Tom Watson takes course design business on worldwide tour

By HAL PHILLIPS

ASOTOWN, Japan — With four projects poised for opening — including The Nine Hundred Club here — Tom Watson, the architect, has arrived on the Asia-Pacific design scene.

It’s been a deliberate, patient process for Watson, whose Tom Watson Design now has seven projects under construction worldwide. After consulting on various U.S. projects — including the acclaimed ministry’s diplomatic corps UTPK, which owns Moscow CC. A contract was signed and crews began clearing the ground in 1988. The past six years were very long ones, Jones said.

Comparting it to building a golf course throughout the American Civil War, he said: “We had revolutions and changes of government. The currency has gone from one ruble to a dollar to 2,000 rubles to a dollar. Just getting this project done was immensely satisfying and immensely difficult — a lifetime experience.

“I was like skating on ice which was melting.”

The golf course, which Jones called “world-standard and very traditional,” sits on relatively flat terrain in deep woods with marshland and two creeks running through it. It plays 7,000 yards from the back tees.

“It could hold any major championship, and it will,” he said.

The facility sports a clubhouse and an 80-room operating hotel, and a large center is being built for other sports like tennis.

Golf is new to Russia. But already the country has “candidate golfers, young people out of school who do nothing but play golf,” Jones said. “They want to do in golf what they did in hockey.”

The Last Horizon: Moscow opens first golf course

By MARK LESLIE

NAHABINO, Russia — Courses, changes in leadership and incredible fluctuations in currency are all memories now that the new Russia has its first golf course.

Moscow Country Club officially opened here Sept. 2 with prestigious members of the world golf community on hand to see the new mixing with the old.

Golfers will note a unique complex of bunkers at the 2nd green and 3rd tee. “They were built by the Russian soldiers defending against the Germans in 1943,” said Robert Trent Jones Jr., who designed the course in this Moscow suburb. “This is the place where the Russians stopped the advance of the Germans — exactly 18 miles from Red Square.”

Jones invited golf friends, like Royal & Ancient Golf Club’s Michael Bonallack, who recognize the first golf course in the last major country of the world is a significant event, and let’s welcome them in,” he said.

Jones first met on the project 20 years ago with officials of the Russian foreign

Tom Watson Takes Course Design Business on Worldwide Tour

Tom Watson, whose Tom Watson Design now has projects under construction worldwide, took the business on a worldwide tour.

The 1st hole at Moscow Country Club displays the course's deep-woods character.