Las Vegas cup runneth over with projects

The Las Vegas golf course development market is the hottest in the nation. Here's a rundown of recent openings, near openings and the latest gossip:

THE SURE THINGS

- The Las Vegas Paiute Tribe Project, managed by Landmark Land Co., will eventually feature four Pete Dye-designed courses. Two are complete: The Nu-Wav Kaiv (Snow Mountain) course opened in 1995, while the Tavai Kaiv (Sun Mountain) course opened late last year.

- Landmark is now constructing its own design at the Mojave Valley Resort in Laughlin, Nev., near the borders with California and Arizona. Eighteen holes should open in late summer.

- The Nicklaus-designed South Course at Lake Las Vegas is open. A second course should start construction this year. Third and fourth courses are possibilities at this mega-resort, developed by Trans-Continental.

- The first 18 at Primm Valley Golf Club in Stateline, Nev., are open for play. A second 18 is under construction. Tom Fazio designed both.

- Badlands Golf Club, designed by Johnny Miller, will open another nine holes by September.

- The Rees Jones-designed Seven Hills Golf Club in Henderson will open this summer.

- The second 18 at the TPC at Summerlin — the Canyon Course, designed by Bobby Weed and Ray Floyd — opened for play late last year.

- Perry Dye's Desert Pines Golf Club, developed by the Walters Group, staged its grand opening Feb. 3 (see story next page).

- Cal Olson's Players Club course in Mesquite opened for play late in 1996.

- Sunrise Country Club added a third 18 last summer.

- Mt. Charleston Golf Course, a 9-hole project in Kyle Canyon, opened last year.

- Executive 18s have opened at Sun City Summerlin and Sun City McDonald Ranch in Henderson.

THE GOSSP

- Rhodes Homes plans an 18-hole course amid its subdivision in Elkhorn.

- A municipal course — probably an executive 18 or 9-hole layout — is slated for 100 acres at the corner of Cheyenne and Durango.

- There's talk of a course on land near Nellis Air Force Base, which sports an existing course.

- A Ted Robinson design has been proposed in Mountain Spa.

- There have also been rumors of a second course at Steve Winn's Shadow Creek — this one upscale daily-fee.

Las Vegas had very few pay-for-play options. Several casino-owned courses allowed limited play, while Angel Park Golf Course and The Legacy offered true daily-fee play starting in 1989. But that was it. It seems ridiculous in hindsight — especially with millions of visitors each year. But daily-fee/resort golf was hard to come by until the Nu-Wav Kaiv Course opened in March 1995, followed by the Johnny Miller-designe Badlands Golf Club six months later.

"I did the original feasibility study on the Badlands for [developer] Stan Abrams and Senior Tour Players Development; when it came time for financing, I had moved to NationsCredit and did the financing, too," said Rick Nekoroski, who remains an underwriter at NationsCredit.

"The Nu-Wav Kaiv and the Badlands really started the daily-fee expansion. The daily-fee market has really lagged behind private development in Vegas. And golf has lagged behind everything else in Vegas. I don't know why. It's hard to do a bad deal there. You can charge $140 a round.

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