



Photo: David Coyle

UK golfer John Holmes is cutting his tees on the University Club of Kentucky golf links, the home course of the University of Kentucky men and women's golf teams. Last summer, Holmes qualified for the 103rd U.S. Open Championships at Olympia Fields Country Club and medaled at the U.S. Amateur Championships in Oakmont, Pa.

Discounted membership fees for staff, faculty, alumni and students are among the university's premier perks.

The rates are quite affordable for those affiliated with the university and you have the prestige and class of a private country club without the high rates.

Carved into Central Kentucky's rolling hills, the University Club is the state's only private 36-hole championship golf club. It has two signature courses open to its members, the 7,007-yard "Big Blue" and the 6,680-yard "Wildcat."

For more information about the University Club, call 859-977-1252 or visit www.uckygolf.com

University Club, UK Continue Positive Partnership

By David Melanson

Just walking through the front door of the University Club of Kentucky gives you that Wildcat feeling. There is no denying it — the University Club bleeds Blue.

"We're proud to be affiliated with the University of Kentucky," said Watts Humphrey, general manager of the University Club.

"UK is known worldwide for its rich tradition of excellence, and we are excited to be part of that."

Although independently owned and operated, the championship golf club on Leestown Road shares a unique partnership with UK. Joe Burch, retired vice president of university relations, said the relationship has been advantageous to the university on several levels.

"The University Club has been a real benefit for UK," said Burch, who also served as chairperson of the University Club's Board of Directors. "It's a great benefit for the school's employees, alumni and friends as well as our athletics department."

One of the most positive aspects of the relationship is that UK never invested any financial resources into the club, Burch said. Under a licensing agreement, UK granted the club the ability to use its name and logos.

The University Club was originally owned and maintained by the University Clubs of America but was purchased by a local investment group last year. Burch said the new owners have given the University Club added financial stability while retaining UK's many privileges.

The ability to host fund-raising golf tournaments at the club for competitive rates is one privilege that many departments continue to reap. Many UK colleges and departments, like the College of Pharmacy and the College of Agriculture, have used the University Club to host events.

The 36-hole club is also home for the men's and women's golf teams. Fully equipped with a private practice facility, the University Club is the first "real" home course that the UK teams have ever had.

"It's the best thing that has ever happened to us," said director of golf operations Bettie Lou Evans. "We always had to beg, borrow and steal for a place to play. It's nice to have a place to call home."

The teams also host a pair of tournaments at the club each year, starting with the women's Wildcat Fall Invitational. The men's team hosts the Johnny Owens Invitational each spring. Both events are free and open to those who want to cheer on the Cats.

In 2003, the University Club was home to the women's SEC championships, which Evans said was a great opportunity to spotlight the UK golf program. She hopes the club can host another SEC tourney soon.

"The club is a great asset for the University of Kentucky," Evans said. "Having a facility like this that we can call our own should make a tremendous difference. The University Club will boost recruiting and allow us more practice time. Plus, we plan to expand with an indoor facility in the future. All these things give our golfers great opportunities to succeed."

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