

Mayfield Golf Club primed for success following recent reopening

Written By ROBERT BELARDI

For the first time all season, owner and director of golf and food services at Mayfield Golf Club Christopher De Laat opened his doors May 16.

De Laat has been preparing a staged-process since February, analyzing how he can evolve his business at the course.

The family founded Mayfield Golf Club in 1978. De Laat and members of his family got out on to the course to maintenance the playing field.

He says he is very grateful to be open, something he feared would never happen.

"I'm just grateful. I didn't know if I was going to be able to operate our business. In whatever capacity you can operate, you do your best to make it work. All I wanted was a fighting chance and I think I have that now," De Laat said.

In February, De Laat's ingenuity on reshaping his business for what was to come, is indeed for the future as well. He analyzed the flaws within his business and with some research and predictions on what things could look like in limited capacity, he prepared his golf club for the inevitable.

"I started doing research finding a new system and I found one. That new system allows me to do a bunch of new things I couldn't do before, including pre-payment, self-check-in, current inventory, past inventory," he explained.

So far, the system is robust. He says the customers know how hard the staff is currently working to procure the safety of the players and the staff are very much aware how much De Laat cares about their safety as well.

Using Golf Ontario's recommendations, De Laat has set a guideline of his own.

It is a simple system. Players' tee-times are staggered by 12 minutes. Snack foods and drinks for now. His golf shop has already been streamlined to one check-out counter years ago.

The restaurant will remain closed. Rental clubs will not be permitted. Putting greens will not be open for practice prior to rounds. He says, it's about changing the habits of golfers; for now of course.

As for power karts, De Laat is resorting to an older system that was in place years ago.

"Back in the day we used to do it this way, where there is a value of the kart. If you rode alone we used to charge a single rider fee and if you shared the kart you have a shared fee."

When you reserve your tee-time online, you purchase a kart for yourself; if a kart is in stock at the time.

Single riders will pay two-thirds of the initial kart value and shared riders will split a slightly, large cost.

When riders are out on the course at staggered tee-times and others are moving too slow, De Laat says he will use his nine-hole golf course to move the group to. His analogy is to think of a golf course as a train station, you just switch lines.

He is optimistic by July his course can move into the second phase. BBQ stations with hot dogs and hamburgers will be set up and the restaurant; with a limited menu, will be offering take out. Then, he can also work with 27 holes permanently.

De Laat; a pro-golfer for the PGA for the past 35 years, will continue to monitor the circumstances while ensuring the safety of his course, questioning golfers at the gate prior to entry.