

BRIEFS



GRAHAM, PANKS SPLIT

Player consultant David Graham and architect Gary Panks are terminating their 10-year association in golf course design. Graham is concentrating on a full PGA Senior Tour schedule, while Panks will continue to focus on course design and share more of the credit with his staff, including senior designers Gary Stephenson and Michael Rhoads. The firm will continue to operate its Phoenix and Dallas offices under the name of Gary Panks Associates.

DOAK HIRES PLACEK

TRAVERSE CITY, Mich. — Renaissance Golf Design has named Don Placek as a design associate. With a degree in environmental design from the University of Colorado at Boulder, Placek has joined the firm to assist primarily to develop concept drawings, construction documents and other graphic-related areas. He has been in the golf course design and construction field for nearly eight years, spending six years at Dye Designs in Denver. His responsibilities will include various levels of involvement with new construction, restoration and consulting.

PUTTING CHALLENGES GO FORWARD

ORLANDO, Fla. — Classic Golf Group, Inc. has been hired by Golf Challenge Corp. to design a "putting challenge course" along International Drive here. Len deBoer, president of Classic Golf, said the course will feature challenging Tifdwarf greens and will give golfers an opportunity to win prize packages, including a \$25,000 cash grand prize. Construction is underway. A spokesman for Golf Challenge Corp. said the Orlando Putting Challenge Course could be the first of many such projects to be located in high-traffic, resort destination areas.

OSU HONORS ALUMNUS HURDZAN

COLUMBUS, OHIO — Golf course architect Dr. Michael Hurdzan was recognized with the Distinguished Alumni Award by the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences Alumni Society in November at Ohio State University. This award recognizes alumni who have brought distinction to themselves, their college and OSU through participation, commitment, and leadership in their profession and community.



Mike Hurdzan



Rolling Rock Club's new 15th hole, with the new nine-hole addition designed by Brian Silva.

One of nation's best 9, Rolling Rock Club, goes 18

LEGONIER, Pa. — After 76 years as perhaps the best nine-hole course in America, Rolling Rock Club has expanded to 18 holes.

The original Donald Ross-designed loop was joined last year by nine new holes from the hand of architect Brian Silva.

A partner with Uxbridge, Mass.-based Cornish, Silva and Mungeam, Silva worked worked to match the unique architectural style embodied in the original

nine. While Silva is an experienced interpreter of vintage design — he just finished the restoration of 185 bunkers at Ross' Seminole Golf Club in North Palm Beach, Fla. — the original holes at Rolling Rock Club (RRC) proved a tough act to follow.

"Donald Ross was no fool. He used all the good land back in 1917," Silva explained. "The site we worked with was very difficult; it was essentially the side of a mountain. It took us close to a dozen

route plans to make it work. While Ross was able to gently lay his golf holes onto design-friendly terrain, we were forced to stair-step the holes up and down the side of this mountain. In doing that, we knew right from the start there would be hard edges to the new holes, unlike the comfortable edges of the original nine.

"Our greatest efforts in matching design styles can be found in the green and bunker designs. We consciously set out

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Augustine Golf Club's 1st hole, a 417-yard par-4. The high-end daily-fee facility designed by Rick Jacobson in Stafford, Va., opened in 1996, to rave reviews, earning 5th place in Golf Digest's Best New Upscale Public Golf Course rating.

Jacobson, a Chicago guy, goes global

An internship with the Madison (Wis.) Park Planning Department, under Art Johnson, who dabbled in golf course design, plus a chance reception at the golf course architectural offices of Ken Killian and Dick Nugent, led to Rick Jacobson entering the field of course design. Now, after years of working with Wadsworth Golf Construction Co. and then alongside Jack Nicklaus, Jacobson is making inroads of his own in the golf world. In 1991 the University of Wisconsin landscape architecture graduate started Jacobson Golf Course Design, and later earned acceptance into the American Society of Golf Course Architects. Nowadays, he is working on projects from East to West Coast and as far away as Japan, including renovating Des Moines (Iowa) Golf and Country Club in preparation for the 1999 U.S. Senior Open, and designing Michael Jordan Family Golf Centers in Chicago and elsewhere. We caught up with him in his Libertyville, Ill., offices.

Q & A

Golf Course News: You worked briefly with architect Roger Packard but, beforehand, you worked for Wadsworth Golf Construction Co. How did that experience help you?

Rick Jacobson: Wadsworth made arrangements with Roger for me to work for them on one project, Riverside Club in Dallas. That evolved into a full-time job and was an exceptional introduction to the golf course architecture field. I was exposed to one of best contractors in the world and their construction materials and techniques, then got the technical background and plan production in Packard's office.

Spending time on site with a contractor is literally a prerequisite for anybody pursuing a career in golf course architecture. You've got to be cognizant of the processes involved during construction of a project, so that when you're making

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Palmer to get Rossi Award

ANAHEIM, Calif. — Golfing legend Arnold Palmer will receive the 1998 Don A. Rossi Humanitarian Award here during the annual Golf Course Builders Association of America (GCBA) banquet, Feb. 6.

"The award honors individuals who have made significant contributions to the game of golf and its growth, and who have inspired others by their example," said GCBA President Paul Eldredge. "I don't know who we could possibly give the award to who fits that description any better than Arnold Palmer."

The award is named for Don Rossi, who served as executive director of the National Golf Foundation from 1970 to 1983 and of the GCBA from 1984 until his death in 1990.

"I am very pleased to receive this award," said the 68-year-old Palmer. "I knew Don Rossi and appreciate the role he played in building the industry around our game. To receive an award named for him from the golf course builders — who are the backbone of our industry — is indeed an honor."

Palmer will, however, be unable to attend the GCBA banquet. Ed Seay, his partner in Palmer Course Design, will accept the award on his behalf.

The son of a golf course superintendent in Latrobe, Pa., Palmer

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Arnold Palmer

Rolling Rock goes 18 with Silva 9

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to copy features from the old course. The 18th green is a mirror image of the 8th green, for example, right down to the grades. The 1st green is folded so the middle is lower than the front and back; at the 10th, we did the same thing."

Founded early in the century, Rolling Rock is far more than golf club. RRC maintains its own trout hatchery to stock its streams, raises duck and pheasant for drive and field shooting, operates a four-season clay-bird shooting facility, offers tennis and swimming during summer months, not to mention dining and lodging year round. Golf is not the focal point. Indeed, the club's nine-hole track was deemed sufficient for more than 70 years.

When the membership decided to expand, it turned to Silva, whose restoration portfolio includes a sizable Donald Ross section. Yet all this familiarity with Ross had not prepared Silva for the flamboyance of RRC's original nine, not to mention the challenge of creating a companion nine.

"I still can't believe how severe the original greens are," said Silva. "You often hear that Ross was 'the master of subtlety.' But he designed a 220-yard par-3 at Rolling Rock [no. 3] with about four elephants buried in the green. ... When you're standing in fairway bunkers 8 feet deep, the last thing you're thinking about is subtlety."

The new nine — measuring just 3,200 yards to complement the 3,000-yard original — was built by Ranger Construction of West Palm Beach, Fla. Feature work was subcontracted out to Mark Eitleman's Agri-Scape, Inc. of Ellington, Conn. Silva was a constant presence on site, visiting Rolling Rock every week for more than a year.

The membership rewarded Silva's dogged efforts by placing

Palmer honored

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burst onto the golf scene at the same time as television technology. He and the army of admirers who followed him on Tour became a staple in America's living rooms as he won 91 tournaments worldwide. Despite a busy schedule devoted to course design and a limited number of tournaments, Palmer actively supports the children's hospital in Orlando, Fla., that bears his name and serves on the board of The Golf Channel.

"There isn't a person in the golf industry who doesn't owe at least part of his business existence to Arnold Palmer," said GCBA Executive Vice President Phil Arnold.

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his name on the scorecard, beside that of Mr. Ross. "We thought Brian should be so recognized because the reaction to his work has been most favorable," said RRC Club Manager John Douglas. "Brian did a wonderful job carrying the Ross flavor over to the new nine, on very difficult terrain."

Silva's many trips to Pitts-

burgh dovetailed with work at Seth Raynor's Fox Chapel Golf Club, which he is restoring in anticipation of the USGA's Curtis Cup matches in 2002. CSM is no stranger to USGA tournament preparation: Silva partner Mark Mungeam recently renovated Chicago's Olympia Fields CC, which hosted the 1997 USGA Senior Open and was recently named site of the 2003 U.S. Open.

PGA Southern Cal to build courses

CALIMESA, Calif. — The PGA's Southern California Section (SCPGA) has announced plans to build two 18-hole golf courses across Interstate 10 from Oak Valley Golf Club here. Section Executive Director Tom Gustafson said the builders hope to begin construction in the fall and open the course in the summer of 1999. The section needed to negotiate with Oak Valley Partners L.P. to create a formal development agreement for the 400-acre site. The entire Oak Valley project includes 6,700 acres that were designated nine years ago for golf, residential and commercial development. The acquisition "will allow us to run our own tournaments ... and provide us with another source of income," Gustafson said.

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