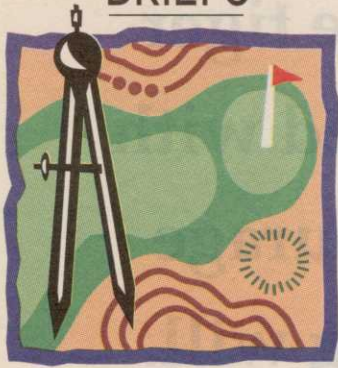


BRIEFS

**DÖSCHER JOINS NORTHEAST GOLF**

FAIR HAVEN, N.J. — Chris Doscher, a landscape architecture graduate from the University of Massachusetts, has joined the firm of The Northeast Golf Co. At UMass, he received the Honor Award for the American Society of Landscape Architects for Outstanding Achievement in Design. As a design associate he will assist design development and construction documentation for new golf course and renovation projects.



Chris Doscher

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VAIL PLANS BEAVER CREEK COURSE

VAIL, Colo. — Vail Resorts, Inc. has announced plans to invest approximately \$59 million for the upcoming winter season in resort improvements for its Vail, Breckenridge, Keystone and Beaver Creek mountain resorts. Included are a new golf course and high-speed four passenger chairlift at Beaver Creek. Approximately \$9 million is planned to be invested at the Beaver Creek resort. Preliminary planning for the golf course development near Beaver Creek is awaiting local government approval.

PRIMM VALLEY OPENS 2ND FAZIO

NEVADA — Primm Valley Golf Club, home of the Tom Fazio-designed Lakes Course, has opened its Desert Course off Interstate 15, four miles south of Primadonna Casino Resorts' properties at the Southern Nevada/California border.

In contrast to the lush landscaping and water features of the Lakes Course, Fazio created a more challenging playing option at the arid Desert Course, with narrower fairways melding into natural desert landscape with many varieties of cacti and palm.

ASGCA DONATES TO 3 PROJECTS

CHICAGO — As part of its second annual President's Grant Program, the American Society of Golf Course Architects Foundation has presented grants to the Indiana Golf Foundation (IGF), Golf Course Superintendents Association of America and Tufts Archives. IGF will use its grant to help launch its new golf camp for at-risk children. The GCSAA grant is for its "Investing in the Beauty of Golf Campaign." Tufts Archives in Pinehurst, N.C., houses many drawings and works from Donald Ross and others.

GOLF COURSE NEWS

Colorado golf boom keeps on ticking

By ALLEN BEST

In 1992 Fred Green wanted to build a membership-driven golf course about 15 miles west of Vail, Colo., the nation's largest ski area. As a hedge, he drafted plans to first excavate the rich gravel deposits.

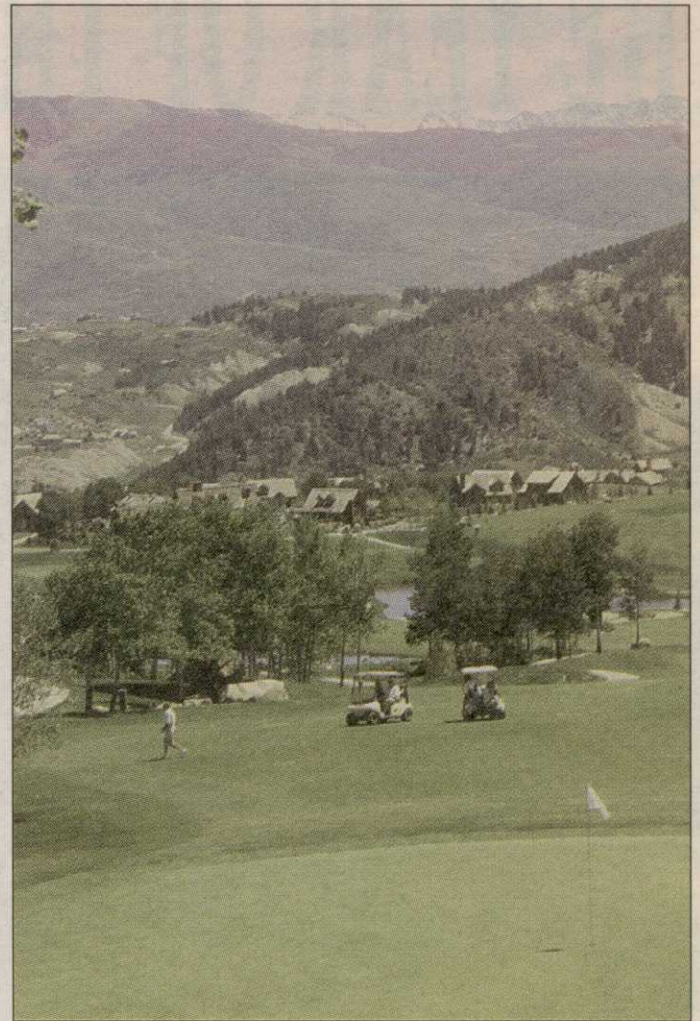
Green started selling memberships at \$50,000, quickly upped it to \$80,000 and, soon, greens overlaid the gravel. The membership roster is full at 250, with invitation-only membership fees now believed to cost well in excess of \$100,000. Presence of a railroad track bisecting the course never hampered sales. There is no associated housing nor hotel.

That course, Eagle Springs, is among the most startling success stories in a valley exploding with golf courses. Five courses were built in the first 30 years after the Vail Ski Area opened in 1962. Five more (including a short course) have opened in just the last four years. But at least 10 others are planned, or double the number already built, in this valley of 30,000 people where it has snowed twice on the Fourth of July during the 1990s.

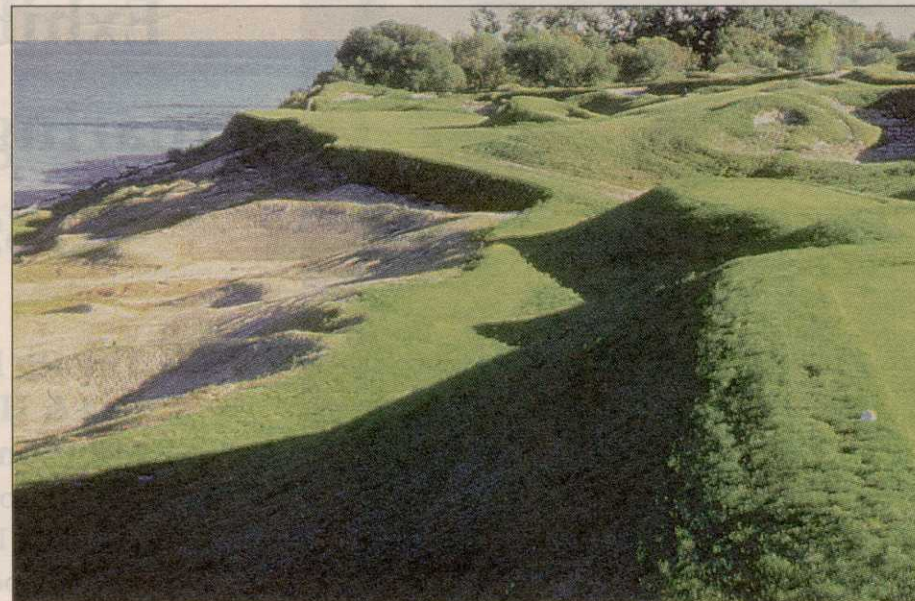
A parallel boom is occurring nearby in the 42-mile-long Roaring Fork Valley, home to the Aspen and Snowmass ski areas. The first two courses opened in the 1970s, and weren't followed until the Maroon Creek Club opened in 1994; memberships cost \$150,000. Today's 117 holes of golf in that valley could grow to 176 by the next millennium.

Summit County, another enclave of ski resorts along the Interstate 70 corridor, has three courses that will be supplemented by two and possibly more. Elevation there is 8,000 to 9,000 feet, frosty in all months save for July.

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Cordillera Resort outside Vail.



The 17th hole at the Pete Dye-designed Whistling Straits outside Kohler, Wis.

Whistling Straits even stuns Dye

KOHLER, Wis. — "In my lifetime I've never seen anything like this. Anyplace. Period." Speaking "with some degree of modesty," architect Pete Dye was describing his Whistling Straits, a links-type course on the shores of Lake Michigan which opened for public play on July 7.

Stretching along two miles of Great Lakes shoreline, the 18-hole facility pays homage to the origins of golf by stressing that it is a walking course only and will have caddies. The PGA of America has already selected Whistling Straits as host site for the 1999 Club Pro Championship, a national title tournament.

Whistling Straits is the latest addition to the resort complex owned by Kohler Co. and centered in the Village of Kohler that already includes Dye's Blackwolf Run, and the AAA Five Diamond resort

hotel The American Club. Blackwolf Run hosted the U.S. Women's Open Championship in July.

Offering a view of the Great Lake from each of its 18 holes, Whistling Straits has fescue fairways and massive sand bunkers. It weaves 14 holes in nearly uninterrupted sequence along the two miles of lakefront. Eight holes hug the shoreline where the Straits Course plays from just above beach level, then rises nearly 80 feet to bluffs and elevated berms that provide panoramic views of the watery horizon.

The par-72 Straits Course plays to 7,288 yards from the championship tees. Each hole has five tee placements. Occupying a 560-acre site, Whistling Straits will eventually offer two 18-hole courses. Joining

Continued on page 36

Player: Keeping busy in Asia & busier in U.S.

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa — After scaling back his group office in Singapore as a result of the economic downturn, Gary Player remains bullish on Asia as well as the growth of the public golf market around the world. GCN recently caught up with the living legend to discuss the Asian situation and the current project in his own backyard.



Gary Player

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Golf Course News: Now that you've scaled back the group office in Singapore, where do you see your position in the Asian market?

Gary Player: "We're still very positive about Singapore. It's a very important part of our presence in Asia. As things come back to normal there's no doubt that we'll return in full force. I continue to make my visits and I refuse to disregard the market just because they're having a few problems. As far as the market stands now, we still have projects going and we're optimistic. But that's life, isn't it, trials and errors."

GCN: How will the Asian golf market get back on its feet?

GP: I think public golf for every market, not just Asia, is going to be key. A man like Tiger Woods has had a great influence. It's so terribly important that a young man like Tiger, who's in such an important role, visit Asia as well as South Africa and other re-

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Colorado golf boom continues

Continued from page 31

Most courses here are built to sell part-time homes. Course-building costs are extraordinarily high, playing seasons uncommonly short. Within these economic bookends is one of the most exclusive real-estate markets in the country.

Cordillera Resort, located 15 miles west of Vail, illustrates the

pure real-estate market. Critics scoffed when the resort opened in the late 1980s because ski slopes were a 20-minute drive away. Sales initially were sluggish. But then a rugged Hale Irwin-designed course opened in 1994. Real-estate purchasers acquired golf privileges. Homes of \$1 million-plus have skyrocketed. Cordillera is now planning

its third course, this one 40 minutes away, to absorb overflow demand from existing real-estate sales, and also to extend the playing season.

At Country Club of the Rockies, site of the Jerry Ford Invitational Golf Tournament for more than a decade, there are more homes than the 340 golf memberships. Consequently, homeowners with memberships can tack \$100,000 to home prices.

Membership itself costs another \$100,000. Sellers are getting those prices because during the four- to five-month playing season, conditions are about as good as they get, said course pro Tom Apple.

Skiing remains the most important lure for Vail Associates, which operates two ski areas. But, golf has become increasingly important in selling hotel rooms and real estate. A case in

'Look at us as being one of the nation's hottest markets as far as used tee times.'

— Mike Steiner
Eagle Springs

point: Fifty-two lots along ski runs at the company's Bachelor Gulch development sold for an average \$807,000 during a three-hour lottery sale in 1995.

Golfing guarantees to help shove prices into that stratosphere. Accordingly, the company plans a second golf course, and would love to find land for a third.

Mountain courses are more expensive to build, said Jim Thompson, president of Vail Resorts Development Group. Land sells for about \$10,000 per acre. Also, whereas 200 acres might be enough at Scottsdale, 475 acres will be needed at Thompson's next course on picturesque Bellyache Ridge, where there are more ravines, problem geology areas, and wildlife issues.

"Because of the terrain, they're expensive to build," said Thompson. "You're moving a lot of earth, and you're mitigating a lot of geology issues."

High-end customers expect high-profile architects, at a minimum cost of \$750,000. Finally, building costs soar in busily building resort communities. "Add it all up, and it costs \$25 million to \$30 million to build a course, and that's with a modest clubhouse," said Thompson. "Plus, one of the high-end 18-hole courses costs \$1 million a year to operate."

Revenue is limited at higher-elevation courses by a 100-day season. Is it any wonder that 32,000 rounds was tops in the valley last year? That was at the municipal Vail Golf Club, which has \$80 green fees. Some private courses charge \$195 rounds, and they play between 7,500 and 11,000 rounds.

Frost-free seasons in the Vail-area courses range from 60 to 95 days. Elevations range from 8,300 to 6,000 feet.

"We play everywhere from April 15 to Oct. 15," said Eagle Springs golf pro Mike Steiner. "Anything on either side of that is a bonus."

About 20 miles west and 1,000 feet lower, Cotton Ranch head pro Chris Woolery reported an inaugural playing season that started in late February. Advertisements in March promoted morning skiing and afternoon golfing.

There's enough warmth to grow grass, said Woolery, but not enough humidity to grow other problems.

Continued on next page

GOLF COURSE NEWS

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Weiskopf eyes '99 opening for Cedar River

By PETER BLAIS

BELLAIRE, Mich. — Tom Weiskopf expects to make a big splash near the shore of Lake Bellaire when his new Cedar River Golf Club opens at Shanty Creek/Schuss Mountain here in June 1999.

Planting and sodding should be completed by late this summer at Cedar River, the fourth championship-length layout at the northwest Michigan resort, joining Summit Golf Club (designed by Bill Diddel), Schuss Mountain Golf Club (Warner Bowen/Bill Newcomb) and The Legend Golf Club (Arnold Palmer).

Shanty Creek President and Chief Executive Officer Terry Schieber believes Cedar River will rival The Legend — which has been rated one of the top resort courses in the Midwest — as Shanty Creek's main attraction. Green fees will be a comparable \$125.

"Cedar River is Tom Weiskopf's first design in Michigan and he's going all out to make it a top-flight course," Schieber



The 7th hole of the new, Tom Weiskopf-designed Cedar River Golf Club.

said. Schieber believes the layout itself is at least the equal of Boyne USA's Bay Harbor Golf Club, the Art Hills' design in Petoskey overlooking Lake Michigan that is receiving rave reviews.

"This [Cedar River] may be a better layout, but it's tough to compete with the lakeside setting of Bay Harbor," Schieber said.

Cedar River, which affords views and

occasionally plays along its namesake, is a wooded layout with generous landing areas and greens averaging 6,500 square feet.

Greens, tees and fairways are planted with Providence bentgrass. The roughs are Kentucky bluegrass.

The course sits within 580 acres, with housing lots along parts of it. Pittman, Poe & Associates is the landscape plan-

ner and H&D (Hodgkiss & Douma) Inc. of Petoskey the course builder.

Shanty Creek selected Weiskopf, who has been designing courses since 1983, because of his design ability and to differentiate the Cedar River track from others in golf-rich Northern Michigan. Michigan led the country in new course openings for four consecutive years between 1993 and 1996.

"Just about every major designer in the country has a course in this area," Schieber noted. "The Weiskopf name will help us stand out."

Among Weiskopf's award-winning courses (designed in cooperation with Jay Morrish) are Loch Lomond Golf Club, Luss, Scotland; Troon Golf & Country Club, Scottsdale, Ariz.; Forest Highlands, Flagstaff, Ariz.; Double Eagle Golf Club, Galena, Ohio; and Troon North Golf Club, Scottsdale.

The construction superintendent is David Faucher, a 1998 winner of the GCSAA's Environmental Steward Award while overseeing The Legends. Faucher plans to stay on as head superintendent once Cedar River opens.

"Making Dave the superintendent at Cedar River was one way for us to keep him around a little longer," Schieber said.

Prince Edward Island government partners with resort for course

By MARK LESLIE

BRUDENELL, Prince Edward Island, Canada — The second course at Brudenell River Resort is being built in this oceanside resort community.

Developed by PEI Golf in partnership with the Prince Edward Island provincial government, the course sits on 200 acres of Brudenell River Provincial Park.

Jason Straka of Hurdzan/Fry Golf Course Design said in July that all the

holes were cleared, nine were shaped and construction was on target for an opening early next August.

"We have the best of both worlds," he said. "On several holes you feel like you're on top of the world, playing along the Brudenell River with panoramic views. The other holes are in dense woods, giving an extremely secluded feeling where you can't see from one hole to another."

The designers had so much land to

route "that we didn't have to disturb much, other than tree clearing," said Straka, who is working with architect Dana Fry on the project. "Boundaries for the wetlands were established and we avoided them as much as possible."

The terrain, Straka said, is surprisingly rolling for this island. Several tee shots drop more than 20 or 30 feet.

The layout carries over a few deep ravines, a finger of the river and several wetlands. Yet, the layout shrinks from

7,200 to 4,900 yards over five sets of tees, the forward ones allowing for play around the hazards.

The facility will contain a learning center consisting of three practice holes, a short-game area, practice range and putting course.

Kings County Construction, which remodeled the adjacent course working with course architect Graham Cooke, is building the new track. Shapers are Ernie and Mike Overary.

Colorado boom

Continued from previous page

Woolery, who left Austin, Texas, three years ago, reports golfing in the Vail and Aspen areas is second to none, "and I've played all the prominent places in the country. With the name Vail attached to it, there's an expectation of quality."

The Vail area is unique in the national golfing boom because of high prices combined with scarce tee times, Steiner said. "Look at us as being one of the nation's hottest markets as far as used tee times."

That scarcity has ski and resort company executive Thompson pondering new ways to give tee times to client hotels. Instead of allocating blocks of time, he said, hotel guests may have to reserve times seven days in advance. Unbooked times could then be used in other ways.

How soon will this boom end?

The hunch in Vail and Aspen seems to be that private land will be gone before the last of vigorous and affluent baby boomers.

That has some developers eyeing the federal tracts that compose 80 percent of the land.

GOLF COURSE NEWS

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