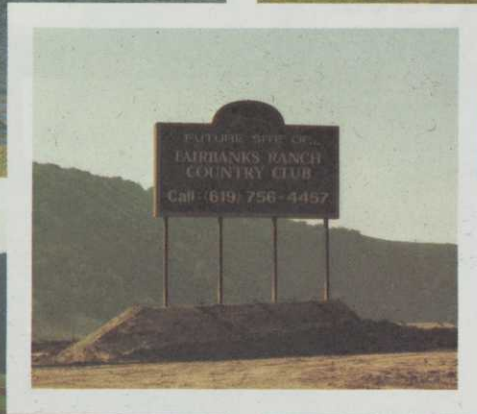
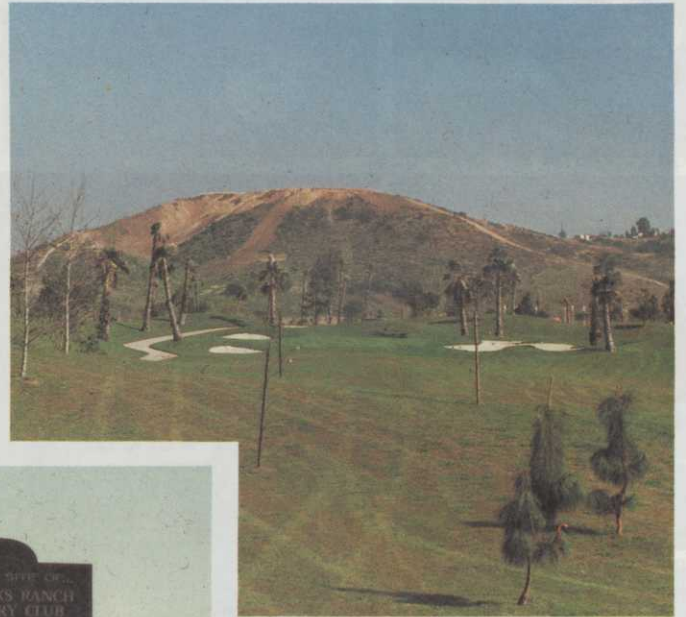


And now a course where golfers could face three faults for refusing a water hazard!



San Diego in southern California has the ideal climate for golf. Temperatures hardly vary outside the 60° - 90°F range and there are numerous fine courses. However, as in most matters American, there is always room to go one better... Take a film star's ranch, virtually unlimited funds, add the Olympics and, in just over 12 months, you have the Fairbanks Ranch Country Club. The ranch, at Rancho Santa Fe on the outskirts of San Diego, was the property of Douglas Fairbanks Jr. An enterprising development company—Watt Industries—acquired the land and laid out plans for some palatial homes, shops and, naturally, a golf course. The site designated for the course was not, by British ideas, particularly attractive—just a valley floor covered in scrub, surrounded by hills and with a small river. Into the story entered golf course architect and construction superintendent Fred Harris, followed by the US Equestrian Olympic Committee and the Fairbanks Ranch golf course and the Olympic Equestrian cross-country course for the three-day event started to take shape in April last year.

The 34 charter members of the club each put up \$300,000 (£200,000); the construction budget for the first 18 holes was \$3,500,000. Unfortunately, a few unforeseen snags occurred and eventually the cost will be \$5,000,000, which is about £1,000,000 over budget!. This left \$5,000,000 for a clubhouse, etc, and there is no shortage of takers wishing to subscribe the \$50,000 membership entry fee. Landfill for the course was taken from the river bed and banks with 55 large earth moving machines shifting 3,000,000 cubic yards of 'dirt'. The river, which was 100 yards wide, is now nearer 500 yards across and a stone embankment has been constructed in case the river comes into full flood. Over 6,400 mature trees were planted and lakes, all with concrete edges to avoid erosion and to ease maintenance, were built. Seeding took place in autumn and the course opened for play in May. In between, the equestrian course builder moved in and up went 30 jumps around the golf course, including several through water fronting the clubhouse, all of which will be dismantled and never seen again after the Olympics. So watch out for the T.V. coverage.

Michael Coffey.

Top left: 18th green and clubhouse under construction. Below: Fred Harris points—also pictured is Jim Adams.

Top right: many holes enjoy stunning backdrops. Below: 14th fairway.