

Q&A: Jacobson

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do use his strategic bunkering philosophy. You might take the Tillinghast greens that were more concave and his fairways that were more receptive and apply them, or the strategic school of design from Macdonald. So I think it's a matter of schooling yourself in those designs and picking out the features that apply to the type of facility you've been hired to do for your client.

As I walk through a site, I formulate what the developer is looking for in design to accommodate the player profile they are targeting and their operational costs as far as maintenance. Studying the old classic designs gives you a knowledge basis to tap into when you're formulating a design approach for different projects in different parts of the country.

And I've combined those old-school architects along with a guy like Jack Nicklaus. Certainly he gave me the knowledge of being able to design for lower-handicap golfers as far as setting up holes, pin placement and landing areas that challenge better golfers as well as designing for higher-handicappers like myself.

That's what everybody attempts to do today. To what degree they succeed, the public golfers tell you through the success of the project.

From a business standpoint you have to respond to your developer's mission statement. Define their goals and objectives and then modify the design to accommodate the budget, the level of difficulty they want, or the lack of difficulty. We're doing some work now on a golf academy, a shorter 9-hole course geared toward beginner golfers. We don't want 60 bunkers 8 feet deep.

GCN: Did Michael Jordan have any input into your design of the Michael Jordan Family Golf Centers?

RJ: Not from a design standpoint. He was very involved from the promotional standpoint and with developing programs for inner-city kids and people who don't have access to golf. That is a key in today's golf environment. We have to cultivate the youth in golf. They're our future — the next wave of golfers once you look past the Baby Boom generation.

GCN: How many Jordan Golf Centers are planned?

RJ: Beyond the first one that is open in Chicago, another is in planning in Charlotte. AMF bought them, but we're still working with them and have looked at other sites around the country. I don't know if they are going to pursue them.

GCN: You are designing quite a mix of daily-fee, resort and private courses. Have you seen a trend in any direction?

RJ: We're seeing a thrust toward providing facilities for practice — in private facilities as well as public. Even at some of the old classic golf courses that have unused parcels of land, they're putting in a short-game practice area, or even a nine-hole pitch-and-putt course. Facilities which were built on the fringe of a metropolitan area 10 to 15 years ago, but which are now in high-growth areas, are going from 18

to 27 holes, or from 27 to 36. There are a lot of expansions and many are incorporating expanded practice facilities.

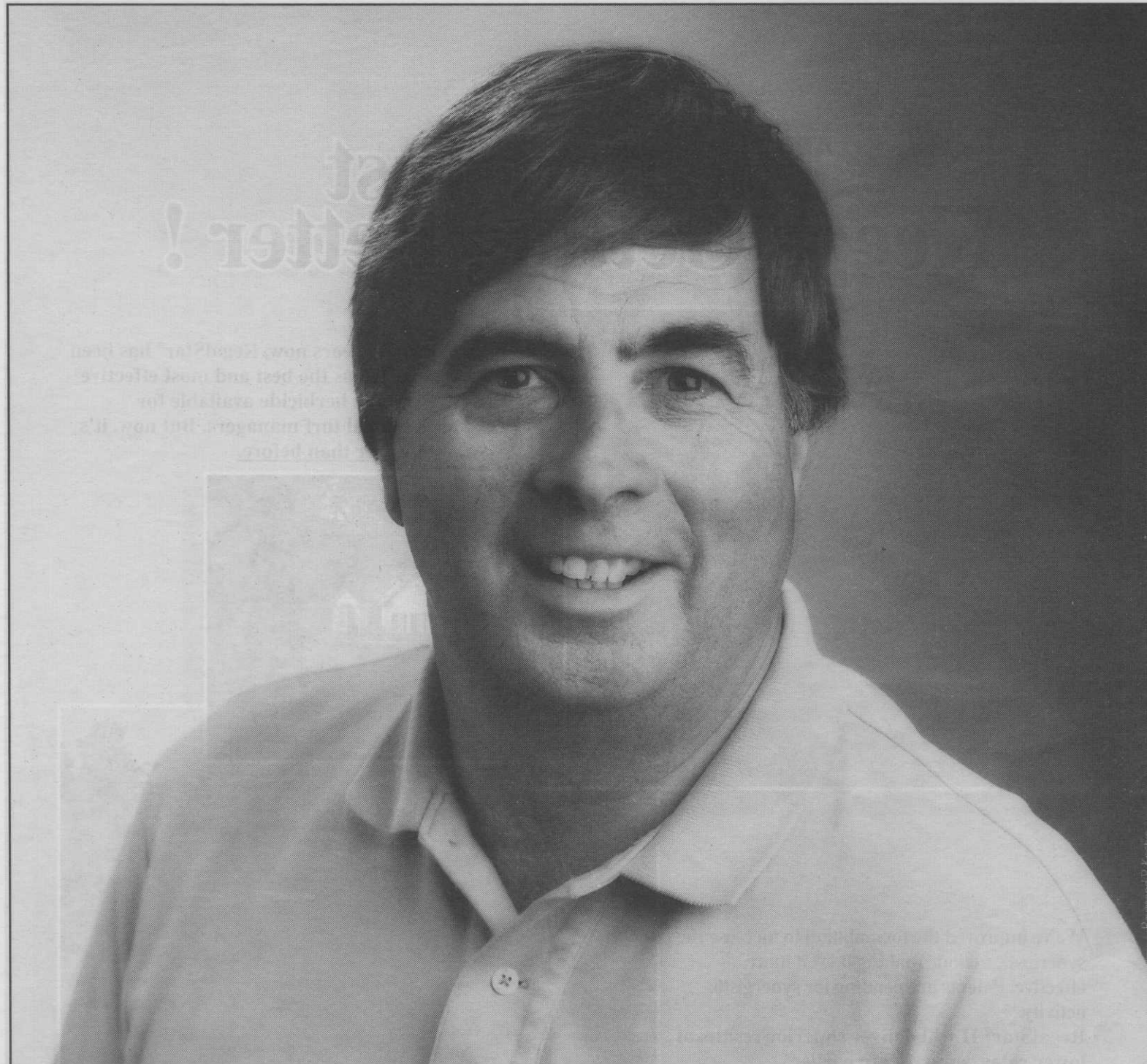
GCN: What sort of staff do you have?

RJ: We have two part-timers as support staff and two full-time designers — me and Doug Myslinski, another Wadsworth alum who was a project supervisor and, more recently, senior estimator.

JACOBSON PREPPING DES MOINES G&CC FOR SENIOR OPEN

DES MOINES, Iowa — In preparation for the 1999 U.S. Senior Open, Des Moines Golf and Country Club is undergoing a major renovation of 18 of its 36 Pete Dye-designed holes. Rick Jacobson is in charge of the project, which includes combining 9 holes from each of the two 18-hole courses to create the 18 holes for the Open.

The second phase of the renovation should be completed this spring. In phase one, nine holes were worked on. "All the greens were been regrassed with A4 [bentgrass]," said Jacobson. "We reconstructed the 18th green and expanded a couple others to recapture pin placements. We've reconstructed all the bunkers and added several in strategic places."

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