

DESTINATION

On the road with MLB



Road TRIPS



When the Cubs, White Sox or Cardinals visit major league parks throughout the Midwest, fans are sure to follow and take their golf clubs along, too

By Neal Kotlarek

The 16th at Brown Deer Golf Club

Golf and baseball. Are there two summer activities that go together any better than these – 18 holes in the morning and watching your favorite major league team that evening at the ballpark? This summer, Ed Morgan of Chicago has meticulously laid out plans to combine those avocations into a trip to Wisconsin. “The White Sox are playing the Milwaukee Brewers in a June weekend series,” explains Morgan, a technical director at a suburban food manufacturer, “so we thought we’d catch a couple games at Miller Park and check out a few area courses before the opening pitch.”

Morgan reserved a hotel just west of Milwaukee and planned to book starting times at Morningstar Golfers Club, a challenging layout in Waukesha, and at least one other area course.

Combining a golf trip with a major league baseball game isn’t a unique idea, of course. The two pastimes make for an ideal summer road trip, whether it’s a long weekend or a vacation with the family.

For fans of the Cubs, White Sox or Cardinals, here are the golf prospects in major league cities within a reasonable drive of the Chicago District.



COURTESY OF PETER WONG

Legends Golf Club in Prior Lake, Minn.

Bedford Valley and Gull Lake View all offer challenging layouts. A few exist east of Battle Creek, in Marshall, including the Medalist that was carved out of 300 acres of woodlands and wetlands.

Golf in the Detroit metro area is highlighted by the Orchards Golf Club in Washington, host club of the 2002 U.S. Amateur Public Links Championship, and Shepherd’s Hollow in Clarkston. Both spectacular properties are perennially listed among the state’s finest courses.

Chicago to Detroit: 284 miles, driving time 4 hours, 40 minutes

Cubs at Tigers: June 23-25

White Sox at Tigers: July 24-26, Oct. 2-4



CINCINNATI

Acclaimed architect Arthur Hills designed the spectacular Legendary Run layout that features links-style topography on the front nine and tree-lined fairways on the back. Built over 200 acres, the self-acclaimed “world’s friendliest golf course” is annually ranked as the area’s top public facility.

Nicklaus Design built the very popular Aston Oaks Golf Club, located 14 miles west of the city in North Bend. Land formerly owned by President William Henry Harrison was used for the course, where weekend green fees, including cart, go for less than \$50.

Chicago to Cincinnati: 298 miles, driving time 4 hours, 55 minutes

Cubs at Reds: June 5-7, Aug. 3-5

White Sox at Reds: June 19-21

Cardinals at Reds: July 3-5, Sept. 29-Oct. 1



CLEVELAND

Outstanding golf reigns in the area, headlined by Fowler’s Mill—an early Pete Dye design—and Greyhawk Golf Club, built by the von Hagge design team. Boulder Creek, just southwest of the city, completes a formidable trifecta.

Built in 1970, Fowler’s Mill is located 30 minutes east of downtown Cleveland

and offers 27 holes of amazing diversity. The “Pete Dye 18” is the championship course of this grouping, yet many players include the shorter third nine on their visits.

Greyhawk places a premium on accuracy as more than 80 bunkers, 10 lakes and a stream combine to present a challenge to players of every skill level. Boulder Creek features fiercely wooded terrain interspersed with wetlands and hills.

Chicago to Cleveland: 346 miles, driving time 5 hours, 40 minutes

White Sox at Indians: June 29-July 1, Sept. 28-30

Cardinals at Indians: June 12-14



DETROIT

The route from the Second City to the Motor City literally is teeming with outstanding golf courses. Indeed, for travelers who spend too much time considering the layouts spread out along Interstate 94 in golf hot spots like Battle Creek, Lansing and the Detroit suburbs, it’s possible the trip to or from Comerica Park will be filled with numerous stops.

A potpourri of outstanding golf courses rest within a short drive of the Battle Creek exit, which is a little more than halfway between Chicago and Detroit. Stone Hedge (North and South),



KANSAS CITY, MO.

Renowned for its great steakhouses and rib joints, the metropolitan area also has made a formidable argument as a golf destination.

Located some 30 minutes from the newly unveiled Kauffman Stadium, Falcon Ridge Golf Club in Lenexa is widely considered to be one of the best public courses in neighboring Kansas. Fairways stretch over hilly terrain and locals know that when it comes to putting surfaces, those at Falcon Ridge are kept in impeccable condition.

No two holes are alike at Shoal Creek, which offers dramatic elevation changes and many breathtaking views. Like Falcon Ridge, the course has become a mainstay on the lists of the best public facilities in the state.

The par 3s at Tiffany Greens, on the

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city's north side, are this course's signature attraction. The 195-yard fourth is called the Green Monster for the rock wall that supports the entire front side of the green. No. 10 was named Alcatraz, due to all the water that surrounds the putting surface, while the 195-yard 15th capably lives up to its "Majestic" nickname.

Chicago to Kansas City: 529 miles, driving time 8 hours, 20 minutes

White Sox at Kansas City: July 2-5

Cardinals at Kansas City: June 19-21



MILWAUKEE

Milwaukeeans are justifiably proud of Miller Park, which opened to great fanfare in 2001. Likewise, area golfers are enthused by the wide selection of high quality and affordable courses in and around the community.

The strong municipal offerings are headlined by Brown Deer Golf Club, home to the PGA Tour's U.S. Bank Greater Milwaukee Open.

The city of Waukesha is less than 10 miles from the ballpark and serves as a hub for a long list of fine layouts. The hilly and charming Naga-Waukee Golf Course is a bargain with green fees under \$50 on weekends, cart included.

The aforementioned Morningstar Golfers Club was designed by Libertyville architect Rick Jacobson, who also created The Broadlands in North Prairie, about a 40-minute drive from Miller Park. This links-style tract opened in 2000 and it is a favorite of big hitters with two par 4s, Nos. 11 and 17, that can be reached off the tee with long, accurate drives.

Arnold Palmer designed an impeccably maintained layout, The Bog, in Saukville. While wetlands grace a significant number of holes, the golf course is meticulously groomed and might just offer the truest putting surfaces in the Milwaukee metro area.

Chicago to Milwaukee: 92 miles, driving time 1 hour, 45 minutes

Cubs at Brewers: Sept. 21-23

White Sox at Brewers: June 12-14

Cardinals at Brewers: July 7-9, Sept. 7-9



MINNEAPOLIS

While Twins fans are eagerly anticipating the 2010 grand opening of their team's new home, the \$412 million Target Field, golf aficionados are justifiably proud of the more than 450 courses in the state that are open to the public.

The TPC-Twin Cities was a collaborative design effort by Arnold Palmer and native son Tom Lehman.

The course features just about every obstacle imaginable, including native wetlands, waste bunkers, stands of towering oak trees, 27 water hazards, snaking sand bunkers and huge stretches of prairie grasses.

Legends Golf Club is located in Prior Lake, just a 30-minute drive south from the Twin Cities. This fabulous layout is set on 360 acres of dramatic landscape. Perfectly manicured fairways and greens are guarded by bunkers filled with

Olde Stonewall in Ellwood City, Pa.



COURTESY OLDE STONEWALL

pearly white sand barged to the site from the Ohio Valley.

Players seeking traditional architecture and green fees under \$40 should head to Hopkins, home of the municipal Meadowbrook Golf Club. Built in 1926, the rolling, 6,529-yard layout was cited as "best of the Twin Cities" by a local newspaper last year.

Chicago to Minneapolis: 408 miles, driving time 6 hours, 50 minutes

White Sox at Twins: July 10-12 and 27-29, Aug. 31-Sept. 2



PITTSBURGH

Located an hour's drive southeast of Pittsburgh, Seven Springs Mountain Resort has become renown as the state's premier ski lodge. The course is a true mountain-top golf experience as breathtaking views of the Laurel Highlands can be enjoyed from countless locations.

It's worth a visit to Quicksilver Golf Club, which for numerous years has been a site for events on the Champions and Ben Hogan tours.

Opened to the public in 2006, Alcoma Golf Course was built as a private club in 1923 over 152 acres of rolling land, and to the northwest, in Ellwood City, Olde Stonewall has been acclaimed as one of the top public facilities in the state. Olde Stonewall is convenient in the respect that it is not far from an exit off the Pennsylvania Turnpike, the primary artery used for road travel between Northern Illinois and southwestern Pennsylvania.

Chicago to Pittsburgh: 462 miles, driving time 7 hours, 30 minutes

Cubs at Pirates: June 29-July 1, Sept. 7-9

Cardinals at Pirates: Aug. 7-9, Sept. 4-6



ST. LOUIS

While the close proximity to the ballpark and the direct views of the iconic Gateway Arch are reason enough to enjoy Gateway National Golf Links, it helps that the golf course is spectacular, to boot. Located across the river in Madison, Ill., Gateway National serves up meticulously maintained bentgrass

LODGING AND PLAYING

For hotel information and directions to golf courses around Midwest ballparks, contact these state tourism department Web sites:

MICHIGAN

www.michigan.org

MINNESOTA

www.exploreminnesota.com

MISSOURI

www.visitmo.com

OHIO

www.discoverohio.com

PENNSYLVANIA

www.visitpa.com

WISCONSIN

www.escapetowisconsin.com

fairways and greens.

Located in Waterloo, Ill., Annbriar Golf Course was designed over gently rolling terrain by Michael Hurdzan. The popular and enjoyable 18-hole layout opened in 1993 and is named in honor of the late Ann Nobbe, who envisioned a course built on her family's 226-acre farm.

Earmarked to become a private course in the near future, Missouri Bluffs Golf Club in St. Charles, Mo., was carved through forested land.

Designed by Tom Fazio and opened in 1995, Missouri Bluffs has been a popular site for championship golf. It twice was the site of Nike Tour's St. Louis Classic, including the first in 1997, when the course had been open for just two years, and has served as the site of the University of Missouri's annual intercollegiate tournament.

Chicago to St. Louis: 297 miles, driving time 4 hours, 58 minutes

Cubs at Cardinals: Sept. 18-20

• For course Web sites and additional information, visit www.cdga.org.

Neal Kotlarek is a freelance writer from Chicago.

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