



Transforming the Golf Course Snack Bar into an On-Course Oasis

By Pamela Brill | September 17, 2019



Photo by John Gessner / Pinehurst Resort

Snack bars, halfway houses and comfort stations are being designed to be much more than just places for making quick pit stops and grabbing fast-food bites.

Move over, burger and fries—and pass the pulled pork. Many clubs and courses are enhancing the golf experience, and helping golfers up their games—while also stepping up their options for sustenance—by redesigning on-course snack bars, halfway houses and comfort stations to serve as welcome oases, pre-, mid- or post-round, and provide a bevy of new snack and rest/relaxation options. Here's how some properties have taken steps to treat members and guests to a better round of 18-hole, tee-to-green, soup-to-nuts service.



Belfair in Bluffton, S.C., members playing golf depended on cart service that lacked convenient access during and after rounds. “The beverage cart was underutilized and sat stagnant at an area of the golf course adjacent to one of our comfort stations that intersected several holes on the front and back nine,” explains General Manager Ken Kosak.

But by creating two new grab-and-go comfort areas last September, Belfair has been able to extend its hours of service, streamline operations and provide greater menu variety.

Located in two high-traffic areas—on the east course and in the staging area—Belfair’s comfort stations were redesigned with both logistical and aesthetic changes in mind. The existing comfort station, which had already been equipped with restrooms and a water and ice machine, is now an enclosed space with the addition of windows for natural light and the installation of HVAC. Tile-plank flooring, a wood tongue-and-groove ceiling and wainscoting, along with custom cabinets and granite top, create a “Lowcountry” feel (see photo, opposite page).

The improved flow of operations has, in turn, helped Belfair’s management restructure its division of labor. “We are able to redistribute the hours normally managed by a beverage cart to other areas, such as the card rooms and locker rooms,” notes Kosak. “This has given us the ability to extend and enhance our offerings, as well as provide us with the ability to be open longer without the overhead costs of additional labor.”

The comfort stations offer new hours, from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., that help to better serve members’ needs before a round, during practice sessions and post-game.

In addition to standard fare of hot dogs, sandwiches and salads, the menu for the Belfair comfort stations now also reflects seasonal options, such as homemade soups and member-favorite Belfair chili. Food is prepared in the main kitchen and distributed to grab-and-go stations first thing each morning. Members have keyless entry access to portable self-serve containers that can go from the golf cart to the course effortlessly.

Thanks to such vast improvements, Belfair’s new comfort stations are yielding a sales increase of about 20 percent over previous beverage cart service, Kosak reports. “Members like the convenience of the extended hours, as well as the [greater] variety of items offered,” he notes.

Rest and Refresh

At Big Cedar Lodge in Ridgedale, Mo., golfers have the perfect excuse to take a break from their games and gaze out over the Ozark Mountains while partaking of a snack.

This past April, the resort unveiled a halfway house that serves its newest course, the Coore-Crenshaw designed Ozarks National, at the 10th hole. “Because the course [does not have] a returning nine, a comfort station was needed to offer



“Members like the convenience of the extended hours, as well as the greater variety of items offered.” — Ken Kosak, General Manager at Belfair in Bluffton, S.C.



"Because [the Ozarks National course does not have] a returning nine, a comfort station was needed to offer guests a mid-point rest area, and that gave us a great chance to up our game on the level of service we provide to golfers." —Matt McQueary, Golf Sales and Marketing Manager at Big Cedar Lodge in Ridgedale, Mo.

Modeled after a log cabin, the one-room facility (see photo above) is designed to evoke a warm and cozy atmosphere while providing modern-day amenities. Grab-and-go options are designated in three key areas: a cooler, freezer and tabletop snack stations.

Members have the option of eating inside at one of six tables that provide seating for 18, or on rocking chairs on an outdoor deck that overlooks the mountains and golf course.

Stocked with a variety of pre-packaged snacks, hot and cold non-alcoholic beverages and healthier options of fruit and granola, the snack bar is free of charge—an asset in terms of low-maintenance service. "This eliminates many of the typical operational needs that are required at other halfway houses, such as a POS system or credit-card machines," notes McQueary. Any food requiring prep is

handled at the lodge's main kitchen, and extra refrigerator and freezer space is maintained at the clubhouse.

While the snack service provided at Ozarks National is relatively effortless, the decision to stock prepackaged goods also required some preliminary legwork. "Because the food is complimentary with no POS system, it can be difficult to forecast stocking needs," McQueary reports. At least one staff member is tasked with maintaining inventory and keeping the space clean, and a housekeeping team is also on hand to perform regular deeper cleanings.

Convenient and casual, the new halfway house is continuing to prove its value for visitors in need of refreshment. "Guests love the convenience of simply grabbing what they need without having to reach for their wallet," says McQueary. "From lighter and healthier options, to treats that satisfy that sweet tooth, there is something for everyone. Who doesn't love free ice cream on a beautiful day?"

A Nod to the Past, and Eye to the Future

After experiencing a number of property-wide renovations over the past several years, Pinehurst (N.C.) Resort needed to provide a new source of respite for golfers between rounds. But rather than erect a transitory structure, management opted for a permanent facility that not only benefits guests but also reflects the resort's rich history.

Tying in the restored Pinehurst No. 2 and last year's redesign of Pinehurst No. 4, the brand-new halfway house was opened to guests this past February. The new structure "serves both of Pinehurst's most notable courses and sits prominently as a reflection of Pinehurst's commitment to evolve, but in a way that best represents



"[The new halfway house] serves both of Pinehurst's most notable courses and sits prominently as a reflection of Pinehurst's



Modeled after Pinehurst's original, circa-1898 clubhouse (see photo, opposite page), the halfway house is outfitted to provide easy access to food and drink. Guests place their food orders at a walk-up service window and can help themselves to cold drinks from a refrigerated cooler.

Pinehurst Resort & Country Club in Pinehurst, N.C.

An open-air, shaded exterior containing tables, counters and rocking chairs extends around the perimeter, providing a front-row seat to Pinehurst No. 2 and 4. "Lazy" overhead ceiling fans invite guests to sit back and relax as they take in the views. Up top, an observation deck that provides a bird's-eye view of the courses can double as a function space for small gatherings.



Pinehurst Resort's new halfway house was modeled after the famous property's original, circa-1898 clubhouse.

To provide members with a well-rounded selection of upscale snacks and tasty delicacies, the menu at the new halfway house features local favorites such as pulled pork sandwiches, smoked pork sausage, turkey and cheese sandwiches, pulled pork tacos and chicken salad. All food is prepared in an off-site kitchen and transferred to the halfway house each day, where it is served hot.

A variety of spirits, craft and domestic beers and Arnold Palmers is also available to complement these offerings. Because there is no indoor seating, members are able to enjoy their meals outdoors or during a round of golf.

And that they do, as evidenced by positive feedback since the halfway house's inception. Long-time Pinehurst golfer John Patota says the new addition provides a sense of permanence to the longstanding property.

"For it to resemble the very first clubhouse at Pinehurst connects us a little bit more to the past," Patota notes. "That's the best thing about Pinehurst—even as we celebrate the past, we're always looking to improve the experience here."

Beyond Your Basic Dog

In addition to upgrading their halfway houses and snack bars through structural and design changes, many clubs and courses are also revamping their menu offerings to accommodate members' and guests' desire for greater variety and quality of the food and beverages made available to them while playing a round of golf.

This past summer, Hickory Ridge Golf Resort in Holley, N.Y., made over its snack bar menu to include a full roster of appetizers, entrees and sides, while also expanding its hours of operations to from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. "We noticed people looking to order something more consistently and up until this point, we had only been serving hamburgers, hot dogs and the like," says General Manager Sean Brooks.



N.Y.-area favorite, the Zweigle hot dog, while those with dietary needs can indulge in a gluten-free cold plate of chicken salad, cottage cheese, hard-boiled egg and potato salad.

Streamsong Black in Bowling Green, Fla. has also enhanced its halfway-house menu for its new “Tin Can” halfway house (see photo below). Opened in September 2017 in conjunction with the resort’s newest golf course, the “Tin Can” is the third halfway house on the property, joining those in place on the Streamsong Red and Streamsong Blue courses.



The new “Tin Can” halfway house on the Streamsong Black course features lobster rolls, chicken-salad sandwiches and other “easy to eat on the go” fare.

While each of Streamsong’s halfway houses boasts its own specialized menus (Red is known for BBQ, and Blue for its mini-tacos), Streamsong Black recently expanded its offerings in response to customer feedback. The newest additions include lobster rolls and chicken-salad sandwiches that Streamsong Director of Golf Scott Wilson says are “easy to eat on the go between holes.”

“We are committed to enhancing the guests’ experience and providing some of the best food and beverage offerings in golf,” Wilson adds.

Summing It Up

- > Self-serve comfort stations provide quick and convenient access to food and beverages between rounds.
- > Food prep and storage needs can be managed off-site and transported daily.
- > Regular cleanings and daily maintenance are essential for keeping halfway houses fully functional.

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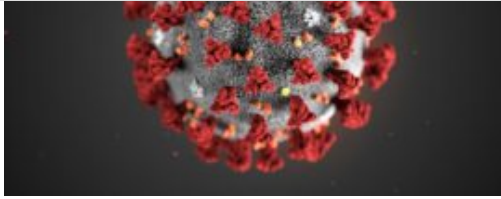
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