Benz pioneers surface-to-surface misses

**6,000 miles a mere map/Fax away**

**By Mark Leslie**

LOS GATOS, Calif. — Pushing computerized terrain modeling to a new level that encompasses the technical elements of construction, golf course architect Brad Benz said he is speeding up the construction process by 30 to 35 percent.

"This is light-years ahead of other programs," said Benz from his headquarters here. "It is phenomenal. We keep upgrading and advancing it. With each project, we learn something new."

Benz and his computer-expert sidekick, senior golf course architect David Snead, essentially designed and built two computers for the process. Taking elements of 52 software programs relevant to their needs, they merged them so they communicate with one another.

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 Builders crossing the Pacific in opposite directions

**Kajima exports Japanese savvy while...** Pacific Golf getting it done abroad

**By Mark Leslie**

PASADENA, Calif. — When a company's main diet is building floating airports, tunnels and dams... when it hails from a country where many sites are "engineering and construction nightmares"... when it even designs and builds its own construction equipment, a mere golf facility should present no challenge too big. That is the feeling of global engineering and construction giant Kajima Corp. and its Golf Division manager in America, Tom Buzbee.

"We think the golf business is heading towards centralized golf," said Buzbee from his headquarters here. "It's getting complicated and expensive."

"We're on the ground floor of something I think will change the golf business a little. How much we are able to do depends on how we are able to circulate." Since the construction firm is the "lead" company in projects supported from within each country, he said, and while "probably a little less" is being spent generally, "those spending more are getting more, maximizing use of their money."

He said more competition from contractors, materials and suppliers is helping push costs down.

As far as golf will, in the foreseeable future, be affordable to average citizens in Asia-Pacific, Martin said: "I firmly believe people will pay to play."

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IMPRESSIVE TEAM OPENS GREEN BAY CC

**The Green Bay Country Club, five miles southeast of downtown at the intersection of Interstate 43 and U.S. Route 172, opened to members for play on May 5. The 18-hole Dick Nugent-designed, private course was constructed by Wadsworth Golf Course Construction Co. on rolling ground, unobstructed by homesteads. The natural setting, which features a winding creek, was enlarged by Nugent's addition of four manmade lakes and complemented by the all bentgrass playing surfaces. Water comes into play on 13 of the 18 holes. The par-5, 6th hole is the longest five-par in the state at 634 yards. Western Golf Properties served as consultants during construction. The management team includes club manager Alex Reich; superintendent Marc Durance; professional Mark Hagenbach.**

An American in England

**By Mark Leslie**

LONDON — Call it multinational. Call it an invasion from abroad. But don't call Duke's Dene golf course an Americanization of a British game.

This golf course — although developed by Mizuno-Gumi Co. of Tokyo and designed by American Brad Benz — will be "every bit British" when it opens in July or August, said Benz.

"Yes, it will sport bentgrass greens and tees. But that is the only thing about Duke's Dene (meaning valley) that will not scream out: 'I'm British!'"

"People were concerned how an American could do anything in England that would be remotely close to English golf," Benz said. "I said, 'That's the easy part.' The technical side of solving problems in golf is far easier."

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**uto**
American Benz wins over Brits
Continued from previous page

more challenging and difficult. If you build in England, it will be English inherently. We know the difficulties and how, from a technical perspective, to build those. We've done everything from riveting of bunkers to the subtle contouring that was a condition of project approval."

Duke's Dene was "a contentious project," drawing opposition from area residents when first proposed, Benz said. "There was a natural resistance" among locals to Americans designing the course, said the contractor, Brit Brian Pierson. "The perception of British people of American architects is of major muck shift, huge recontouring. They didn't realize Brad and [senior architect] David Snead were more traditionally British in their attitude."

"But all of a sudden, golf balls started showing up all over the golf course," Benz said. "These characters were smashing golf balls around in the early morning or the evening, thinking this might, in fact, be very good. Now that they see what we're doing, it has been received favorably. In fact, the planning authorities are not happy they cut us back on what we wanted to do."

The developers had proposed building three lakes. Planners nixed that idea. Instead, three underground concrete tanks serve as the water reservoir.

Benz used the valley's "cleavage, its perfectly rounded swales" in creating the course, making it "a special place where we built a hill, a tee, a green, a fairway, a rough, or a bunker surround, we have a blend that fits your needs."

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Computer modeling saving big-time
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"We can use them for all of our needs—from contour development of the playing surface to the technical side—irrigation design, hydraulics of the irrigation system so we can size pipe, drainage, etc.," said Benz. "But, most important, by using computer modeling and getting it to the construction personnel, it speeds up the construction process by 30 to 35 percent."

An example: A bulldozer operator working for British contractor Brian Pierson calls Benz's office in the United States from the construction trailer outside London. "I'm 135 meters in front of the 5th green, 24 meters to its right and 7-1/2 meters behind my dozer. I need that view of the green complex," Benz pulls up information on the computer, prints out the image, and in two minutes the dozer operator has a fax in hand showing how the feature should look.

"It was "hands across the sea."
— Brian Pierson
British golf course builder

Does Benz plan to make the creation available through mass production? "No," he said. "I just want to design golf courses."