



**Independent, locally owned and operated!**

www.lamorindaweekly.com 925-377-0977

Published January 18th, 2012

## **SMC and MCC Partner to Renovate Driving Range**

*By Sophie Braccini*

Clear sky, crisp light, warming sun and green grass- Friday the 13th of January was a perfect day to play golf. Brother Ronald Gallagher, President of Saint Mary's College, and Moraga Country Club Board President Donald Maddison, holding their best drivers, aimed to be among the first to practice on the new driving range that reopened that morning. The men associated in play as their respective institutions associated in financing the complete renovation of the driving range that included drainage, irrigation, the addition of new sand holes, and new grass. "We have a great relationship with the Country Club," said Scott Hardy, Saint Mary's College (SMC) golf coach, "the students practice here all the time; it's a win-win for my team." "We helped the financing of the range's renovation with the fees we pay to the Club," added Gallagher, who also said that it was nice to see the range reopen after almost four months.

Frank Melon, the Moraga Country Club's (MCC) Executive Director, agreed, "We are very proud to have the students practice here," he said, "the members enjoy seeing them around, the kids are always very polite when they come here, and we follow their results. Saint Mary's had a very successful golf season last year."

Hardy indicated that the golf team has 11 students, most of them on scholarship and coming from all over, from South California to Norway. "We won two games last year," said Hardy, "one at Notre Dame and one at Firestone. Our present rank is 28th out of 300 teams and we hope to improve our ranking this year."

Mark Orr, SMC's Director of Athletics, came to the inauguration still beaming from the previous night's win by the basketball team against Gonzaga by a merciless 83-62. "The golf team has been practicing here for almost 20 years," he said, "there is no place to practice on campus, this partnership works very well for us."

On the day of its reopening, the new range's grass looked a bit thinly sown. "This is normal for this type of grass," said Luis Ballesteros who, according to Melon, is the best golf superintendent in the nation, "we used a mix of Bermuda grass and perennial rye to create a drought resistant field that will recover and grow fast all summer long." Melon indicated that MCC and SMC had just signed a renewed agreement for the next 20 years-a partnership that clearly seems to work for both parties.

Reach the reporter at: [sophie@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:sophie@lamorindaweekly.com)

[back](#)

Copyright © Lamorinda Weekly, Moraga CA