Audubon cracks down on broken promises

By MARK LESLIE

SELKIRK, N.Y. — Probation. Excommunication. These terms that embody enmity are now part of the lexicon at Audubon International (AI), long a bastion of teamwork and cooperation.

While the majority of the 66 golf courses in the 4-year-old Audubon Signature Program are committed to it and swear by its effectiveness, others have fallen off the bandwagon, or perhaps were never aboard, according to AI President Ron Dodson.

Lamenting the fact that he had to, first, “place on probation,” then “excommunicate” one of the eight fully certified Audubon Signature facilities, Dodson said: “Our strongest program is only as strong as our weakest one, and we can’t allow people to make our name look weak. We already are being accused by other environmental groups of kowtowing to the golf course industry and giving away the Audubon name. But we don’t. People work for it and are proud of it.”

However, when The Champions Club at Summerfield in Stuart, Fla., did not correct some problems targeted in AI’s biannual audit, the club and the organization parted ways.

“We wrote and told them they are no longer to use Audubon International’s name or logo,” Dodson said. “They are to take their signs down and the Audubon print off the wall, and take all references to the Signature Program and Audubon International off their advertising materials and so on. More than that, we can not do.”

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Child’s Play in Kentucky

By MARK LESLIE

LAWRENCEBURG, Ky. — A “kid’s course” built within the existing layout may prove a key option for golf facilities around the country, now that Bob-O-Link Golf Course has made the concept a reality.

On Father’s Day, Bob-O-Link opened its Kids Course within the 22-year-old track, thanks to owner Jack Ridge, who is also a golf course architect and president of a children’s golf-product company, Club Pro Products in Louisville.

“Golf has missed the boat,” Ridge declared. “Everybody’s mindset has been junior golf — teenagers — but no one has thought of kids up to 10 years old. That’s what separates this course.”

The idea for the Kids Course, he said, stemmed from parents who bought Club Pro clubs and bags, then asked Bob-O-Link Golf Course member Buddy Flora tends the 5-foot-tall flagstick for son Buddy Jr. as he putts into a Kids Course cup.

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Estate courses on the rebound

By MARK LESLIE

SUGAR GROVE, Ill. — Disappointed in Augusta National’s famous par-3 12th hole at Amen Corner, Jerry Rich came home to his 2,000-acre estate and built what he calls a better one. Disappointed in Augusta’s 200-yard-long Magnolia Lane, he built a Magnolia Lane of his own. It meanders across two miles.

This is Rich Harvest Links. This is Jerry Rich’s dream — a dream that grew from the current rage of building putting greens, and entire golf holes, on a person’s property is not new, but rather a second coming of sorts. Two decades after Sutphen wrote those words in The Outing Magazine, Donald Ross laid out Overhills Golf Course in the last 20 years.

— Van Tassel Sutphen in The Outing Magazine, 1906

The back 40: Not your typical backyard

Seven or eight years ago, when the madness was at its height, many so-called courses were laid out over private grounds.

— J. Michael Poellot, golf course architect
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Kids course
Continued from page 15 where they could take their children to play the game.

“I always suggested a par-3 course or driving range,” Ridge said. “Where else was there?”

“We’re very excited because this will be testing the waters [for similar, future projects],” said Mike Ridge, his cousin Jack’s vice president in Ridge Golf Design and assistant to the president of Club Pro. “The whole idea behind this is to let kids experience the game and fall in love with it by actually playing it. It gives them goals, thrills, the challenge, a perception of the game. They’re hitting a dozen shots to the green with daddy. They want a chance to make a par or birdie. That’s what will keep them coming back.”

Although they fought horrible weather, the Ridges said a layout like the Kids Course at Bob-O-Link could be built in a span of two weeks in perfect weather. At Bob-O-Link they simply added far-forward tees on 13 holes and used five ladies’ tees that are in strategic places, then built bunkers situated for children’s play. Kid-sized benches and ball-washers at the tees, and 5-foot-high flag sticks for a second set of kids’ holes on the greens add to the built-for-children feeling, as do the kids’ scorecards.

The opening on Father’s Day was special, Mike Ridge said, because “we wanted the kids to feel it is their course in a sense that Dad is their guest.”

Jack Ridge explained: “By installing new sets of tees and the strategic location of new bunkers, hazards and mounding, a routing was being created which, in essence, resulted in a course within a course, with its own distinct character that does not compromise the integrity of the existing full-sized layout.”

A PGA professional who has given hundreds of lessons to children, Jack Ridge designed the Kids Course with a good feel for how far they hit the ball. He and Mike figured 85 yards on a drive. Therefore, a hole from 85 to 160 yards long is a par-4. Longer than 160 yards is a par-5. An adults’ straightaway par-4 of 385 yards can also be a double-dogleg 275-yard par-5 for kids. Bob-O-Link’s Kids Course is a par-74 layout measuring 3,100 yards. Looking forward to other kids’ courses, Mike Ridge said more than one set of children’s tees can be built per hole — perhaps having one for 3- to 6-year-old and one for 7- to 10-year-olds.

Flat pipe
Continued from page 17 sense to us,” he said. “With its bigger surface area, it does a better job of taking water out of the bottom of the all-sand California green profile than conventional round pipe and gravel.”

But the main reason flat-pipe technique is attracting attention, according to Whelchel, is that “it saves a lot in construction costs. Although the material cost of AdvanEDGE is higher than round pipe, no trenches need to be dug, no gravel backfill to buy, and no trench spoils to dispose of.

“Our experience,” he said, “shows that the installed cost of flat pipe is about half the cost of traditional drain pipe, maybe even less. This can add up to $30,000 to $40,000 in savings for 18 holes.”

AdvanEDGE pipe is normally sold with a geotextile fabric wrap to filter out soil fines. If the greens mixture and surrounding soils are relatively free from migratory fines, Hurdan-Fry permits the pipe to be installed without the filter wrap. ADS can produce the pipe with narrower “sand slot” perforations. ADS also offers a standard line of couplings and tees designed specifically for horizontal installation.

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