

Crooked Stick Golf Club

The Beginning. In 1964, Pete Dye, built his first great golf course — Crooked Stick. Supported by 60 “interested, avid, and maybe crazy golfers” from the Indianapolis area, he formed a corporation to acquire a flat cornfield to be transformed into a links blend of Alister Mackenzie, Donald Ross and C.B. MacDonald. Pete’s tour of St. Andrew, Muirfield, Prestwick, Carnoustie and Royal Dornoch and other courses, provided him with the models for his track and routing. The cornfields were pushed into wide fairways and fair landing areas, but second shots were demanding. Pete’s design incorporated innovative elements in the United States, but familiar challenges in Scotland: railroad ties, strip bunkers, sand and grass pot bunkers, mounds and blind shots. Construction of the first nine holes (now the back nine) was completed in 1965. Two years later the back nine was completed. Gene Pulliam, one of the original Directors, described the course as a challenging but fair test of the shot-making ability of players of varying proficiency, greens designed to the length and severity of each hole, a course which in 18 holes requires the use of nearly every club in the bag, an element of privacy by restricting the number of parallel holes, and, in sum, a course to be enjoyed both for the challenge of golf and the companionship which only golf offers.

The Name. In June, 1964 the members were called upon to vote on a name for the club. “The Golf Club of Indianapolis” looked like the winner. But the story goes that as Pete Dye and Bill Wick, one of the original Directors, were walking over the uncompleted back nine, Pete picked up a gnarled stick and swung it at some stones. The likely beginning of the game was the inspiration for the name “Crooked Stick Golf Club,” which was ratified by the members on April 8, 1965.

Refinement. In 1985 the greens were replanted with a disease resistant pencross and at the same time Pete used this opportunity to modify them. In 2001, to eradicate poeanna, the greens were replanted with A4 grass and some of the greens were recontoured. Pete has continuously refined certain aspects of the course, tinkered with bunkers, added mounds and false fronts and lengthened the course. While the essence of the course remains today, several changes made were designed to accommodate major tournaments.

Not all changes at Crooked Stick have been on the course. Originally the members used an old farmhouse as the clubhouse. Then, a “permanent” clubhouse was constructed in 1973. Since Crooked Stick is a golf only club, it served the members well until July 5, 2004. On that day it was demolished to provide a site for a new clubhouse which was to “last for at least 50 years” and “which should feel like it has always been there.” By June 2005 the members and their guests were delighted with their new facilities which have been selected as the second place winner in the private club category of the 2006 Golf Inc. Clubhouse competition.

Championships Hosted. Crooked Stick has had the honor of hosting the following championships:

1982 USGA Junior Championship	2005 Solheim Cup
1983 USGA Senior Championship	2007 U.S. Women’s Amateur
1989 USGA Mid-Amateur Championship	2009 U.S. Senior Open
1991 PGA Championship	2012 BMW Championship
1993 U.S. Women’s Open	

The Challenge of the Course. A player at Crooked Stick will find that no consecutive holes are laid out in the same direction, one must constantly adjust to wind from a different tack, long holes are followed by short holes, and shots calling for right-to-left flight are followed by shots requiring a left-to-right path. Pete and Alice Dye have designed Crooked Stick to test a player’s “poise, courage and intelligence,” as well as his or her skill. You can look ahead or look back and the natural beauty of each hole extends before you. But the more familiar you are with the course, the more you see what is waiting for you. It does not let up, and it never lets you down.

