The greens are undulating, but funnel everything toward the middle.

Neither has ever won the tournament. But with the 36-hole championship flight being held at their home courses on Jan. 31 and Feb. 1, their knowledge should place them among the favorites to win the event.

"Dale's my man," said Barton Creek head pro Greg Smith of his course manager.

"He's a scratch golfer and has to be considered one of the favorites in any tourney he plays.

"We have a third course here called Lakeside. Dale shot a 61 there. That's just a stroke off the course record."

The championship flight will be played on Barton Creek's Crenshaw/Coore Golf Course. Fairways are large and greens enormous, averaging about 10,000 square feet. The par-5, 16th, for instance, has a 14,000-square-foot putting surface.

"Water comes into play on the first and second shots. But the hole is so short, people can easily make par," Smith warned.

"The par 4, 11th is the signature hole, according to Smith. The downhill drive is straight toward a fairway bunker just past the landing area. The approach is back uphill to an elevated green protected by a pair of sand bunkers. A prevailing left-to-right wind makes it all the more difficult.

Other memorable holes are the 4th and 13th. The 4th hole. Lake Austin runs the entire length of the tee area courses slated for this year's GCSAA Golf Championship. The final flight will be played over Barton Creek and Austin Country Club.

The Hills at Lakeway, designed by Jack Nicklaus and taken care of by superintendent Greg Hinton, is one of four Austin-area courses slated for this year's GCSAA Golf Championship. The final flight will be played over Barton Creek and Austin Country Club.

Which is why he expects Hanna to do well. Austin CC's superintendent carries a very respectable handicap and has played the course enough, Finnick believes, that he won't be intimidated.

"Once you get over the visual intimidation at any Dye course, you find they aren't that difficult to play," he said.

The par 4, 11th is the signature hole, requiring a 190-yard carry over an open canyon from the back tees.

But the one that consistently plays the most over par is the deceptive 287-yard, 4th hole. Lake Austin runs the entire length of the short par 4.

"Water comes into play on the first and second shot. But the hole is so short, people

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Spodnik, MacCurrach honored by GCSAA

By MARK LESLIE

LAWRENCE, Kan.—Superintendent John Spodnik, who has "inspired many people throughout his career," and PGA Tour agronomist Allan MacCurrach, cited for "exceptional contributions to the superintendent's profession," will be presented the GCSAA's 1994 Distinguished Service Awards at the international golf show.

The award "means being recognized by your peers as a contribution to the advancement of the profession in general and to the turfgrass industry," said Spodnik from Westfield Country Club in Westfield Center, Ohio, where he has served for 34 years.

"I'm overwhelmed," MacCurrach said. "Superintendents have made my job easy over the years. People like us, who are able to travel, are exposed to different things (agronomically). Often times, I'm just passing on information I've picked up the week before."

Spodnik, who retires in September, was the 1969 president of the GCSAA and has been secretary-treasurer of the North Ohio Golf Course Superintendents Association for 34 years. He has been director of the Midwest Regional Turf Foundation at Purdue University for several years, holding the office of president in 1975. Serving in his third year as treasurer of the Musser International Turf Foundation, he was a director during the formative years of the Ohio Turfgrass Foundation, which honored him with a life membership in December.

MacCurrach is senior agronomist for the PGA Tour, making advance visits to sites for Tour, Senior Tour and Nike Tour events. He also assists Tournament Players Club superintendents in developing their agronomy programs. Before joining the PGA Tour in 1974, he was superintendent at Valley Country Club in Warwick, R.I., and Chevy Chase (Md.) Country Club. He left the Tour to consult Golden Bear, Inc. from 1984-88.

GCSAAPresident Randy Nichols said the two men "have made exceptional contributions to the advancement of the golf course superintendent's profession."

Their careers, he said, "embody the highest traditions of this award."

Spodnik, Nichols said, "has inspired many people throughout his career."

Spodnik feels his main contribution has been "setting the right example" of professionalism and, through chapter involvement, helping agronomy students with scholarships and training programs.

"If your profession is going to grow and be recognized, you have to have professional people presenting that image to the public," he said. "Some very talented young people are joining the industry."

"I can remember the average age in our Northern Ohio chapter was 54. It's down now to 32. That's remarkable, and it means we're attracting new people. People now look at education when hiring, whereas before it was the School of Hard Knocks."

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usually try to bite off more than they can chew," Finick said.

Another Texan who could do well is board of director candidate Tommy Witt of Bent Tree Country Club in Dallas.

"Tommy used to work in the Austin area and knows the courses," Smith said. "He's a very good player. He can't hit the ball out of his own shadow. But he sure can putt."

Several people in the know also mentioned GCSAAPresident Randy Nichols as a likely contender. Nichols and playing partner Dave Powell of Myers Park Country Club in Charlotte, N.C., were among the final-round leaders in last year's tourney in San Diego. On St. Cuyon Golf Club's third hole they had the misfortune of inadvertently putting one another's balls. Both were disqualified.

"You can't talk about who might win the tournament without mentioning Dave Powell. He's won it several times [1985, 88, 90]," said defending champ Richard Stuntz of Alvamar Country Club in Lawrence, Kan.

Stuntz won his first title last year after several near misses. Stuntz plans to play in the Jan. 29 two-player, Best Ball Mixer with neighbor Roger Null (champion in 1983, 90 and '91) of Boone Valley Club near St. Louis.

"Roger's playing real well. He tied for fourth in this summer's U.S. Golf Association Mid-Amateur Championship qualifying round," Stuntz said.

If Powell or Null wins a fourth title, they would move into second in tournament victories. Emil Masciocchi won six championships (1940-41, 1946, 1948-50).