Zokol enters design field

VANCOUVER, B.C. — Canadian PGA tour professional Richard Zokol ruffled a few delicate feathers in June 1993 when he said high-profile course designers like Pete Dye and Jack Nicklaus designed courses that were too hard for the ordinary player and too artificial in their massive re-arranging of nature.

At the time Zokol made those comments, many said the two-time Tour winner was a golfer, and not an architect, and therefore didn’t really know what he was talking about. That’s changed.

Zokol, 35, is edging into golf course design while still playing professional golf. He’s created a design model for a course at Tower Ranch in Kelowna that has been idling for 18 months. He is also excited about a design bid for the refurbishment of Fraserview, an old Vancouver Park Board course set for a makeover in 1997.

“Fraserview is a masterpiece waiting to happen,” Zokol told The Province. “I’m going to put my heart and soul in it. It will be my launching pad.” The bid will be chosen within a year.

Zokol is still as opinionated as ever. He has said he’s “convinced the leading architects are not building the type of courses people want.”

“Call it the McDonald’s drive-thru, fast-food window golf. I think it’s a shame, all the (U.S. Tour’s) TPC courses. The typical TPC course is just boom it anywhere and putt the eyes out. It’s negatively affecting the typical (U.S.) player.”

Sacramento fast becoming area of plenty

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — Described as one of the most golf-starved areas in the country in the late 1980s, Sacramento County is now in the midst of a busy golf course boom that could make it a golf destination.

Five public courses from Lincoln to Lockeford are scheduled to open in 1995. They include a city-owned course that is Sacramento’s first municipal layout in more than 40 years. On top of that, nine more golf courses are in the planning stages.

Planners and developers said the boom is a coincidence. PGA member Tim Hovanscek says it’s more a case of simple demand. Hovanscek, who will be the golf pro at the Twelve Bridges course in Lincoln set to open in November, recently completed a PGA master’s thesis on developing golf communities that included Sacramento.

“Once you look at the demographics and all the studies,” Hovanscek told the Sacramento Bee, “you could probably build another eight or 10 courses in the area comfortably.”

The new city-owned Bart Cavanaugh Golf Course in nearby Freeport opened for play this July.

Zokol calls his young design company Callidus, which in Latin means knowledge gained through experience.

“I’m not trying to reinvent the wheel, but I want to bring back courses from earlier this century like those of Donald Ross, (A.W.) Tillinghast and Stanley Thompson,” he said. “I have zero experience in course design, but I think I’m sensitive to the needs of the common player. What I don’t know, I’ll get people around me who are the best.”

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