



## Cutten Fields

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Guelph, ON

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**15th Hole**  
under construction

Member since 2000

## Bill Green

Superintendent, Cutten Fields

*By Ryan Marangoni, Assistant Superintendent,  
Burlington G&CC.*

*Photos provided by Bill Green & Cutten Fields.*

### About the Course

First class private 18 hole golf course, designed by Chick Evans and Stanley Thompson. Cutten Fields boasts the best patio view in the city of Guelph, modernized practice facilities, Har-Tru (clay) tennis facility, and a recently updated clubhouse.

**Private, semi-private, public,  
municipal, resort?** Private

**Architect:** Chick Evans and Stanley Thompson

**Number of holes:** 18 Holes

**Number rounds annually:** 23,000

**Practice Facility:** Yes

**Number of staff year round, seasonal:**

5 full time employees and 16 seasonal staff

**How many mechanics, assistants:**

Jamie Laird Assistant/Arborist; Mark Hughes, Assistant/Project Manager; and Fred Hannington and Chris Hesselden, Mechanics.

Green has always been athletic. He loved Hockey and he loved the game of golf. "I wasn't particularly good at golf, but I loved it." As a young teenager he practiced golf in his backyard, chipping balls into buckets. At the age of 14 he decided to build his own fairway and hole. "I just thought it would be more fun." Obviously.

With a little self-directed golf course construction under his belt and a clear passion for the game, there is little surprise that Green found himself on the seasonal crew for Mississauga Golf and Country Club in 1998, enrolled in the Horticulture Diploma Program at the University of Guelph in 1999, and off to Penn State University to complete the GolfTurf Management program in 2001. Green was also one of the first Canadian interns to work at Baltusrol Golf Club. Not a bad start to what is shaping up to be an impressive career.

Green returned to Canada and worked as Bert McFadden's assistant at Georgian Bay Club for two years, relocated to the Toronto



*Bill Green, Superintendent, Cutten Fields.*

Golf Club as an assistant to Al Schwemler for 10 years and became the superintendent at Cutten Fields in 2014 where he has been for the last 5 years.

Here he leads a successful team that includes mechanics, Fred Hannington and Chris Hesselden, Jamie Laird his assistant/arborist and carpenter, and assistant Mark Hughes who has a background in golf course construction. With such a wide scope of skill sets on the team and access to an

## In the Hot Seat

**Q:** Favourite Major?

**A:** US Open

**Q:** Best piece of turf equipment?

**A:** Geolink Sprayer and Kubota Excavator

**Q:** Favourite meal?

**A:** Is at Baker Street Station and includes good beer

**Q:** Ultimate foursome: You and which three?

**A:** Mike Babcock, Adam Sandler, and Carl Spackler

**Q:** Lowest round ever and where?

**A:** 73, Toronto Golf Club

**Q:** Favourite movie?

**A:** Rudy

**Q:** Favourite golf course?

**A:** Swinley Forrest Golf Club

**Q:** Favourite course designer?

**A:** Harry Colt

**Q:** Favourite Band?

**A:** My daughter took me to an Arkells concert recently...amazing

onsite lumbermill, the sky (and budget) is the limit for the Cutten Fields team. Green can repurpose the course's felled trees and Laird's craftsmanship can be seen around the property in the form of course benches, divot boxes and bridges and locker room benches, and boardroom furniture is next on the list.

This in-house dream team can also tackle huge projects like re-routing cart paths, constructing new tee decks, re-shaping fairway contours (earth moving, not just grass lines) and building brand new greens. This work of course, was not free-rein in 2018; Cutten Fields hired Golf Course Architect, Jeff Mingay who developed a Master Plan with a new element of design for the course. In collaboration, Bill, his management team and Mingay decided to tackle the renovation of the par 5, 15th hole - without the help of outside contractors.

This hole was chosen for many reasons, but the one that carried most weight was



*Green's first fairway; built at age 14.*

that the work could be done with minimal golfer disruption - nine days, to be exact! In one calendar year from fall 2018 – fall 2019 Green and his team removed upwards of 50 dead Ash trees (emerald ash borer), Hughes and co. constructed two new tee decks, added four fairway bunkers, totally reshaped the fairway, constructed three new greenside bunkers and built a new very large green! This all happened while members continued to play the hole. The nine days in which membership had to

play with a temporary green took place just before the new green opened. During this time, Hughes bulldozed the old green, constructed two greenside bunkers, added sand and sodded them as well as tied the existing fairway into the new green's approach. Not too bad for nine days work. The project concluded with such success that the membership voted in favour of executing the Master Plan to rebuild ALL of Cutten's greens – an exciting time for Green and his team. "Having a team with

## What You Need to Know

**Predominant grass type:** Bent/Poa

**Predominant soil type:** Loam

**Types of greens:** 14 push-up, 1 USGA, 3 others

**Course length:** 6657 yards

**Size of greens:** 84,150 ft<sup>2</sup>

**Size of tees:** 115,000 ft<sup>2</sup>

**Size of fairways:** 31 Acres

**Major Challenges:** Winter injury is a constant struggle at Cutten Fields. A multitude of factors put us in a higher risk category for sustaining winter damage including surface drainage issues, no internal drainage, poor entrance and exit points, small greens with minimal pin locations and poor water quality.

**"Bill is the epitome of a family man, a wonderful father, mentor to many, a great leader, and a true professional. His passion for golf course management, agronomy, and construction is contagious. It was an honor working with Bill at the Toronto Golf Club for nearly 10 years"**

**– Al Schwemler, Property Manager  
The Toronto Golf Club**

such a wide scope of skill sets is great for the budget and managing timelines and member expectations. I'm looking forward to managing these new greens and bunkers."

Green has worked tirelessly, collecting data, collaborating with colleagues and gathering evidence to help support the fact that Cutten Fields should rebuild their vintage greens. On one hand, Green is proud of the effort needed to get the project to where it is today but realizes there is still a long way to go.

The team is currently working on three new greens, two new fairways, lots of bunkers and many new tee decks. This work will also be done in-house, and it can be completed with very limited golfer disruption, just like 15. This work will continue into the spring 2020 and these three new greens will open for play in the fall. Fall 2020, will also be a busy time of year for Bill and his team however, a different kind of busy. Instead of his team moving earth and doing the heavy lifting, an outside contractor will be employed to continue the project. The job will include rebuilding the remaining 14 greens and irrigation associated with them, cart paths, greenside bunkers as well as new fairway bunkers and tee decks. Hughes will



*Bill Green's family.*

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move out from behind the controls of the dozer to become the material handler and quality control man – making the necessary purchase orders for aggregates, and materials used to carry out the work as well as organizing temporary tees and greens as the crew progresses through the course. At any given time, once the fall project starts, there will be at least nine holes open for play. This makes planning and organizing a top priority to keep the membership happy. Bill can use the success of the 15th green, which will be one or two years ahead in

establishment, as a measuring stick for the future success of the rest of the renovation.

"This is a big investment financially for the club and personally for each of the members to endure. You really want things to go well, so we have put a lot of time researching and planning to make sure that

the club is successful. After construction and grow-in of the new greens is complete, comes learning how to manage these new greens. We will need some time to recover once all this is done."

Becoming a successful superintendent is more than executing renovations and maintaining an impressive golf course, it's also about managing a successful team. Green attributes his success to many great influencers during his career as an assistant, and all for different reasons. His preferred management style seems to echo the many lessons he

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"As hard as it is to watch key members of his staff move on, like his mentor, he encourages them to take opportunities to further their own careers and does what he can to help "

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learned from Al Schwemler. "Al is a great believer in personal and professional development, and he trusted his staff to take on projects and call the shots." In the same way that Green relies on his team to take on leadership roles in their own wheelhouse, Green was given opportunities



(L-R) Bill Green and his team Mark Hughes and Jamie Laird.

to prove himself on several projects while on Schwemler's team and establish himself as someone with a bright future. When Green felt like he was ready to take on a course as the superintendent, Schwemler hired a coach to help him develop his interview skills.

Today, Green takes time with his seasonal staff to help them develop their skills on the course as well as resume building, and job search skills. "I want to see these kids succeed and it doesn't matter if it's on a golf course. They're learning work ethic and a bunch of skills that can translate into something else." He also wants to see his full time staff succeed and as hard as it is to watch key members of his staff move on, like his mentor, he encourages them to take opportunities to further their own careers and does what he can to help.

Green relocated his family to Guelph when he moved to Cutten Fields, and is fortunate that he can stay connected to the course through email - which affords him time to be at home with his family. Well on his way to creating his own mini hockey team complete with mascots, Green and his wife Micheline have four children, Savannah(14),Adelaide(11),Harlow(9),and

Colton (7), three dogs, a cat, four chickens and a fish. Green also finds time to coach Adelaide's BB level rep hockey team.

Over the years, Green has learned that, "You have to create balance to be successful."

When asked how and where he likes to spend his vacation time, he responded, "Vacation?! Ha ha ha...maybe later." For now, staying close to home with his family is all this quintessential superintendent needs. ■

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