Armchair designing for supers

By MARK LESLIE

LAS VEGAS — Superintendents will be the architects and Jack Nicklaus, Rees Jones and Arthur Hills the judges in a golf course design competition run by the American Society of Golf Course Architects (ASGCA).

The ASGCA Golden Anniversary Challenge was the brainchild of society President Denis Griffiths, who said: "We wanted to keep our presentation [at the International Golf Course Conference] fun, light and enjoyable. In the last few years so many of our presentations have gotten a bit heavy, dealing with problems and issues. We've overlooked the creativity and excitement that we as architects get."

Saying that members of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA) daily manage existing golf courses and grow in the new ones, Griffiths asked: "But how often do they get to design one? Here's their chance."

There is a $100 entry fee for the Continued on page 32

Classic Challenge espouses approach friendly to seniors

LEESBURG, Fla. — Incorporating a concept dubbed "The Classic Challenge," Pringle Development is building a golf course here designed for seniors as well as women and most "average" golfers.

The track, called The Monarch, is part of the Royal Highlands community between Leesburg and Clermont.

What the targeted golfers appreciate most in the concept is "our golfer-friendly approach to design," said Len deloer, course architect and president of Classic Golf Group of Winter Haven.

That approach entails "realistic fairway lengths, wider primary and secondary landing areas, larger greens, larger fringe areas for chipping, optional safe and strategic options to every hole and an absence of severe penal hazards that cost strokes even on good shots," he added.

"We have studied what senior golfers want and we have listened to them," deloer said.

"What we've learned is incorporated into The Monarch and every Classic Challenge course in more than 22 distinct design parameters." The 6,000-yard, par-72 layout will offer senior golfers the same sense of challenge they enjoyed when they were younger and playing 7,000-yard courses, he said.

Mid-State Construction of Auburndale is doing the major storm drainage and earthwork.

Cate breaks out on his own in N.C.

Tim Cate has designed golf courses for the past 12 years, mostly with Willard Byrd. The University of Georgia landscape architecture graduate recently completed his first solo project, Panther's Run near Myrtle Beach, which has been nominated for Golf Digest's Best New Public Course of 1996. Cate is designing a second 18 holes for Ed Gore, who developed the Ocean Ridge Plantation community where Panther's Run is located. Cate also has projects in the planning stages in Calabash and Southport, N.C. His office is located in the former temporary clubhouse at Ocean Ridge.

Golf Course News: How did you get started in the golf design business?

Tim Cate: I worked as an intern at Sea Palms on St. Simons Island [Ga.] in the mid-1980s and helped with the drawings for a new nine they were building there. After school, I worked for Edward Pinkney, a landscape architecture firm that was very active in the Hilton Head area. That's when I had the opportunity to work with Willard Byrd and eventually went to work for him.

After two years, Willard put me in charge of his Little River [S.C.] office. I worked on a number of projects including Lion's Paw here at Ocean Ridge. The owner [Gore] was involved on a daily basis and we became good friends. He asked me to go to work for him when he decided to build the last two courses here.

It took me a year to leave Willard. He treated me like a son. I have the utmost respect for him. He was pretty disappointed when I left. Several other well-known architects have apprenticed with Willard — Clyde Johnston, Lee Chang, Mark Hollinger [with J. Michael Poellet's office].

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By MARK LESLIE

KENNEBUNK, Maine — Maine's only Walter Travis-designed golf course, Cape Arundel Golf Club here, is undergoing a long-range facelift to restore its bunkers and greens.

Overseen by Tom Doak and Bruce Hepner of Renaissance Design of Traverse City, Mich., the project began this summer and will continue for about four years, said superintendent Greg Searle.

"The greens had lost close to one-third their original size," Searle said, "and 80 percent will be very, very rectangular." That was the way they were designed in 1922 when Travis redesigned an existing nine holes and added nine to the club, whose members include the likes of former President George Bush.

The original greens were about 4,500 square feet each and had shrunk to about 3,000 square feet. Mowing the grass at tee height of one-half inch, crews have enlarged the greens to their true perimeters.

"We will intensely aerify them and top dress eight or nine times," preparing them for reduced cutting height, Searle said. "We'll get them to green height in two years."

The bunkers, Searle said, had been filled in over the years or had lost much of their character, which was unique in that Travis built flat traps with no flashing. The path to redoing Cape Arundel's 52 bunkers began this summer.

Eleven should be completed by winter, and all the rest will be renovated over the next few years, Searle added.

The reconstruction entails stripping the sod and installing drainage, new walls and replacing the sand, he said.

Design contest

Continued from page 31

The registration package containing such items as a topographical map with a description of the property, the wind elements, soil conditions, and vegetation. Superintendents will sketch their layouts on blank prints, then mail them to ASGCA.

Nicklaus, Jones and Hills will rate the entries during January and bring them to the GCSAA conference to unveil the winners on Feb. 10. During the ASGCA session they will each present what they consider the top design and why.

Winners will be invited onstage to be recognized and will receive their layout framed and autographed by Nicklaus, Jones and Hills. They will also get autographed copies of Golf Has Never Failed Me, a book by architect Donald Ross that the ASGCA published as a 50th anniversary project this year.

In discussing the society's conference presentation, Griffiths said, "We wanted to get back to the essence of golf course design and why we are so fortunate to do what we do. Jack, Art and Rees will talk about design philosophies — not wetlands, not maintenance. Rather, why is this bunker here? What experience are we trying to give the player?"

"Our next intent with the contest was, how can we light a fire under the superintendents? We thought a competition would really involve them. The whole presentation will be so much more meaningful. "I hope you will see the sparkle in these guys' [superintendents'] eyes when we talk about design and design philosophies."

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