**Hot ... Hot ... Hot!**

TPC network takes off with new construction

BY PETER BLAIS

The network of PGA Tour Tournament Player Club facilities will reach the quarter-century mark by the year 2000 with seven courses currently under construction or in planning and others being discussed, according to Chris Smith, director of special projects for the PGA Tour.

The latest course to come aboard is the TPC at Wakefield Plantation in Raleigh, N.C. The Hale Irwin design broke ground Sept. 16 and is the first TPC course to be announced as the future home of a Nike Tour event, Smith said.

"It [the number of TPC facilities] is expanding because of the overall success of the TPC network," said Smith, adding that TPC clubs have garnered a number of operational and design awards.

The TPC network runs the gamut from private to public to resort facilities. With the exception of the TPC at Eagle Trace, which yielded the Honda Classic to the recently opened (1996) TPC at Heron Bay, all the PGA Tour Golf Course Properties owned and/or operated by the PGA Tour host Tour host events.

The design arm of the PGA Tour — PGA Tour Design Services — works with the architect that the developer hires at each facility to make sure the Tour's needs are addressed. A PGA Tour player is usually also involved as a consultant or designer on the project. "Player involvement is important in the design of all TPC courses," Smith said. "All

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**OLD HEAD: New beauty in the Old Country**

BY MARK LESLIE

KINSALE, Ireland — The site sits entirely in County Cork on a peninsula whose cliffs plunge down to the Celtic Sea. It contains what its architect calls "the most natural [golf] hole God ever built." And, now complete, it stands as the model for new golf course construction in this country, passing stringent environmental permitting that stretched over five years and resulted in an ecological sanctuary and protection for some fascinating historic landmarks.

The property is Old Head Golf Links, an 18-hole semi-private course with daily-fee play developed by Irishman John O'Connor, built by local contractor Haulie O'Shea and designed by the American Ron Kirby with consultant Dr. Joe Carr, possibly Ireland's most successful amateur golfer of all time.

"I've never seen anything like this in my life, and others I've talked to agree," said Kirby, who has designed golf courses around the world for more than three decades alongside the likes of Robert Trent Jones Sr., Gary Player.

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**$10M in working capital pumped into Golden Bear**

NORTH PALM BEACH, Fla. — Golden Bear Golf, Inc. has announced completion of a definitive credit agreement with SunTrust Bank for a $10 million revolving credit facility to be used to finance the working capital needed to fund the company's continued growth as well as for general corporate purposes.

"We are pleased to have arranged additional working capital financing, especially for our rapidly growing Paragon Construction division, which through June ... has won contract awards in excess of $90 million for projects expected to be completed over the next nine to 24 months," said Jack Bellinger, president and CEO of Golden Bear Golf, Inc.

"We are also actively pursuing possible additional financing which could take a variety of forms including private placements of debt or equity securities, or bank financing."

Under the terms of the agreement, the revolving credit facility will mature in two years with an option for a one-year extension.

Borrowings will be secured by company assets, excluding certain golf center properties and other assets pledged to secure other long-term indebtedness.
TPC Network
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them rent-free access to a tournament site as opposed to having to find a spot and pay rent. That translates into a bigger charitable donation.

Myrtle Beach is a good example of a community that worked with the PGA Tour on a new facility, Smith said. The announcement for the new TPC of Myrtle Beach facility was held at The Dunes Club, which had hosted the Senior Tour Championship, Smith said. Myrtle Beach Golf Holiday, the major golf marketing organization for the Grand Strand, is a partner in building of the course.

What does the PGA Tour look for in deciding on a new TPC site? “Our mission,” said Keith Tomlinson, vice president of TPC Development, “is to be in locations that allow us to improve existing tournaments, provide a location that is designed for spectators from the outset, challenge the Tour pro and entertain the average golfer. We also provide a site where the tournament sponsor doesn’t have to pay a rental fee. Charities are generally

The Network
The PGA Tour owns and/or operates 14 golf facilities, has seven under construction or planned, has four domestic facilities licensed, but not owned or operated by the PGA Tour, and has six licensed international facilities. They include (opening or projected-opening date in parentheses):

**Owned and/or operated**
- TPC at Sawgrass, Ponte Vedra Beach, Fla. (Oct. 1980-Stadium, Feb. 1987-Valley); TPC at Eagle Trace, Coral Springs, Fla. (Dec. 1983); TPC at River Highlands, Cromwell, Conn. (June 1984); TPC at Prestancia, Sarasota, Fla. (Jan 1985-Club, Jan 1987-Stadium); TPC at Avenel, Potomac, Md. (Oct. 1986); TPC at Scottsdale, Scottsdale, Ariz. (Dec. 1986); TPC at Southwind, Memphis, Tenn. (March 1988); TPC at Piper Glen, Charlotte, N.C. (Aug. 1988); TPC at Michigan, Dearborn (1990); TPC at Tampa Bay, Fla. (Jan. 1991); TPC at Summerlin, Las Vegas (Nov. 1991); TPC at Heron Bay, Coral Springs, Fla. (May 1996); TPC at The Canyons, Las Vegas (Oct. 1996); TPC at Sugarloaf, Atlanta (May 1997).

**Under construction or planned**

**Licensed - Domestic**
- TPC at The Woodlands, Texas (May 1984); TPC at Los Colinas, Irving, Texas (May 1986); TPC at PGA West, La Quinta, Calif. (Jan. 1986); TPC at Snoqualmie, Seattle (1999).

**Licensed - International**
- TPC Botch, Tochigi Prefecture, Japan; TPC Mito, Ibaraki Prefecture, Japan; TPC Mission Hills, Kanchanaburi, Thailand; TPC Mission Hills, Kao Yai, Thailand; TPC Mission Hills, Shenzhen, China; TPC Ichihara, Chiba, Japan.

the sponsor. If we provide a rent-free facility, that leaves more for prize money and charitable donations. So our primary focus for development is in areas where the tournament has outgrown its present facility and needs a new spot to reach its potential.

Tomlinson said he also gets occasional calls from developers saying they have a site, although the local sponsor may not be considering a change. “We’ll see if it makes sense for the tournament and whether it can operate the other 51 weeks as well,” he said.

Much of the growth in the TPC network started during the mid-1980s was tied to the need for sites to hold PGA Senior Tour events. For example The TPC of Michigan hosts the Ford Senior Players Championship, the TPC at The Canyons the Las Vegas Senior Classic and the TPC of Myrtle Beach the Energizer Senior Tour Championship. Sites that have given up tournaments to the new facilities are usually ready to do so, Tomlinson said. They have generally benefited from the marketing exposure the event gave the older course. Now that memberships and/or tee sheets at the non-TPC tourney site are full, giving up the course for tournament week often proves an inconvenience.

The PGA Tour has traditionally opened two to three new TPC facilities annually, Tomlinson said. The Tour hopes to increase that to four to five a year, doubling the number of facilities within the next five to seven years.

The PGA Tour wants to be at least a part owner and operator of all the new operations it opens, Tomlinson said. “There are few if any brand names in the golf business,” he said. “We [TPCs] have some brand name recognition.”