Globetrotting a small (golf) world

**Morocco: Golf void beckons**

*By Hal Phillips*

RABAT, Morocco — Year-round golf destinations on the order of Palm Springs are few and far between in the European marketplace, where seaside resorts rarely feature enough courses to satisfy large numbers of golf-only tourists. The Moroccan business community would like nothing better than to fill this void.

With five projects underway and at least five more in the planning stages, Morocco will soon have more golf facilities than any country in North Africa. Combine these totals with its 14 existing facilities and Morocco — with its miles of coastline along the Atlantic and Mediterranean — can easily compete with Europe's leading warm-weather destinations: Portugal's Algarve region and Spain's Costa del Sol.

"It's only the last few years that Morocco has thought of golf as a pure touristic element," explained Ron Fream, whose 36-hole Bahia project remains in planning north of Casablanca."The foreign expertise is what makes sense if someone handles the market. From a logistic standpoint, it makes sense if someone handles the market in Southeast Asia and someone handles the market in the Middle East two years ago, there were only 36 holes in the entire country: 18 in Alexandria, 9 near Aswan in Southern Egypt, and 9 across from the Cairo Hilton. "There needed to be an 18-hole golf course across from the Hilton in Cairo," Packard explained. "It was run by the British, who wouldn't allow any Egyptians to play on it. When the British left, the Egyptians took it over and..."

**Egypt: Hopes of new money**

*By Hal Phillips*

HELLOPOLIS, Egypt — If Larry Packard keeps his current pace, friends at the American Society of Golf Course Architects may start referring to this venerable designer as "The Pharaoh." With 18 holes in planning here East of Cairo and 18 more under construction across town, near the Pyramids, Packard will have soon designed more than half the golfholes in Egypt, a country he describes as "ripe for development."

Before Packard arrived in the Middle East two years ago, there were only 36 holes in the entire country: 18 in Alexandria, 9 near Aswan in Southern Egypt, and 9 across from the Cairo Hilton. "There needed to be an 18-hole golf course across from the Hilton in Cairo," Packard explained. "It was run by the British, who wouldn't allow any Egyptians to play on it. When the British left, the Egyptians took it over and..."