

Grand Cherokee installs Champion Bermuda

That dam course

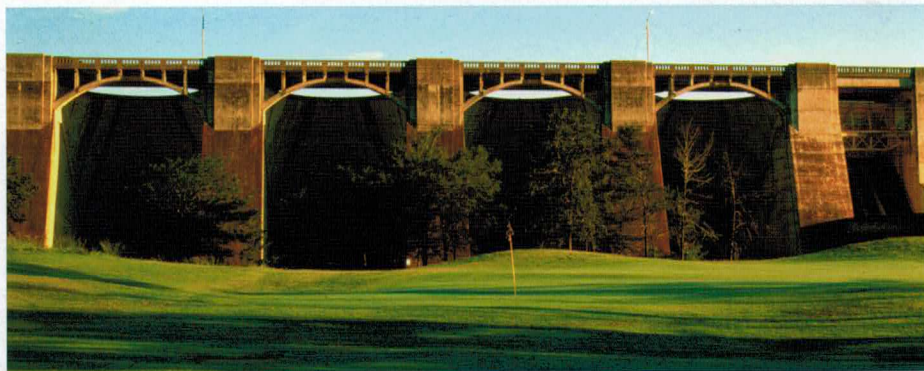
BY KEN MACLEOD

The Grand Cherokee State Park Golf Course near Langley has become the latest, and the northernmost, golf course in Oklahoma to convert to Champion Bermuda greens. The process began May 27 and is expected to take seven weeks. Meanwhile, the course remains open on temporary greens.

You can play Grand Cherokee during the transition for \$10 for 18 holes or \$5 for nine holes, including cart. Course superintendent and professional Kevin Mallow, who has been operating and tending the course since it was designed by Tripp Davis and opened in 1999, is excited to see what the Bermuda will do for his course.

"It's worked well in other parts of the state," he said. "We look forward to not having to nurse the greens through the summer. It will make the conditions we offer even better."

The term hidden gem may be an overused cliché, but it is certainly apt in the case of Grand Cherokee. If you can find the massive Pensacola Dam, the largest multiple



Grand Cherokee sits in the shadow of the massive Pensacola Dam on the Grand River.

arch dam in the world, on the south side of Grand Lake, well the course is right there in its shadow. Getting there is a matter of getting to Langley and then following the signs.

It's a bird-watcher's paradise, particularly for waterfowl and the birds of prey who enjoy fish, alive or dead. Mallow has counted more than 20 bald eagles on the property in the past. On our recent visit, three large vultures kept watch from a dead tree in the spillway.

Davis made great use of the available land on this nine-hole tract. The greens are large enough for two flags, one for each nine dur-

ing an 18-hole round in which golfers are encouraged to play from the tee box corresponding to the flag color. A benign par-3 of 150 yards from a white tee to a white flag can transform to a 180-yard shot over a deep bunker to a pin tucked in the back right on the second pass.

Like all of Davis' work, this course is no pushover, though it is designed with enough tee boxes to keep play moving. The greens have movement and character and they could be a real treat once the Champions takes a firm hold.

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