

GOLF COURSE NEWS

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A protégé of Wadsworth, Nicklaus and Nugent, Rick Jacobson is stamping his own trademark on the world of course design. See Q&A, page 47.

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CONFERENCE AND SHOW PREVIEW
Meet the board candidates, pages 40-43

Accessible, sustainable golf gets its due



The newly renovated 6th hole at East Lake Golf Club will play host to one of Atlanta's most ambitious junior golf initiatives to date.

• The First Tee takes giant step forward

By M. LEVANS

ST. AUGUSTINE, Fla. — The First Tee, launched in November in a national publicity wave headlined by George Bush and Earl Woods, has managed to pull together the golf industry's heaviest hitters in what is being called the most significant concerted initiative to create acces-

sible golf facilities for minority and junior golfers.

According to The World Golf Foundation, The First Tee's founding organization, the initial focus will be on developing financial support to acquire locations for the facilities. To supplement these acquisitions, The First Tee plans

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• East Lake: Atlanta's inner-city gem

By PETER BLAIS

ATLANTA — It's too early to say exactly what the effects will be of the \$100 million East Lake Meadows project here. But the private/public partnership that resulted in the renovation of the historic East Lake Golf Club, construction of a new executive length golf course and

building of a 500-unit residential community looks like a boon for the Georgia capital's inner city.

The initial focus was the famous East Lake Golf Club, where golfing legend Bobby Jones learned to play the game. The club had deteriorated badly since the late 1960s when

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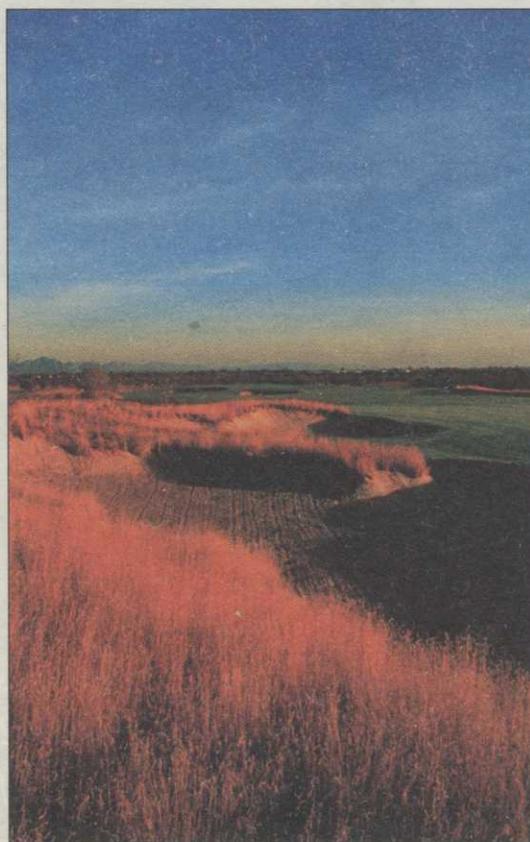
Reaction to ADA gauged

By BOB SPIWAK

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) appears to have consequences in the world of golf which go well beyond disabled golfers. Courses may be forced to change facilities as well as policies, such as the "Cart Path Rule."

To get a superintendent's take on ADA, *Golf Course News* spoke with Jerry Coldiron, superintendent of Lassing Pointe Golf Club in Boone County, Ky.

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TALKING STICK SPEAKS VOLUMES

Coore & Crenshaw's Talking Stick, two 18-hole courses built on Salt River-Pima-Maricopa Indian Community land, promises to bring a little Scotland to Scottsdale, Ariz. See story page 54.

MAINTENANCE

Genetic engineering could drive seed costs up

By MARK LESLIE

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Remarkable advances in genetic engineering of turfgrass will bring new cultivars to the marketplace more quickly. But seed costs could go up markedly, particularly because different companies own patents on the various techniques and genes that drive the discoveries.

Future release of new turfgrass varieties will be punctuated by negotiations "to see who gets what out in the marketplace," said Dr. Virgil Meier, a plant breeder responsible for turfgrass development at O.M. Scott.

Meier explained that to
Continued on page 34

First Tee gains massive backing

Continued from page 1

to provide, through the help of participating organizations and individuals, expertise and consulting advice, land-planning services, course design and other assistance that will help reduce the cost of the project.

Fifteen developments have been identified as meeting The First Tee criteria thus far, including renovation of Detroit's Belle Isle course made possible by a \$2 million donation by Ford Motor Co. and Visteon Automotive Systems.

The First Tee plans to have 100 courses in the program in the next two years.

To this point, financial commitments for these developments have been made by the PGA Tour (\$30 million), The United States Golf Association (USGA) (\$3 million over the next two years) and Augusta National Golf Club (\$5 million). Other organizations that plan to make financial commitments include PGA of America and the Ladies Professional Golf Association. Individual contributions are being accepted as well.

"You have USGA and PGA Tour, the two biggest names in golf cooperating," said Michael Hurdzan, of Columbus, Ohio-based Hurdzan Fry Golf Course Design Inc. "They're saying you have to do something to get people into this game. And I believe they're putting their money

Casino Beach: 'We can make it work'

Continued from previous page

to convince The First Tee that he has the wherewithal to make the project happen.

"I want to do something for family golf," said Champion, "but I am a businessman. I'm going into this project and I expect to make a living doing it. I believe it's possible to do a good thing and make a profit."

It's this sort of project — accessible yet profitable — that Hurdzan, principal at Columbus, Ohio-based Hurdzan Fry Golf Course Design, believes will take golf into the future.

"The end result should be a course that can be built at a low cost and maintained at a low cost so the owner can charge a reasonable fee but still make a profit," said Hurdzan.

According to Hurdzan, building a course with the junior in mind takes him back to the basics of course design. "When you have beginners, you have to make sure it has some playability. The goal is building something that is agronomically solid, something the owner can maintain."

Hurdzan has supplied Champion with the routing for the project, which will be built on top of Champions existing nine-hole course.

For Champion, having Hurdzan on board offers substantial leverage as he approaches The First Tee for funding. His focus is simple — give the family a range of affordable golfing environments from which to choose.

"Dad's getting ready to go and play on a Saturday morning. Why can't he take his 6-year old?" said Champion. "The idea is to get the kids involved at 6- or 10-years old. Our idea of junior golfers is 13- and 14-year olds. That's too old. Soccer is

RELATED STORIES, PAGE 58

where their mouth is and investing in the future of the game."

Service and expertise commitments have been made by the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA), American Society of Golf Course Architects (ASGCA), National Golf Foundation, American Junior Golf Association, Tiger Woods Foundation and National Minority Golf Foundation.

"The neatest thing about The First Tee is that all of us are in it together," said Judy Bell, president of the USGA. The USGA has provided The First Tee with a grant of \$1 million for 1998 and plans an additional \$2 million over the next two years, pending a USGA review of the program.

"We see this as a supplement to our current grant making," said Bell. "The goal is to start with the local champion who is getting the job done but needs some help."

The initiative appears to be gaining momentum, and supporters, by the day. On December 9, the ASGCA inked its formal commitment to The First Tee, offering "... our services in any way we



A typical First Tee layout could look like this map of a facility in Duval County, Florida. It is one of the first projects to receive The First Tee funding. The nine-hole layout measures 2,974 yards and plays to a par 25, with four par-3s, three par-4s and two par-5s.

can," according to Alice Dye, ASGCA president.

First Tee participants will be able to obtain ASGCA design assistance during the development of any one of the designated course models — which could be a 3-hole course, pitch-and-putt course, nine-hole course or 18-hole course.

Course architects Hurdzan and Denis Griffiths believe accessible facilities can also be profitable and sustainable. They both see The First Tee as a project that has been too long in coming.

"For years I've said that golf has to build this base," said Hurdzan. "I got my start in this business building very inexpensive golf courses. Those courses became profitable, but more importantly, they allowed people to come in and play at a very low fee."

Hurdzan currently has three low-cost courses on the boards, one with Fort Worth, Texas-based Steve Champion,

owner of Casino Beach Golf Inc.

"I've been on the soapbox for many years," said Griffiths, principal of Braselton, Ga.-based Denis Griffiths & Associates Inc. and most immediate past president of the ASGCA.

"Finally we're seeing the golf community saying there are many different methods to making golf accessible and also profitable for those who are running the facilities."

While the ASGCA has made its commitment, formal word from the GCSAA is next to come.

"Our involvement hasn't been determined specifically," said Jeff Bollig, senior manager of media/public relations for GCSAA. "It will probably be a chapter-based program where The First Tee courses exist. We may provide funds to maintain them or provide a member to work on the courses. We may even provide a publication to assist the managers of the courses."

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