

IN BRIEF

ATLANTA, Ga. — Boys & Girls Clubs of America (B&GCA) honored course architect Tom Fazio and two other supporters Dec. 17 with the Champion of Youth Award for outstanding service, support and accomplishments on behalf of the national youth organization. A B&GCA national trustee since 1991, Fazio was instrumental in starting a club in his hometown of Hendersonville, N.C., providing financing for both the club's construction and first year of operations. He is the club's board president and works several days a week with the young people at the facility.

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MYRTLE BEACH, S.C. — Architect Tom Fazio and PGA Tour player Lanny Wadkins will team up to design and build Myrtle Beach's 100th golf course, the Tournament Players Club at Myrtle Beach. The course, to be located on Highway 707 one mile west of Highway 17 South, will replace The Dunes Golf and Beach Club as the future site of the Senior PGA Tour Championship. Wadkins will act as player consultant on the course. Construction is set to begin this spring.

Fla. courses gouged by stormwater assessments?

By PETER BLAIS

SARASOTA, Fla. — Twenty-three Sarasota County courses have filed a lawsuit to block a tenfold increase in their stormwater assessments.

"The new assessments treat golf courses as if they are homes," said Linda Talbot, vice president and managing director of Foxfire Golf Club. "There's no scientific basis for it. But the county com-

missioners look at golf courses as a deep-pocketed source of revenue. Our rates have jumped 850 percent since 1993."

Foxfire's assessment went from \$5,400 three years ago to \$46,605 in 1996, Talbot explained. Sarasota Golf Club's assessment escalated from \$5,400 to \$38,000, while Meadows Golf Course leapt from \$5,400 to \$72,000. Foxfire and Sarasota GC are 18-hole layouts while Meadows is

a 27-hole track.

The new assessments resulted, Talbot said, from a 1989 federal mandate requiring counties to clean up their water and air. Sarasota County spent millions of dollars updating its stormwater systems and has increased assessments to pay off the bonds that financed the upgrade, she said.

The problem is that the increases were passed by county ordinance rather than by voter approval. An Orlando engineering firm developed the rate structure for the county. The county enacted the new structure after conducting hearings in which certain groups, particularly agricultural organizations, lobbied for and received lower rates.

The per-acre rate for groves and orchards, Talbot said, is approximately one-eighth that of golf courses. Tilled agricultural land is assessed at approximately one-fifth the rate of golf courses, she added. Courses were assessed at the same rate as single-family homes, where it is estimated that 14.8 percent of all rainfall runs off and is handled by public sewer systems.

"We know that runoff from golf courses is much less than from homes and much closer to agriculture," Talbot said. "The agricultural industry is well organized in Florida and had representatives sit in on all the county board meetings when they

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KUDOS FOR KERN'S EAGLE KNOLL

Gary Kern-designed Eagle Knoll Golf Club in Jefferson City, Mo., topped off its first year of operations with a kudo from Golf Digest, which named the course one of its "best new affordable courses for 1996." Tim Cox built the course and superintendent Rodney Distler maintains it.

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