

ROCKIN' GOOD TIME...



Belgrade's boulders: From pain to pleasing

By MARK LESLIE

BELGRADE LAKES, Maine — The glacier taketh away and the glacier giveth... That could be the motto at Belgrade Lakes Golf Course here, where boulders as large as a truck have turned construction from mundane to sometimes nightmarish but where, nevertheless, the pain has been transformed into a gain.

"The actual site, with its vast views, and particularly the addition of the rock, I think, has been a major thrust of the interest of the golf course," said British golf course architect Clive Clark.

"I prefer the traditional look but with features," Clark said. And he got those "features" in spades — and backhoes full, for that matter — at Belgrade Lakes.

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Boulders, like those at Belgrade Lakes Golf Club (above), or ledges, like those at The Ledges Golf Club (below), offer great challenges — and rewards for builders and designers.



Bedrock: A foundational element at The Ledges

By MARK LESLIE

YORK, Maine — "We've got it, let's flaunt it," was Brad Booth's attitude when he tackled his design of The Ledges — a course with stunning 200-foot elevation changes built on a foundation of bedrock.

"We've used lots of dynamite," Booth said from his Ogunquit office, "and lots of big equipment. There is one 35-yard rock truck, three 25-yarders, four or five excavators, six or seven bulldozers, some as big as the biggest D-8."

Unlike the round boulders of Belgrade Lakes Golf Club, Horizon Golf Construction's crews at The Ledges are dealing with the squarish ledge left by dynamiting cuts as deep as 20 feet.

"We're incorporating the ledge into the design in many different ways in multiple places," Booth

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BRIEFS



HARBORSIDE HONORED

CHICAGO — The American Association of Port Authorities (AAPA) has presented the Illinois International Port District a 1997 Environmental Improvement Award for its Harborside International Golf Complex. "The Port of Chicago demonstrated superior leadership in developing a reuse plan for an old landfill that balanced the port's role in providing economic development, environmental stewardship and recreational opportunities — and ultimately developed a world-class golf course," said AAPA's Tom Chase. The course was designed by Dick Nugent Associates.

AURORA TABS KAVANAUGH

AURORA, Colo. — The city of Aurora, Colorado/Golf Division has retained Kenneth M. Kavanaugh Golf Design, of Tucson, Ariz. for a new, 18-hole project called The Homestead at Murphy Creek.

GOLF COURSE NEWS

Mungeam hits stride in design

Like many young architects today, Mark Mungeam started his career in construction with Moore Golf, Inc. and Prince Contracting Co. before joining the Uxbridge, Mass.-based design firm of Cornish and Silva in 1987. Eight years later, he was made a full partner. A member of the ASGCA, Mungeam's design credits include the acclaimed Links at Hiawatha Landing near Cooperstown, N.Y., and Shaker Hills Golf Club in Harvard, Mass., named by Golf Digest as the second best public course to open in 1991. He also directed the Cornish, Silva and Mungeam renovation at Olympia Fields in preparation for this year's U.S. Senior Open.

QA
&A

Golf Course News: You recently finished a high-profile renovation job at Olympia Fields. How extensive was the make-over?

Mark Mungeam: I would say that, as make-overs go, it was fairly extensive. We revaluated and recut all the bunkers on the North Course. In the process of recutting, we also revised the fairway contours. We rebuilt many tees, on some holes redoing the entire tee complex. On others we added back tees. All the greens



The 18th hole at Shaker Hills Golf Club in Harvard, Mass., which made an indelible mark for its designer, Mark Mungeam, before he became a partner in Cornish, Silva and Mungeam.

were restored and we completely rebuilt the 6th hole, moving the green back some 30 yards.

GCN: Was there added pressure knowing a Senior Open would be played there, on national television?

MM: Well, there wasn't when we started in the early 1990s. We were retained to renovate the North and South courses at Olympia Fields, and we didn't know there was a Senior Open in the offing. After it was named the 1997 Open site, there was a little added pressure. Not much. Obviously, we would try to do as good a job as possible, regardless of the tournament

prospects. It added another level of interest but it didn't change how we went about our work. First and foremost, we wanted to make it a more playable, attractive course for the membership.

GCN: How did it look on television?

MM: As far as I was concerned, it looked great! Maybe I shouldn't say this, but it looked better on TV — the alignment of the bunkers, how the fairways related to them, made for a great TV picture, especially from the blimp. We moved or added bunkers further out to account for modern length; the first hole is an example of that.

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The Ledges

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said. "We're building a lot of rock walls. A number of the tees are built up with rock wall as opposed to elevating and grading them out. Some tees are built on top of huge ledge outcroppings 20 to 30 feet high. In carries over wetlands — where plant material can grow high and get in the line of play — we've surrounded the wetlands with elevated walls, so when the brush grows up, it will be no higher than the wall banks."

Belgrade boulders

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While engineers' reports indicated they would find "surface rock" on the site, one of the partners, John Alford, said: "The running joke is, We didn't realize 'surface rock' ran 10 to 15 feet deep. Where we dug out a pond on the 3rd and 6th holes, the boulders ran deeper than that."

Clark and the construction crew piled the mountain of boulders into 6-, 12-, 20-foot-high walls edging the fairways, or undergirding tees, or banking ponds into visually stunning effects on the panoramic property.

The heavy equipment and man-hours necessary for dealing with the boulders will double or triple the cost of the 18-hole public course, which will open the first nine next summer. But Clark wouldn't trade the site, "not as long as you have the budget to take care of it," he said. "All in all, it's an advantage."

The aesthetics of the boulders help set it apart, he said.

"I think it's a very nice splash of color between the fairway and out-of-bounds areas," he said. "You have brilliant green fairways set against the creamy color of the rock. There is a lot of pattern and texture and variation. It helps define your hole."

This is Clark's first American design after more than 20 in Europe, and the terrain and boulders offer a challenge not found in his native England or his second home, La Quinta in the desert of Southern California. "Golf course design is like art in that the type of material or the artists' canvas and oils might be slightly different," he said, "but the concept is the same."

"In Spain we had a rocky site, but that was mild. This is serious stuff here. These are boulders. Some must be about 25 feet high in areas. They tower above you."

Yet, they have an advantage over something like lava, Clark added. "With lava, you're stuck with its texture and shape. We were able to place the rock in different ways and in various shapes ... up and down as well."

"I love features — brooks, lakes, bunkers, rough, trees, anything that causes trouble — on a golf course," Clark said. "One of the problems as a designer, is that you have to be very careful that the feature doesn't crowd the course, making the fairways too narrow or affecting the landing areas too badly."

Indicative of the course, the tee on the par-3 8th hole sits on a ledge bank 30 or 40 feet above a four-acre pond. A peninsula green pushes into the pond, whose edges all around are a stone face.

Having cut his teeth on ledge while working with Bartlett Construction building Green Mountain National in Vermont and the Shattuck Inn in Jaffrey, N.H., Horizon Golf Construction President Lenny Myshraal is undaunted by the site. "We haven't used much dynamite yet — about 3,000 pounds," he said. "But we've got a ways to go."

Watching a large excavator pull apart ledge, Pat Rocheleau of the developer, York Highlands Corp., said: "The more he can do that, the less it will cost me."

The ledge has both raised cost on this project in some ways and lowered it in others. Dynamiting, moving and building walls with it has cost time and money. But it will also save as the source for crushed stone on the cart paths and as the material for fill in some spots.

"The obvious difference between moving ledge and, say, dirt on a flat site," said Booth, "is how movable it is."

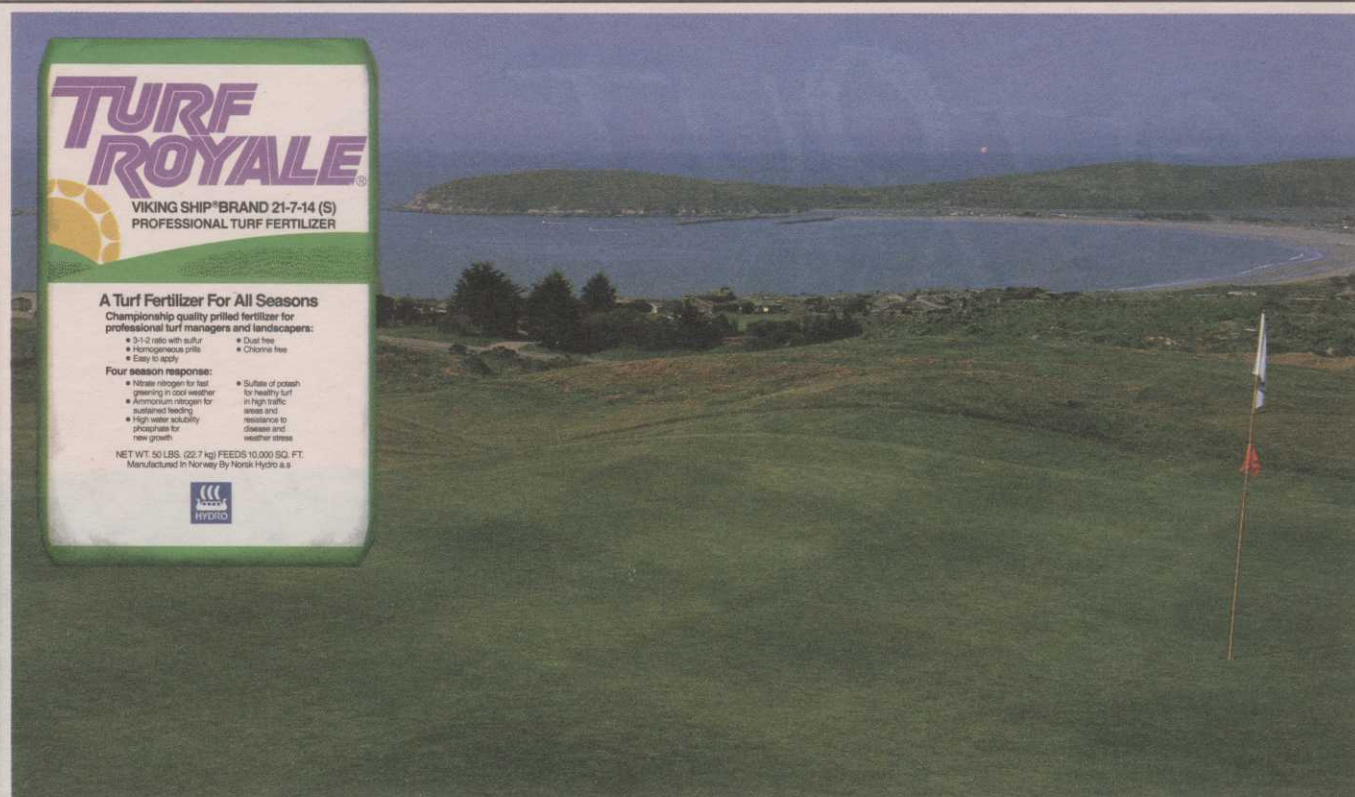
When you blow it up, ledge is as movable as anything. A D-8 will push it as if it were pushing dirt.

"It costs about \$1 to \$1.50 a yard to move material, and that cost increases the farther you move it. We use it as close as we can."

So, has the problem — ledge — been turned into an asset?

"Absolutely," Booth said. "This golf course will be unbelievably dramatic."

The public will be able to judge when the front nine opens in late summer 1998 and the back, nine opens in spring of 1999.



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