in the ponds by feeding on the nutrients in the pond and starving the algae to minimize or eliminate its growth. In conjunction with this program, our team worked with Bettendorf High School's Environmental Science class, tasking them to prepare solutions to this issue. The 10-student class visited Palmer Hills, toured multiple areas and engaged in discussion about the problems of protecting our environment. The students returned to the golf course to implement their solutions as a class project.

Our maintenance team has transplanted over 300 native plants in creek banks and in landscape beds to provide more pollinator habitat, visual appeal and erosion control. We have been raising sprinklers around greens for better efficacy and playability. We use a long duration fertilizer that slowly releases nutrients to the plant and is coated with an insecticide for grubs and a crabgrass preventer. Spot spraying is more time consuming than wide area spraying but is more environmentally friendly in that we use a fraction of the amount of chemical.



Palmer Hills has also become members of the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program for golf. We will be working to become certified over the next two years. Currently, only six golf courses in the state of Iowa are certified. The ACSP is an environmental education and certification program that helps golf courses protect the environment, preserve the natural heritage of the game of golf, and promote environmental sustainability.

Palmer Hills also has a commitment to our community. For the past two years we have partnered with a local nonprofit organization, Tapestry Farms, helping to grow food for distribution in our community. In total, seven-hundred cabbages were planted at Palmer Hills! They were harvested, then distributed to local food pantries through an initiative that compensates primarily socially disadvantaged farmers' markets and provides work for newly arrived refugees.

In the programming realm, Palmer Hills offers clinics and leagues for men, women, and youth, including a "Girl Power" clinic to inspire young women to pursue the sport.

The Forge putting course is a unique 18 hole putting adventure designed for all abilities to play. Families, seniors, adults, and teens can play to try golf for the first time, improve their putting skills, or enjoy a more relaxed, shortened golf experience.

Palmer Grill offers daily lunch specials, event and party space, and is open to the public seven days per week.

In conclusion, I believe our team and Golf Course are well deserving of the IGA 18-Hole Golf Course of the Year. Not only is it meticulously maintained, but also provides a top-notch golf experience for all, as well as learning opportunities and partnerships in the community. I appreciate your consideration of Palmer Hills Golf Course in Bettendorf, Iowa for this award.

Thank you,

Kim Kidwell

Director of Culture & Recreation
City of Bettendorf

Clint Brown
Director of Marketing and Communication
Iowa Golf Association

I have been a member of the ladies' golf league at Palmer Hills for nine years. Our league membership has doubled over those years because the word is out about the quality of the course and the staff. The course adjustments over these years have greatly improved the ability for the average female, senior and young golfers to hit greens in regulation and make a reasonable score. Clearing those menacing creeks no-longer require a lay-up and extra stroke. The league members continue to praise the condition of the course and its consistency from week to week even after all the play it gets each day. The adventures at Palmer Hills continue to grow for many of us. Those of us needing some help with our game can take advantage of the lessons offered by the skilled teaching professionals or by participating in the newly offered ladies golf clinics. I have also been able to entertain my non-golfing family and friends on The Forge, a unique 18 hole all-grass putting course. There is no doubt the enthusiasm our league has for Palmer Hills begins with the staff. We are treated with kindness, respect and utmost importance. This kind of environment keeps us coming back!

Trish Huber

Recommendation for Palmer Hills
as the IGA18 Hole Course of the Year

August 12th, 2024

Dear IGA:

As an avid golf enthusiast and community member, I am honored to recommend Palmer Hills Golf Course in Bettendorf, Iowa, for the IGA Course of the Year. Palmer Hills is a leading example of excellence in golf course management and a hub of community engagement. With superior course conditions, exceptional staff, and innovative practices, Palmer Hills is a standout candidate for this annual award.

Outstanding Leadership and Staff

Professional Staff: Jon Waddell is our PGA Head Golf Professional. Jon is known for his exceptional personal touch. He regularly greets course guests by name and ensures an exceptional golf experience at every level. His accessibility and attentiveness to guests' concerns, whether related to course conditions or other services, promote a high standard of hospitality. His teaching temperament is valued and a model for the other staff.

Golf Course: Brian Hickey, our Course Superintendent, is a testament that a great golf course starts with a great superintendent. His journey from a young golf enthusiast to a pioneering course superintendent is marked by innovation and a deep commitment to sustainability. Under his leadership, Palmer Hills has become a model of eco-conscious golf course management, setting it apart as a leader in the area and industry, as recognized by the GCSAA 2022 Environmental Stewardship Award.

Course and Facility Quality and Value

Course Conditions: Palmer Hills is meticulously maintained and always in exceptional playing condition. Prior to the addition of Brian as the course superintendent, in the late summer months we could expect thinning grass in the fairways and dried out and dead areas on several of the greens. As a result of his leadership and the entire course maintenance team, we always have great course conditions and I have not seen the "burned out" greens for years gone by. All while handling over 40,000 rounds per year. The large number of rounds is also a result of changes completed over the past several years. Currently the course's unique design offers a challenging yet enjoyable golf experience with well-placed hazards and diverse terrain. For what you get here at Palmer Hills, the value for money is exceptional, with regular guests from areas as far away as Chicago, IL. They come from afar and visit Palmer not only for the great course conditions but also for Palmer Hill's terrific value for a round of golf.

Innovative Features: Palmer Hills is not just a golf course but a place for families and community groups to come together and enjoy the game. The award-winning 'The Forge' is a unique 18-hole putting experience that challenges and entertains golfers of all levels. It's a popular and family-friendly addition that has added a new dimension to the course. Leagues and tournaments provide a unique putting challenge which will only improve your putting IQ when playing on a regular 18-hole course.

Strategic Changes: New changes have been implemented on the golf course to help protect and promote the game of golf. These changes include renaming the front "Red" tees to "Gray," which have helped to reduce the stigma of men playing the "ladies" tees. This has been a great move, with more senior golfers (me included) no longer hesitant to play it forward! This strategic change has promoted a more inclusive system for players of all ages, genders, and abilities.

Community Engagement and Promotion of Opportunities

Junior Golf Explosion: Palmer Hills has seen significant growth in junior golf, with increasing numbers of young golfers using the practice facilities. This has multiplied since joining the First Tee Program this past year. Their focus on youth engagement reflects the course's commitment to fostering the next generation of golfers. The dedicated staff of Jon, Butch Haverland, Alex Grell, and Shawna Elliott can be seen regularly instructing groups of young golfers of all ages. Groups of 5-10 year old golfers with Alex or Shawna are a regular occurrence at the practice areas. I could write a separate paper on the temperament and dedication of Alex and Shawna to the growth of the Junior Golf program. Recently two of our local high schools had their golf team tryouts at Palmer Hills, which further provides evidence of Palmer's community engagement.

Leagues and Outings: Palmer Hills offers ample opportunities for league play, catering to all levels of golfers. Each week, there are eight fun and competitive leagues on the course and one league on "The Forge" course. Two of these leagues have been in place for over 40 years each! Palmer also regularly hosts charity and business outings, further integrating itself into the local community. Because of the beautiful outdoor gathering areas, many leagues host after-golf dinners and year-end parties. Additionally, the community embraces the outdoor areas and regularly rents spaces for high school graduation parties, birthday celebrations, and other gatherings.

Environmental and Wildlife Stewardship

Sustainable Practices: Our superintendent, Brian Hickey, has implemented sustainable practices that have significantly reduced chemical usage and improved turf health. His innovative use of biological products has resulted in better drainage, reduced fungicide applications, and healthier playing surfaces. These efforts have maintained and enhanced the course's beauty and playing conditions. Brian also brings in local high school students to introduce and teach them about potential careers in the industry.

Wildlife Conservation: The course is a sanctuary for local wildlife, with a diverse array of species thriving on the property, including hawks, groundhogs, muskrats, owls, geese, and deer. In the spring and early summer, it is not uncommon to see young families of geese throughout the course. This showcases Palmer Hills as a harmonious blend of nature and recreation. I recently learned that Palmer Hills is interested in applying to the Audubon Sanctuary Certification Program.

Conclusion

Palmer Hills Golf Course excels in every aspect, from its well-maintained facilities and dedicated staff to its innovative and sustainable practices. The course's commitment to quality, community, environmental stewardship, and wildlife conservation makes it a worthy recipient of the **IGA Course of the Year** title.

Respectfully,
KC Jones / 20-year Palmer Golf Course supporter

Clint Brown
Director of Marketing and Communication
Iowa Golf Association

2024 IGA Awards Recommendation for Palmer Hills Golf Course

I have been golfing at Palmer Hills for over 40 years, and the facility and golf experience continues to improve especially over the past 5 years. The main factors in this improvement include:

- The course is a good design that has been modified to make it even better.
- Course conditions have significantly improved in the past 5 years.
- Course amenities have expanded with:
 - Improvements to the driving range, (better matts, additional targets, etc.)
 - Expanded youth programs, including recent designation as a First Tee facility.
 - Additional sets of tees to make the course challenging for long-driving, experienced golfers, and enjoyable for short-hitting or less experienced golfers.
 - “The Forge” 18-hole putting course – fun for golfers and non-golfers alike.
 - Improved restaurant/bar facilities including great outdoor seating areas.

Improvements have been led by PGA Head Professional Jon Waddell and Superintendent Brian Hickey.

Jon Waddell – Head PGA Professional:

- Has been a joy to interact with for over 20 years. His positive outlook and ability to resolve scheduling challenges is truly remarkable.
- Despite being in this role for so long time he has never become “stagnant.” As course amenities expanded his job has become more challenging, but you can always see him with positive interactions with Junior golfers, other staff members, and the most challenging of all - Senior golfers like me.
- As the popularity of the course has increased including many outings, Jon finds creative ways to keep the pass holders happy while generating the extra revenue that outings provide. Somehow, he always conveys that each person’s satisfaction is important to him, even when the interests of different groups conflict.
- In 2023 Palmer Hills set a record for the number of rounds played. I’m confident that Jon’s efforts were a major factor in that milestone.

Brian Hickey – Course Superintendent:

- Arrived at Palmer Hills 5 or 6 years ago with training from Iowa State, and course experience in the Pacific Northwest. His changes in turf and course maintenance strategies have resulted in a significant improvement in course conditions.
- The course superintendent’s job has also gotten more challenging as the site amenities have expanded but he and his staff are very hard-working and seem to be able to address the challenges that variable weather and a large number of rounds present.
- Beyond improvements to greens and fairways, the maintenance staff has significantly improved to surrounding areas with the removal of “scrub vegetation” along the borders with Duck Creek.
- I participate in a retiree group that travels to courses within 2 hours of the Quad Cities and they frequently note that Palmer Hills plays better and looks better than it ever has in the past.

Alan Lewis
4790 Surrey Court
Bettendorf Iowa

Reviews



Palmer Hills Golf Course - Google Reviews As of August 8, 2024



Lee Wolf
Local Guide • 89 reviews • 56 photos



★★★★★ 10 weeks ago

Well maintained and extremely affordable. Palmer Hills is top shelf without taking all your money!



Nick Fleischman
Local Guide • 74 reviews • 5 photos



★★★★★ 10 weeks ago

Service was exceptional and the course was in good shape. We had lunch before our tee time and the food was good. Ranger was checking in on pace of play and even with the rain, things were moving at a good speed.



Nic West
Local Guide • 158 reviews • 170 photos

★★★★★ 16 weeks ago

First time going here and it was great.



KC Fentress
2 reviews • 0 photos

★★★★★ 4 weeks ago

NEW

Golf course is always in great shape.



gfebthben ernernern
Local Guide • 31 reviews • 2 photos

★★★★★ May 8, 2023

this golf course is absolutely beautiful loved playing there



Silvia Swanson
156 reviews • 232 photos

★★★★★ Aug 3, 2022

Great Course wish we had this in Rock Hill SC



Tim Malmstrom
266 reviews • 33 photos

★★★★★ Jun 30, 2022

Great course.

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Pete Jarvis

Local Guide • 244 reviews • 0 photos



★★★★☆ Jun 20, 2022

Clubhouse very nice and organized front nine play pretty easy back nine the putting greens or something else



A B

Local Guide • 164 reviews • 101 photos



★★★★★ May 31, 2022

We went here for a graduation party and had a great time. The golf course was so green and well groomed. The place was very busy but everyone was having a great time. The staff was nice and polite. If looking for a place to have a party Palmer Hills should be considered as a great place for hosting. We'll be back. Highly recommend visiting.



Drake Reeser

5 reviews • 0 photos

★★★★★ Apr 22, 2022

Great course



Tom Ohland

34 reviews • 0 photos

★★★★☆ Oct 8, 2021

Good challenge golf course



Kristen Anderson

9 reviews • 1 photo



★★★★★ Jun 20, 2021

Played The Forge for the first time this past weekend and had a blast. Would be a great family outing or hanging out with friends and having a few beverages. Definitely worth checking out!



Tom Govern

Local Guide • 16 reviews • 1 photo



★★★★☆ Jul 4, 2021

Played 7/2/21. Nice course. Great value. Very good condition day we played. The hilly terrain makes it more enjoyable. They have an amazing looking putting course. We didn't play it but looks like it could be great post round amenity.



Craig B

Local Guide • 89 reviews • 115 photos



★★★★★ Aug 21, 2022

Really nice course. Clean, well maintained, and super nice T-markers, however, BUSY. You might be paired up with other golfers though. The staff was very courteous. Long yardage with a few dog-legs. Not easy by all means. Clean carts. There are 3 to 4 putting courses designated strictly for putting. Driving range. Snack hut. A cooler cart came around every 15mins.. The only thing I disliked was that it was so crowded and the grill was closed.



Lisa Zimmerman

12 reviews • 0 photos

★★★★★ Jul 15, 2022

Tons of fun, first time ever for cpo fundraiser.



Denise Thomason

Local Guide • 135 reviews • 261 photos



★★★★★ Jul 13, 2022

I'm not a golfer, and only did the putting green course they have, but the staff was very friendly and I had a good time!



Ty Grunder

Local Guide • 18 reviews • 0 photos

★★★★★ Oct 2, 2021

Always enjoy Palmer on a Saturday morning especially in the Fall.



DANNY PHILPOT

3 reviews • 0 photos

★★★★★ Sep 30, 2021

Lot of fun very challenging. friendly staff and good food.



Julie Johnson

Local Guide · 18 reviews · 71 photos



★★★★★ 24 weeks ago

What a terrific 18 in February!!! Drove three hours from Wisconsin to enjoy this beautiful course.



Levi DeHaven

5 reviews · 0 photos



★★★★★ 43 weeks ago

Moderately difficult course. Well maintained greens (fast). Loved the slopes on certain holes. Staff treated me with respect. Would love to check out the putt putt practice course (was empty) and range looked busy! Fair price for such a nice course. Courtesy water stations set on the course is a very nice touch!



Ben Blanchard

Local Guide · 47 reviews · 13 photos



★★★★★ Nov 9, 2022

Beautiful golf course especially for November!!! Played from the whites which was perfect for weekend golfers. Can't wait to play again next year!!



J 8

30 reviews · 0 photos



★★★★★ Sep 24, 2022

Every part of this course is to perfection. The layout, maintenance, and overall care of the golf course and property are top notch. It was our first time and will definitely be back. They have it all together there!



Terry White

15 reviews · 12 photos



★★★★★ Sep 18, 2022

Absolutely fantastic... staff are so helpful and great meeting the Sunday team they were all so welcoming... the course is spectacular and great pace off play ... can't wait to come back

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Conclusion



At Palmer Hills Golf Course, we're passionate about providing an exceptional golfing experience while serving as a valuable community asset. Our nomination for the IGA 18-Hole Course of the Year reflects our ongoing commitment to the game of golf and our community. We continuously strive to improve our facility, programs, and services to meet the evolving needs of golfers in the Quad Cities area.

From our well-maintained 18-hole golf course to the putting course at The Forge at Palmer Hills and the practice facilities, we offer a complete golfing experience for players of all ages and skill levels. Our dedication to junior golf and our community engagement activities demonstrates our alignment with the values and mission of the IGA.

This comment on the website **Midwestern Golf** reflects how our stakeholders feel about Palmer Hills Golf Course.

“... the Quad Cities’ municipal course epitomizes the best of America’s daily fee, public-access, community-owned golf, carrying on the long history of accessible, affordable golf. Palmer Hills in Bettendorf is one of the best examples in the nation of a municipal facility that feels and looks like a country club”.

Click the hyperlink to read the review.

[The Forge at Palmer Hills: The family that putts together has fun.](#)

We're proud of our role in the Iowa golfing community and would be honored to be considered for the IGA 18-Hole Course of the Year award. We welcome any further questions or the opportunity to showcase our facility in person.

Thank you for your consideration of Palmer Hills Golf Course for this prestigious recognition.