

Stock Golf Report: Sturgeon Valley gets major facelift

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The Sturgeon Valley Golf Course underwent major renovations. SUPPLIED

Make no mistake. What is going on at the Sturgeon Valley Golf Course isn't just a few nips and tummy tucks or a little cosmetic surgery.

Even to call the massive restoration and renovation a facelift is selling the \$3 million-project well short.

New fairways, greens, bunkers, irrigation, collars, paved cart paths, tee boxes, clubhouse lounge and dining room, the locker room ... You name it. Sturgeon Valley — located north of Edmonton and east of St. Albert in Sturgeon County — has gone all in with the resurrection.

“It’s not just a fixer upper; that’s for sure,” said general manager Mark Beckwith. “The members have invested significantly — they really stuck their necks out — but the result has been very well received.

“Work was done on every hole. It’s almost like a completely new golf course — a new Sturgeon Valley.

“Every golf course needs a renovation after 50 or 60 years. It was just time,” Beckwith said of the course which originally opened as a nine-hole layout in 1960.

A two-year project that is nearly complete with just holes Nos. 1 and 7 left to finish — and those two holes will open at the end of the month — Sturgeon Valley was always a nice place to play but now it is going to be fantastic.

Arguably the biggest change is the greens.

“We’ve resurfaced the majority of the greens replacing the poa with bent grass sod,” Beckwith said of the putting surfaces that — for consistency, roll and lushness — rival anything around especially after a tough winter that affected many other courses. “All 18 are now bent grass and they wintered tremendously.”

Several of the greens — like No. 6 which used to be small, flat and round — have been expanded to allow for more varied pin placements.

Many holes have been completely redone like No. 7 which is going to be a gorgeous Par 3 while others like holes 1, 6, 10 and 18, were redone from 100 yards and in to the greens.

While those latter holes are all wonderful, No. 1 is a particularly solid Par 5 with a new fairway, green surround, three new bunkers and the reshaping and expansion of a lurking pond on the front and right of a new green which was moved to allow more sunlight and airflow.

The new irrigation system, which was 35-years-old, will allow for more coverage on the dry areas and will rid any areas that retained water — especially No. 8 where a new fairway was raised.

The paved cart paths replace what was dirt and gravel.

The dining room was renovated to hold 175 people; a new, posh, Valley Lounge will seat 65 more.

“This is a big deal for us,” said Beckwith, who came aboard as the head pro in 2007 and was named general manager in 2011. “It’s so beautiful and it’s spectacular.”