MacCurrach cops first annual Best Small Builder laurels

By MARK LESLIE

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — Is it in the genes? A young Allan MacCurrach III, whose father Allan Jr. was head agronomist for the PGA Tour, started work on golf courses by filling a 5-gallon pickle bucket with rocks and sticks during construction of TPC at Sawgrass here. Eighteen years later, at the Golf Course Builders Association of America annual banquet in Las Vegas, Feb. 9, Allan III will be presented the first Golf Course Small Builder of the Year award.

It is a fitting early celebration of his 10th year in business, but bittersweet in that his father died Jan. 14, just hours after receiving word of his son’s achievement.

The new Small Builder category in the annual awards competition was created for contractors not in the mega-size category of firms that build eight, 10 or more courses each year.

Last year’s Golf Course Builder of the Year winner Bill Kubly of Landscapes Unlimited said then: “There are some builders who do every bit as good a job as we do, but they only build one, two, or three courses. Too bad they don’t get any recognition.”

Now they can. And the first among them is MacCurrach Golf Construction Inc., whose 1996 clients, in aggregate, rated them 9.75 on a scale of 10. Daylen Inc. of Fresno, Calif., and Tom Roe & Son Construction Inc. of Big Timber, Mont., also finished high in the balloting.

“The best we have ever seen in every respect,” said Country Club of North Carolina General Manager Tom Lee of MacCurrach, whom he hired to totally renovate 18 of his 36 holes in Pinehurst.

Saying that he has never had a paycheck outside of a golf course, MacCurrach credited his first boss, Pete Dye, with infusing excitement into him about the whole golf industry.

“Pete Dye’s legacy is going to be all these great golf courses he’s designed,” he said. “But he has done tremendous things to spur interest in this business. He sure did with me.”

MacCurrach worked with Pete and Alice Dye building the Honors Course in Chattanooga, Tenn., and TPC at Plum Creek (now Plum Creek Country Club). He then earned a two-year associate’s degree in turf management at the University of Massachusetts and landed a job with another key person in his professional development: Jim Holmes, a golf course contractor based in Greensboro, Ga.

“Everything with Pete Dye is fun and exciting and you run on that energy,” he said. “Jim Holmes taught me a great deal about the business side of building golf courses and that there is even a way to make a paycheck at this sort of thing.”

Leaving Holmes, MacCurrach worked with Bob Cupp as project director.

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