

# KOPPLIN KUEBLER & WALLACE

THE MOST TRUSTED NAME IN EXECUTIVE SEARCH AND CONSULTING

## **GENERAL MANAGER/CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER PROFILE: SKOKIE COUNTRY CLUB GLENCOE, IL**

### **THE GENERAL MANAGER/CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER OPPORTUNITY AT SKOKIE COUNTRY CLUB**

The opportunity at Skokie Country Club (SCC) will allow its next General Manager/Chief Operating Officer (GM/COO) to join a club that is considered one of the finest in the greater Chicago and Upper Midwest market. He/She will be following a long tenured and well-regarded leader who is retiring after nearly 18 years with SCC. In doing so, he/she will inherit a strong team of professionals, many of whom have similar tenures, a strong and engaged, family-centric membership at its highest levels in years, and an operation with high levels of both member and staff satisfaction.

Skokie Country Club is well known in the area for the quality of its course and golf experience, the quality of its F&B operation, its racquets programs (especially important has become paddle tennis and winter activities) and its overall dedication to “family”, which is evident in the way members use the Club and the care and kindness they have toward the staff. Additionally, over the past several years, the Club has undertaken a number of capital projects to continue to ensure relevancy of amenities to changing member expectations, and there is significant work going on at present on the strategic plan and “Skokie 2025”; the new GM/COO will be an active participant and contributor to that plan.

Moving to the future, SCC is looking for a highly engaged and ‘present’ leader who possesses outstanding industry vision, financial acuity, and an especially strong understanding and ability to execute a relevant and vibrant F&B operation, which is the cornerstone for member satisfaction at Skokie. Being comfortable in a truly family oriented club and naturally enjoying that kind of operation combined with truly outstanding team development and communication skills is essential.

[Click here to view a brief video about this opportunity.](#)

### **SKOKIE COUNTRY CLUB**

The history of Skokie Country Club dates to 1897 when a group of Chicago businessmen came together to form a golf club. The land they purchased stood atop a ridge and overlooked a broad oak savannah plain and in the distance, a wetland area. This portion, known as the “Skokie,” probably from a Potawatomi Indian word for swamp or marsh. From this came “The Links of Skokie Country Club.”

Fast forward more than 120 years and there have been four course layouts by some legendary designers as part of this club’s storied past. In 1999, the membership of SCC overwhelmingly approved the engagement of Mr. Ron Prichard, a Donald Ross disciple, to update the course. Mr. Prichard redesigned the greens and bunkers to the original Ross specifications and the result is classic Donald Ross.

Today, the course plays to 7,091 yards from the Championship tees and has hosted the 1922 US Open, the 2010 and 2017 Western Amateur and the 1998 US Senior Men’s Amateur Championship. Gene Sarazen won that famous 1922 US Open and is amongst many notable players who have contributed to the significant history of the course and Club.

Today, Skokie enjoys a tremendous position in its members’ lives, most of whom live in the beautiful neighborhoods of Glencoe, Winnetka, Wilmette, and Glenview, surrounding Skokie.

In addition to the course, the Club provides members multiple dining options within the clubhouse and in outdoor areas, most of which overlook the course. A new pool complex provides an active environment for summer use, including a full-service kitchen and outdoor bar.

Skokie enjoys one of the most active paddle tennis programs in the country, resulting in a vibrant year-round racquet agenda. With the largest contingent of paddle players of any club in the Upper Midwest, SCC has six very active paddle courts with multiple leagues and teams and a large first class paddle hut facility. This complements an active summer tennis program with six clay courts, two of which have been in nearly continuous use in the same location since 1899!

Finally, complementing all these amenities is a robust schedule of programs and activities, most for full family participation. Highlighting this full array of wine dinner, holiday events, family campouts on the course and more, is the annual multi-day "Candlelight Dinner" program that is the most sought-after event of the year each December.

Skokie Country Club has had the foresight to position itself thoughtfully in the Chicago market that features several well-regarded clubs. SCC has been able to stay true to its mission and vision, and consequently enjoys one of the strongest pipelines of compatible and collegial memberships in the country. The new GM/COO will be coming to a Club that epitomizes the mission, vision, core values and guiding principles outlined below:

**VISION:** Skokie Country Club's primary objective is to be a premier family-oriented social and recreational club distinguished by its collegial and active membership, friendly and welcoming atmosphere, and superb golf course and other facilities.

**MISSION:** To provide outstanding golf, recreation, dining, and social activities, and a collegial atmosphere for its members, families, and guests.

**CORE VALUES:** Family orientation, friendliness and compatibility, commitment to excellence, courtesy, and inclusiveness, respect, integrity, honoring traditions, member satisfaction, transparency, professionalism, and leadership.

**GUIDING PRINCIPLES:** Offer a premier member and guest experience, maintain all recreational and dining facilities in top condition, appeal to members and their family members of all ages, emphasize collegiality in our culture and admissions process, be responsive to membership desires and manage finances prudently.

## **SKOKIE COUNTRY CLUB BY THE NUMBERS**

- At present, there are approximately 700 members in all categories
- \$78,000 Initiation fee for Regular Golf membership
- \$10,560 Annual dues for full member category
- Approximately \$9.6M gross revenues in operations
- Approximately \$3.9M F&B volume (41.8% FC) with 80% of it in ala carte member dining
- 208 Employees (96 FTE) in-season
- Approximately 14,600 rounds of golf played annually
- Club accounting and POS system is ClubEssentials
- There are approximately 105 year-round employees, supplemented with approximately 70 more seasonally
- The Club has housing for approximately 45 year-round and seasonal employees
- Skokie is a 501(c)(7), not for profit, tax exempt corporation
- There are 11 Board Members with one-year terms for the President; Committee Chairs serve two years in their respective roles
- At present, committees include: Admissions, Entertainment, Finance, Golf, Women's Golf, Grounds and Greens, House, Membership, Pool and Racquets

- Average age of members is 54.5 years of age

**SKOKIE COUNTRY CLUB WEB SITE:** [www.skokiecc.com](http://www.skokiecc.com)

### **GENERAL MANAGER/CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER POSITION OVERVIEW**

As noted, the current, highly-regarded GM/COO is retiring and will be leaving Skokie later this year. The Club has a strong history of tenure amongst many of its senior staff and desires to attract a verifiably high-performing, achievement-oriented, collaborative new leader who views Skokie as a “destination club” for many years to come.

The GM/COO position has responsibility for all day-to-day Club operations and the Club continues to evolve to a stronger COO focus on the model of organizational leadership. He/she directs and administers all aspects of the operations--the amenities, project development, staff, and all programs and activities, including each operating entity of golf, racquet sports, pool, food/beverage operations, activities, and programs--to ensure consistently outstanding service delivery to the membership and their guests. The Board does not want to operate the Club; they have been and want to continue in a higher level of oversight, policy making, governing, and strategic focus. Key to the new GM/COO's success is the intuitive sense to be “present” and to sincerely engage with every generation of members and their guests. However, Skokie has a rich history of Club members serving on committees of its various activities to ensure member satisfaction and in support of the Club staff.

The GM/COO is responsible for the creation, implementation and consistent execution of all service standards and processes while providing vibrant, innovative, relevant, and respectful leadership to key managers and staff. A primary objective is for the GM/COO to be the highly visible and interactive face of the Club and to ensure that departmental goals and objectives are defined, understood, evaluated, and enhanced on a continuous basis.

Being a natural mentor to the team also is critically important, as is being a strong advocate for the team's success. The GM/COO must be a proactive and assertive leader in the process of strategic planning, talent acquisition and retention, membership activities/services programming, ensuring that each of these areas of focus consider current and future membership input and demographics. Additionally, he/she must expect to work to exceed the expectations of members and to recognize trends, evolving demographics, and what will help support the Club in the future. The new GM/COO should have a history of success and of recognizing, respecting, and supporting the contributions of key managers and staff, many of whom have been a part of Skokie for many years.

### **KEY CHARACTERISTICS**

A key requirement is to be able to work proactively with the Board and Club committees who in turn will keep the GM/COO focused on key goals and objectives that benefit the long-term well-being of Skokie, and to ensure that future capital projects are successfully planned and executed, keeping all appropriate constituencies well-informed throughout. The Board is looking for a partner-like mindset from its GM/COO to take a strong role in running the Club, to be out in front of issues, and to provide them with solutions and executing to successful outcomes where and when needed.

Outstanding communication skills, both written and verbal, are necessary. Additionally, as the primary communicator of most of the information at the Club, a keen ability to listen, engage, build trust, and be highly approachable is also of critical importance.

Other key attributes, characteristics and style of the successful new leader include the following:

- Exceptional financial acumen, detail-orientation to “see” things needing attention, and operations, systems, and facilities expertise.
- Visionary and mission-oriented on behalf of Skokie Country Club; anticipate how the Club will evolve and be at the forefront of trends in clubs.

- Knowledgeable and innovative as it relates to technology; having the ability to leverage high tech to improve 'high touch' with members as well as efficiency of the operation and enhanced data capture is critical.
- Outgoing, conversant, respectful, and diplomatic, but able to say "no" when appropriate without alienating members or staff while doing so.
- Actively participate and be a "thought partner" with the Board, Committees, and contributors to the Club's success.
- Attract, retain, and develop staff at every level.
- Innately understanding, empathetic, reliable, and relatable to members and staff at all levels.

### **INITIAL PRIORITIES OF THE GENERAL MANAGER/CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER**

The following priorities have been identified for likely initial primary focus:

- Observe, listen, ask questions, and learn about the culture and heritage of Skokie Country Club. The Club is very open to changes and improvements, but you must first understand the culture, overall history, expectations, etc.
- Meet and sincerely interact with and engage as many members as possible. Build trust, schedule interactive times, and follow up on details. Being "front facing" and involved in all operations and especially in member high usage areas/times is important.
- Work closely with the F&B team to ensure that an appropriate foundation of success is in place in this department, both in the culinary and service execution sides of the operation. F&B operations are of utmost importance to the membership and meeting a majority of members' expectations in this area is a critical success factor. Service and culinary standards and consistent delivery thereof is an important focus.
- Spend time with the team (staff in all areas of operations) getting to know them, their abilities, and aspirations and to further their already strong mutual respect and collaborative approach to supporting one another and the Club's overall mission.
- Develop the Board and Committee relationship, working to create a strong bond and communication exchange of diplomatic openness.
- Review the full organizational chart of Skokie, considering trends, areas of focus and future need, etc., and after 90 days creating a "State of Skokie" report for the Board with observations and recommendations. Respectfully questioning "why" process, procedures, and systems with a new set of eyes is a desired part of the evolution to a new executive in this role.
- Examine and elevate the overall performance management systems in place at SCC, recognizing a continued desire to ensure that goals, objectives, accountabilities, and responsibilities should be evaluated with a focus on relevancy. As part of this focus, review the overall HR functions in the Club to ensure consistency within each department and as it relates to continued staff development.
- The Club has a history of exceptional member experiences; consider how to ensure they continue at a high level and where they may be even further enhanced.

### **CANDIDATE QUALIFICATIONS**

A minimum of 5-10 years of progressive leadership/management experience, preferably in a GM/COO role in a golf and family-centric, private member-owned country club with multi-dimensional operations, or leading hospitality operations outside of the club industry in a similar hospitality operation. True 'rising stars' from the club industry who have been verifiably well-mentored, or those hospitality industry managers who come from top quality environments and who possess outstanding relationship skills will also be considered.

Verifiable success in the key attributes noted above.

A demonstrable record of personal success, unimpeachable reputation, a hunger for "being the best," recognizable and naturally articulate, because of experience and success, in communicating how and why results were achieved.

## **EDUCATIONAL AND CERTIFICATION QUALIFICATIONS**

A Degree is highly desirable, preferably in Hospitality Management or Business. In lieu of the degree, substantial private club or hospitality experience will be considered.

Credentials from the hospitality industry, recognizing on-going involvement and commitment to lifelong personal and professional development are desired.

## **SALARY AND BENEFITS**

Salary is open and commensurate with qualifications and experience. The Club, along with the typical senior staff benefits, offers an excellent bonus and benefit package.

## **INSTRUCTIONS ON HOW TO APPLY**

Please upload your resume and cover letter, in that order, using the link below. You should have your documents fully prepared to be attached when prompted for them during the online application process.

**Preparing a thoughtful letter of interest and alignment with the above noted expectations and requirements is necessary.** Your letter should be **addressed to Scott Kingdom, Search Chairman and the SCC Search Committee**, and clearly articulate why you want to be considered for this position at this stage of your career and why SCC and the Greater Chicago area will be beneficial to you, your family, your career, and the Club if selected.

***Expressions of interest in this manner should be conveyed to our Firm no later than July 20, 2019. Candidate selections will occur in early August and first interviews are expected to occur in mid-August, final selections will likely be made in late August/early September with the successfully selected candidate starting on or about December 1, 2019.***

**IMPORTANT:** Save your resume and letter in the following manner:

“Last Name, First Name Resume” &

“Last Name, First Name Cover Letter”

(These documents should be in Word or PDF format)

Note: Once you complete the application process for this search, you are not able to go back in and add additional documents.

For directions on how to upload your resume and cover letter [visit this page](#).

[Click here](#) to upload your resume and letter of interest and alignment.

If you have any questions, please email Patty Sprankle: [patty@kkandw.com](mailto:patty@kkandw.com)

### **Search Executives on this assignment:**

Thomas B. Wallace III, CCM/ECM  
Partner, KOPPLIN KUEBLER & WALLACE  
412-670-2021  
[tom@kkandw.com](mailto:tom@kkandw.com)

Kurt D. Kuebler, CCM  
Partner, KOPPLIN KUEBLER & WALLACE  
561-747-5213 – Jupiter, FL  
[kurt@kkandw.com](mailto:kurt@kkandw.com)