

## Are sponsorships missing the mark?

When I arrived at Golf Course News in 1992, there were relatively few companies shelling out the major bucks to financially support golf industry events. Nowadays, you can't swing a dead cat without hitting a corporate sponsorship.

Witness Yamaha's backing of the 1997 Energizer Senior Tour Championship (story page 59). Of course, the pink rabbit people will maintain their "title" sponsorship while Yamaha will become the "sponsored by" sponsor, meaning TV guys will say, "Welcome to the Energizer Senior Tour Championship, sponsored by Yamaha Golf Cars."

In any case, Yamaha's move is no doubt an expensive one and follows hard on John Deere's April decision to sponsor/prop up/salvage the perennially ailing Quad City Classic — which followed not quite so hard on the heels of The Scott Company's determination to sponsor the Senior Tour's Tradition.

You can rest assured a battery of demographic whiz kids has guaranteed these corporations that this sort of exposure is the stuff of sales legend. Nonetheless, I believe central questions remain: Do these sponsorships actually help sales? Are superintendents or course owners actually swayed by these high-profile image grabs?

I'm not convinced.

There are several levels of sponsorships now at play on the

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Hal Phillips,  
editor

## So, we've got a Tiger by the tail — let's just enjoy the ride

Not since Arnold Palmer jumped off the television screens to charm America and win an army of followers has a golfer burst onto the American scene with the impact of Tiger Woods. Just as Arnold awakened the masses to the slumbering game of golf so, apparently, has Tiger.

While surveys had reported that growth in number of golfers had flat-lined the last two years, look for a jump when the 1997 figures roll around. One anecdote that could be repeated nationwide following Woods' victory at the Masters:

"The amount of interest is amazing," said Del Ratcliffe of Ratcliffe Golf Services in Charlotte, N.C. "It's all anyone is talking about. The interest in the game of golf is at an all-time high. It might be bigger than when Arnold came out. There is a huge contingent of younger people enthralled with Tiger. But older adults are wanting to play golf, too. Tiger is already great for the industry."

People who before had shown absolutely no interest in golf, are now talking about how to get started, what they need to do, where to buy clubs, etc., Ratcliffe added.

The interest is broad-based, crossing the lines of skin color, age and income. Yes, the press is taking the racial angle here. But why not just let it happen ... As the revolution came with Arnold Palmer, let it happen with Tiger Woods, and leave the philosophy, the greater-good-to-mankind thing alone. The press and others seem to think this very young man must step forward and shoulder a Jack Robinson-like burden that shouldn't be demanded of anyone, let alone a 21-year-old.

Indeed, those race battles are a thing of the past, according to James Black. It was Black, not Tiger, who was the first black man to shoot 67 in a PGA event at age 21. Black, who heads up the Right Moves for Youths program for at-risk kids in Charlotte, N.C., fired a 67 at the L.A. Open in 1964 and was the first-day leader.

"I think what he [Tiger] is doing is more a positive thing for golf and being an ambassador of golf," Black said. "I don't think he has Jackie Robinson pressure. Those roads have been paved. All he has to do is step in and play."

It was John Shipman who was the first American black man to play in the U.S. Open in the North. That was in 1896 at Shinnecock. It was Black, who played the Tour throughout the '60s, who was the first black golfer to qualify for the U.S. Open in the South. That was in 1964 at Congressional, when Ken Venturi won it and Black received the medal as most improved player, following an 84 with a round of 72.

It was Raiff Botts, Pete Brown and Black who were the first black golfers allowed to use the locker room and snack shop facilities at a tournament course. That was in 1965 in New Orleans. Later it was Charlie Sifford who was the first black man to get a tournament player's card.



Mark Leslie,  
managing editor

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## Letters

### SPIKELESS ADDENDUM

To the editor:

I read with great interest the article by Hal Phillips in your April 1997 edition titled, "Alternative spike industry getting complicated." In particular, I reviewed the U.S. map you published purporting to show "how many courses have banned metal spikes in each state."

On the map you show 28 Colorado golf courses banning metal spikes. You are only off by a factor of four! During March 1997, the Colorado Golf Association contacted all the golf facilities in Colorado and asked what their policy would be for the 1997 season (we started posting scores for handicap purposes on March 13; thus our "season" has begun). There are 105 facilities (representing 114 regulation or executive-length courses) that told us their policy for this season is "spikeless" (67 public facilities, 29 private clubs, 5 resorts and 2 military installations) out of a total of 194 golf facilities in the state (representing 207 courses).

So far as I know, Colorado is one of the states leading the "spikeless" revolution, certainly in terms of the percentage of courses that have banned traditional spikes. Any way you add up the numbers, more than half of the courses in Colorado are spikeless for 1997!

Warren Simmons  
Executive Director  
Colorado Golf Association

Ed. — As was indicated in the April issue, the source which provided the number of spikeless courses nationwide was Softspikes, Inc. of Bethesda, Md.

## ATTENTION READERS!

The mailing address here at Golf Course News has changed slightly. Letters and all manner of correspondence should be addressed to:

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It's extremely important readers acknowledge this change, as automation at the Post Office will no longer handle mail that doesn't use our P.O. box or our new street address. As they say at the phone company: "Please make a note of it."

## Sleeping Bear reissues Thomas masterpiece

By MARK LESLIE

CHELSEA, Mich. — He may have died 65 years ago, but my hat's still off to George C. Thomas Jr., and to Sleeping Bear Press, who had the grit and determination to pursue, and then reprint, the "original parts" of Thomas' famous 1927 classic, *Golf Architecture in America — Its Strategy and Construction*. From the dust jacket through the 342 pages of this gem of a replication is as like the original as possible. And it is worth the buying for anyone interested in golf and course design (see GCN Bookshelf on pages 54-55).

No doubt Thomas, a multimillionaire, subsidized this book.

## BOOK REVIEW

Color plates, double-stamped front cover, high-gloss paper for perfect reproduction of more than 80 photographs and 60 sketches... it must have been a labor of love.

Here was a golf course design genius who, before writing this book, humbly pursued input from the other pioneers of his time — a stable that included Alister Mackenzie, Donald Ross, H. Chandler Egan, A.W. Tillinghast, Hugh Wilson, George Crump and William Bell.

"He dropped his ego and the book is a culmination of all the

other architects' thoughts, though it is Thomas' genius that makes it," said publisher Brian Lewis. "It clearly is the best golf course architecture book ever done and it is incredibly relevant today."

Here we have this master's feelings on the craft of course design. Here he shares his canny understanding of wind, water, grass, drainage, types of soil, seed-bed preparation, all of the factors in golf course design and construction we may think are only modern pieces of knowledge.

There are many jewels in this crown. Yet, with all the fascinating talk of smooth, fading lines and of flowing, graceful curves, etc., my favorite Thomas Tidbit is

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# Thomas on design

Continued from page 14

a trick taught to him by Willie Tuckie Jr. concerning laying out a golf course on a contour map. In Thomas' words: "Your map is, of course, contoured to scale, and you cut out of blotting paper miniature fairways, making them also to the same scale as the map; it is easy to place them on your contour map with thumb tacks, first having your map on a board. You will find that by hinging these little fairways at or about the 200-yard mark, you can make them follow the contours on the map as doglegs or straight holes.

"You can play with them just as if they were picture puzzle units; and by making them of different lengths, all to scale, with their width corresponding to that of fairways from 65 to 80 yards wide, the one shot holes unhinged and the three-shot holes hinged twice, you

will find them of the utmost help."

Read this and you have to love Thomas. Was he prophetic? Hear this: "It is most important for the future of golf in this country that every aid should be given to the building and upkeep of municipal courses, because such will eventually become of the greatest value to the game, and from them we may expect to produce many of our future great players."

Was he a rule-breaker? "To my mind, five one-shotters [par-3s on one course] are not too many. Certainly, a fine test of this type is superior to a poor two-shotter, and, in addition, they usually surpass the two-shotter in character, because ground for them is easily found, and they may be made with less trouble and expense..."

"Furthermore, by saving ground in the use of one shotter, it is easier to secure better two shotters on the balance of a course, and in badly broken country they help the problem of plan."

Was he walled in by tradition or grandeur? "It is possible to make a very short nine-hole approach and pitch course, where the holes will average around 30 yards, all of which will require most skillful playing to secure the average par of 3; and I know of several layouts of this character in crowded districts, which are very interesting and attractive. It would seem that such short pitch-and-approach courses could be easily installed at many clubs, at hotels, and even for private grounds, and give the utmost pleasure, as well as fine practice, for the short game."

Was he humble? Speaking of the concentration of municipal golfers ("There was no nonsense as 'Please move your shadow off the line of my putt,' or 'Stand still, caddie, while I play this shot'), he said: "I admired those golfers; I realized they were far above me as sportsmen and golfers."

Here are some thoughts on:

- Nature vs. man: "...the truly Ideal

course must have natural hazards on a large scale for superlative golf. The puny strivings of the architect do not quench our thirst for the ultimate..."

- Walking: "Broadly speaking, where it is necessary to climb more than two steep hills and more than four medium grades, the course is approaching impracticability..."

- The sun. "The tract to be purchased must have a clubhouse site where several finishing holes on both nines of an eighteen hole course have the sun at their back. The thirty-six hole layout must also finish away from the setting sun. By noting possibilities for the clubhouse site the avoidance of sun holes as finishes is a simple one."

- Art and utility: "In golf construction art and utility meet; both are absolutely vital; one is utterly ruined without the other... If you fail in either, your course is without true merit."



CALENDAR

## May

**5-7** — 51st Annual Southeastern Turfgrass Conference in Tifton, Ga. Contact Dr. Wayne Hanna at 912-386-3360.

**16** — Golf Environments of the 21st Century: Integrating Wildlife Conservation and Golf Courses, a conference coordinated by the U.S. Golf Association and National Fish and Wildlife Foundation at National Geographic Society Headquarters, Gilbert H. Grosvenor Auditorium, 1145 17th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. Contact Dr. Kimberly Erusha, USGA, Golf House, P.O. Box 708, Far Hills, N.J. 07931; 908-234-2300.

**12-18** — American Society of Golf Course Architects Annual Meeting in Toronto. Contact 312-372-7090.

## June

**13-15** — Medfest '97 in Post Falls, Idaho. Contact Brandie Beebe at 800-568-8873.

**18** — SUNY Cobleskill's Turfgrass and Landscape Workshop in Cobleskill, N.Y. Contact Robert Emmons at 518-234-5644.

**27** — Turf-Seed Inc. Field Day 15 in Rolesville, N.C. Contact Melodee Fraser at 919-556-0146.

## July

**29** — Midwest Regional Turf Field Day in West Lafayette, Ind. Contact Midwest Regional Turf Foundation at 317-494-8039.

## August

**19** — Cornell Field Day in Ithaca, N.Y. Contact Frank Rossi at 607-255-1629.

## September

**4-5** — Southwest Horticultural Trade Show in Phoenix.

## October

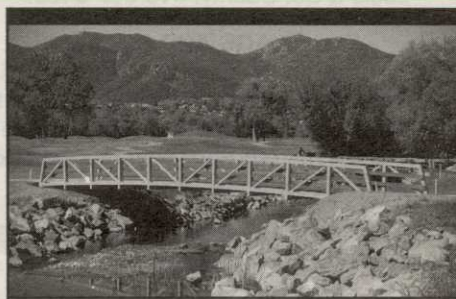
**26-28** — Public Golf Forum in Oak Brook, Ill. Contact Golf Course News Conference Group at 207-846-0600.

## November

**2-4** — 18th Annual Irrigation Association International Exposition and Technical Conference in Nashville, Tenn.

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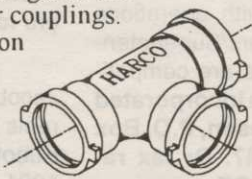
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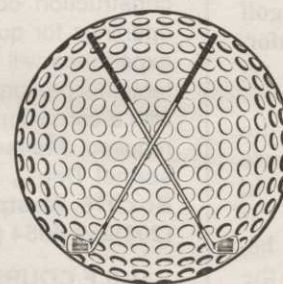
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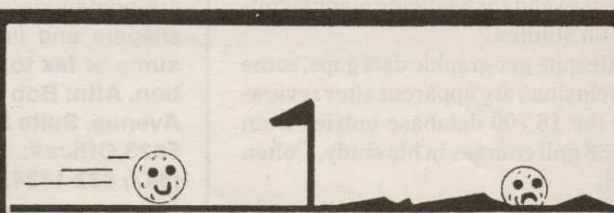
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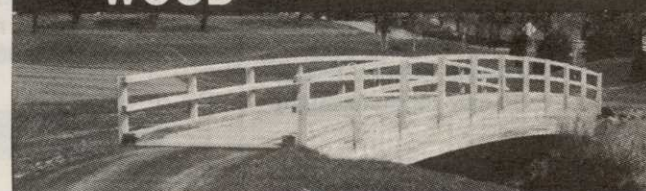
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