

PUBLIC GOLF

Tulsa golf's turnaround sees success at Page Belcher as Mohawk Park awaits improvements

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Fourteen months after Sidorakis Golf LLC was hired to revive the city's four municipal golf courses, a visible turnaround has appeared at Page Belcher. Esther Hodson, Tulsa World

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By Macey Thaxton

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A year ago, many Tulsa golfers had given up on the city's public courses. Fairways had deteriorated, the pro shops sat sparsely stocked, ponds were choked with algae and longtime players took their game elsewhere.

Today, golfers are coming back.

A little more than a year ago, with the city's golf courses in decline and golfers increasingly choosing to play elsewhere, Tulsa decided it was time for a fresh start. Sidorakis Golf LLC — a partnership between Nick Sidorakis, longtime former general manager of Southern Hills Country Club, and Tulsa golf course designer Randy Heckenkemper — was hired to revive the city's four municipal courses: two at Page Belcher, 6666 S. Union Ave., and two at Mohawk Park, 5223 E. 41st St. North.



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Fourteen months later, a visible turnaround has appeared at Page Belcher.

From April 2025 to March 2026, Page Belcher recorded a 16.9% increase in rounds played and a 43% increase in revenue. The improvement was attributed to a philosophy centered on customer service, hospitality and course conditions.

"Our goal is to create a great product, good value and people that feel like this is their home club, their own public club that they're proud of," Sidorakis said. "They weren't proud of it."

Like 'night and day' at Page Belcher

Rather than focusing on one major renovation, Sidorakis and Heckenkemper attacked dozens of smaller problems that collectively shaped golfers' impressions of the two courses at Page Belcher: Olde Page and Stone Creek.

The pro shop, once carrying only a single brand of golf balls and a single brand of gloves, has been expanded into a full-service retail space. Landscaping around the clubhouse has been refreshed. Ponds have been cleaned. Employees received pay raises, and management placed a renewed emphasis on hospitality.

Sidorakis jokes that the biggest improvement to the golf shop is simply that it now has products.

"We wanted to be a full-service golf shop, and the only way you can do that is to really have a selection of merchandise that appeals to the clientele," he said. "We've doubled revenue — 43% growth. You don't get that. I've never seen it in my business. Ever."

For Heckenkemper, changing the culture started with the people working behind the counter.

"We still want to go up (in pay) because we want them to stay and work here as long as they want, not have to leave to find a better job," he said.

While many changes can be seen inside the clubhouse, many lie around the course, or as soon as one drives up to the clubhouse.

Chuck Gibson, owner of Clearwater Pond Management and an avid golfer, volunteered his company's services to restore the ponds throughout the property, removing algae and years of runoff that had clouded the water.

"When (Heckenkemper) asked me to come out and look at the ponds and give him some ideas, I said, 'As long as I don't have to work on all of them at one time, I'll just donate my time for the benefit of the city and the benefit of golf because we love it,'" Gibson said.

Heckenkemper said many golfers noticed the small improvement immediately.

"The golfers that have been out here for the last 10 or 15 years, they've never had clean ponds out here," he said. "So we get compliments on how good the ponds look."

Gibson has also experienced the turnaround from the golfer's perspective. He and his league had largely stopped playing Page Belcher before the management change.

"Before these guys took over, it was brutal to deal with the staff in the clubhouse," Gibson said.

"At tournaments, the focus was not on play. It was not customer-friendly at all, and now everybody's super nice.

"It's night and day, totally different."

Another volunteer, Chris Ferris, helped redesign the landscaping surrounding the clubhouse entrance, hoping the first impression would match the improvements golfers found once they stepped onto the course.

"When (Heckenkemper) called, I was really glad and appreciative to step in and help out where I could," Ferris said. "It's rewarding to help the team that's making the golf course so good make the clubhouse look good too, because before, the clubhouse looked like, 'We don't care.' I wanted to make the clubhouse area look like we care now."

Hydrology an issue at Mohawk Park

While Page Belcher has become a showcase for the municipal golf courses' new direction, Sidorakis and Heckenkemper say a big challenge still lies across town at Mohawk Park.

Persistent flooding has forced the courses there to close for more than 100 days over the past two springs, creating a problem that maintenance alone cannot solve.



Persistent flooding has forced the city's municipal golf courses at Mohawk Park to close for more than 100 days over the past two springs. Pooled water is pictured Friday at the golf course after days of heavy rainfall.

Macey Thaxton, Tulsa World

"If we don't do anything, Mohawk will go away," Sidorakis said. "Mohawk, as a golf course, will cease to exist if something is not done there in the next couple years."

The pair has submitted a master plan to Mayor Monroe Nichols that would completely renovate the front nine holes of the Woodbine course and the back nine of Pecan Valley while preserving the back nine at Woodbine.

The front nine holes of Pecan Valley, which often flood first and hold the water the longest, have become wholly unusable for the course, according to Sidorakis.

"The bones of Mohawk Park are so good that if we reinvest in it, and the city reinvests in it, and the public — and perhaps private, as well — we could have a great facility over there," Sidorakis said.

Sidorakis said the cost of the renovation would be high, and it is unknown how the project will be funded until the city gives its blessing.

The proposal has already been reviewed by a consultant hydrologist with the city's Stormwater Quality division and a study to find alternative solutions is underway.

In the meantime, improvements continue where they can. Last summer, crews added 10 acres of new topsoil and sod at Mohawk, with another three acres planned for this year.

"We've done what we could do with private dollars," Heckenkemper said. "What we can't do is evacuate the water faster, and that's where we need the city's help."

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