

Airway Meadows honored by state golf owners

ON RECREATION SPORTS

COMMENTARY

By WILL SPRINGSTEAD

The New York Golf Course Owners Association recently named Airway Meadows Golf Course in Gansevoort its 2005 Course of the Year.

Entering its seventh year of operation as a public golf course, Airway Meadows is a picturesque 18-hole course with a challenging layout. The course's signature element is the small airport runway between the second and eighth holes.

According to Joan Heber, co-owner of the course along with her husband James, the NYGCOA's criteria for the award is the quality of the course, quality of the management, promotion of the game and community involvement.

"We were quite pleased to win it," Joan Heber said.

In a release, NYGCOA President Ray Holohan said awarding Airway Meadows was easy.

"Joan and James operate an outstanding golf facility, but beyond that, they have created something very special," Holohan said.

"They were looking for a true mom-and-pop operation," Joan Heber said, "because it can be such a big business. He kept on saying our golf course was so unique."

The Hebers will be recognized at the National Golf Course Owners Association conference in Atlanta in February.

The Hebers have never been one to rest on their laurels, as every year they are changing some things and making improvements to the course, and more are planned for the upcoming golf season. The biggest change is that Brian Rhodes, formerly of the Saratoga Spa State Park Golf Course, will become the new pro and continue to develop the junior golf program he has started.

Heber also said they plan on moving some cart paths and doing some more clearing, especially on the 18th hole so that the green is more visible.

"It's more tweaking this year," said Joan Heber, who has been busy trying to generate more leagues and tournaments, "but it's all for our goal to grow more golfers."

(subhed) Martin, U.S. to play soon

Saratoga Springs' Jarred Martin, 23, and the rest of his teammates on the United States National Men's Field Hockey Team will have their first international matches of the year in the next several weeks.

The U.S. is scheduled to play the Dutch club team Bloemendaal in matches on Feb. 7, 8 and 11 before playing the Canadian National Team on Feb. 17, 18 and 19. They will be the first competitive matches for the full USA squad since the Pan Am Cup in May 2004.

Martin, 23, is a 6-foot-2, 190-pound forward on the U.S. National Team and has scored 32 international goals since joining the team in 2000.