

First Tee breaks ground — literally

Continued from page 1

Officials of Chesterfield County, which borders Richmond to the south, voted 4-1 on May 27 to accept the Richmond First Tee Foundation's proposal to build an 18-hole golf course designed with youths in mind, along with a practice range and three-hole "tot" course. It will occupy 140 of the park's 360 acres and will be leased for 20 years to the foundation, with two successive 10-year renewals.

Chesterfield County's approval of the project follows an attempt by Richmond First Tee Foundation to build the facility within city limits. Organized by Richmond native Fred Tattersall, the foundation hoped to open by Memorial Day 1999 and be the nation's initial First Tee. But when talks with city officials bogged down and threatened that early opening, Chesterfield officials came forward.

"Frankly, we've been through such a battle to work a public-private partnership that we've lost a little interest in whether we're first in the country," said Tattersall, an investment counselor and money fund manager. "We just want to build it."

"What sold this course is that it's designed to teach youths how to play and it will be good for senior golf," said Chesterfield County Parks and Recreation Department Director Mike Golden. "I like the idea it's in line with the other youth sports facilities we have. A kid can go and play golf, soccer, football, baseball, or tennis. It might be one, one day and one the next. Or a family can go and one or two play golf, while the rest are at soccer practice. It's not uncommon for that to happen in other ways now."

Iron Bridge Park, Tattersall said, "is everything you would hope for in a park."

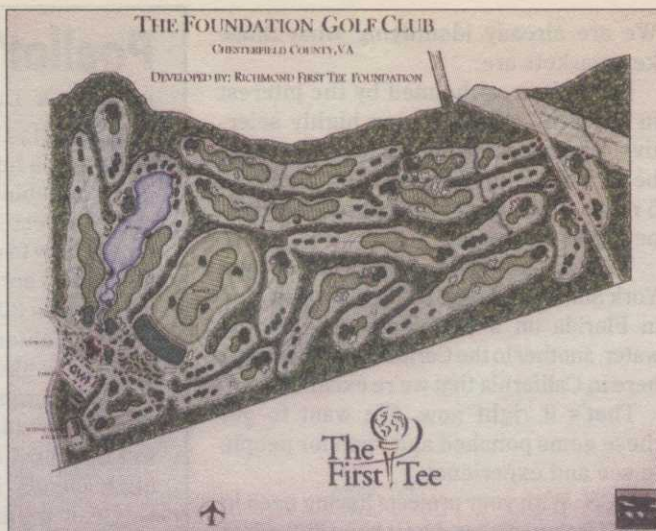
Besides that, it is located in seemingly a perfect position. Last year 440,000 people came to the park during the year. More than 1,100 youths live in the neighborhoods next to the park. There are 11 elementary schools, eight middle schools and four high schools within a 7-mile radius. And reportedly there are 4,000 people living in the poverty level in Chesterfield County.

"We think we've tapped into a great location," Tattersall said. "It's not an issue of moving to the wealthy suburbs of Richmond."

Richmond, meanwhile, was listed in July's *Golf Digest* as the worst of 309 small, medium and large U.S. cities for golfers because of its lack of facilities.

"It's going to be a spectacular project," said Tod Leiweke, executive director of the national First Tee program. "We have a deeply committed group there who have fought through an arduous public process, they're doing it for the right reasons and they're well organized."

Leiweke could not say whether Richmond's will be the first "from-scratch" facility to open. "We have 11 facilities that are extremely active," he said. "They are a mixed bag — a couple existing facilities to expand, a couple that are smaller, etc."



The layout of Chesterfield County's First Tee course, designed by Lester George of Colonial Design.

The Richmond First Tee Foundation has been working with local YMCA, Police Athletic League and Boys and Girls clubs, who have assured they will handle transportation to Iron Gate Park. It is 1-1/2 miles from a major YMCA summer camp that brings in a number of inner-city children and children at risk.

"The hope from the Y's standpoint and ours," Tattersall said, "is to offer the kids another alternative in the summertime."

Golden added that the county Parks and Recreation Department will schedule golf classes and outings at The First Tee facility through the school system.

Location was one of the sticking points with Richmond officials, who preferred one site over the property the foundation and PGA Tour wanted.

The foundation, which is handling the development without any cost to the county, may still partner with Richmond for a city facility, Tattersall said.

"We are still talking to the city and plan to have a site within the city," he said. "It obviously will not be done as quickly as had we been able to agree on matters earlier in the year. But, all along we thought multiple sites were preferable. Once you ask people to go further than 10 miles, it becomes not only a public-transportation issue, but a time issue."

When the Iron Park facility opens — around next Memorial Day — the foundation hopes to have announced the improvements to either an existing facility or other site in the city, Tattersall said.

Meanwhile, one reason to be the first facility developed from inception to be a First Tee layout, is that it can better tap into celebrities and public relations supplied by the PGA Tour, PGA of America, World Golf Foundation, Ladies PGA, U.S. Golf Association and others who are supporting The First Tee program.

A number of communities, existing courses and individuals are involved in refurbishing existing facilities. Here in Richmond, Tattersall and the foundation have raised \$2.5 million from private individuals — \$2 million to build the course and \$500,000 to operate the program for five years, after which it hopefully will be self-sustaining.

Others are contributing as well. Among them:

- course architect Lester George of Colonial Design in Richmond is designing the complex;
- golf course builder Quality Grassing & Services of Lithia, Fla., will bill the foundation as normal, then return the profits as a donation;
- Timmons Engineering, a local firm, is donating engineering services;
- Williamsburg (Va.) Environmental Group, Inc., is consulting on environmental issues at no charge;
- local lawyer John Cogbill is handling legal issues *gratis*;
- PGA Tour player and broadcaster Robert Wrenn of Richmond is donating time to give clinics and as a consultant.
- Mike Snyder of Photogrammetric Data Services in Charlotte, N.C., is providing aerial mapping and contour mapping services for free.

There was opposition to the proposal, leading to marathon county board meetings — one lasting until 1:30 a.m. and another to 4:45 a.m. Some 75 citizens spoke at the last session, half of them opposing the facility. Golden said mountain biking trails that will be displaced by The First Tee will be replaced with new trails to be built elsewhere. To neighbors who objected, he said that if the First Tee were not built, the land would be turned to lighted sports fields in the years ahead.

The First Tee and BLM sign management pact

WASHINGTON — Patrick Shea, director of the Interior Department's Bureau of Land Management, and Tim Finchem, commissioner of the PGA Tour and chairman of the World Golf Foundation, have signed a memorandum of understanding pledging to provide more opportunities for minorities and young people to explore careers in the golf industry, with an emphasis on environmental issues associated with the sport.

"This agreement will help bring one of the most wholesome, character-building, outdoor recreation activities to a more diverse America in a fashion that is environmentally friendly," said Shea.

"This partnership between the World Golf Foundation and the BLM, with its world-class outdoor recreation program, is extremely important to our efforts to identify locations for the development of First Tee facilities," Finchem said. "The BLM has been a strong supporter of golf and shares The First Tee's vision of creating golf facilities that provide affordable access for everyone, with a special emphasis on youth and minorities."

The memorandum of understanding supports First Tee efforts that are an integral part of a national golf initiative supported by a host of organizations, including the PGA Tour, LPGA, PGA of America, Augusta National Golf Club and The Tiger Woods Foundation. The First Tee is also designed to help make the game of golf more accessible to youth, particularly those from inner cities.

The BLM historically is one of the most golf-friendly federal agencies. Over the last 43 years it has taken actions authorized under the Recreation and Public Purposes Act of 1954 that have led to the creation of 40 golf facilities, including courses in such cities as Phoenix, Las Vegas, Albuquerque and Santa Fe, N.M., Portland, Ore., St. George, Utah, and Bismarck, N.D.

BLM is empowered under law to lease or provide title to federal lands to governmental entities at no cost when those lands are used for recreational or public purposes, such as golfing. The BLM is the largest land management agency in the country, with responsibilities for 268 million acres of surface land and about 568 million acres of subsurface mineral estate.

The four-page agreement specifically provides for the BLM to:

- Participate in activities that encourage inner-city and other youth to both play golf and pursue golf as recreation or tourism careers;
- Encourage golf facilities to operate in a manner supportive of wildlife;
- Develop criteria and management practices jointly with The First Tee initiative to encourage environment-friendly management of golf facilities;
- Cooperate with the World Golf

Continued on next page

Specialized Leveling for the Turf Industry

Laserturf offers a highly specialized service available directly to all sectors of the sportsturf industry. As an established company with a proven name we are continuing to develop our national network - offering...



- Time Saving
- Cost Effectiveness
- Quality Service
- Limited Franchises Available in Select Areas
Offer By Prospectus Only.

Laserturf

LEVELING

For Contract Services and Franchise Information
Tel: 706-353-8487
Laserturf USA Inc.
405 Belmont Road
Athens, Georgia 30605

Laserturf Leveling Continuing to Set the Standard

Beauty from ashes

Continued from page 29

nally built for DuPont employees, Seaford was a fine nine designed by Alfred Tull, who first built courses for Walter Travis, A.W. Tillinghast and Devereux Emmet before designing scores of tracks on his own. Seaford members long desired another nine holes, but did not have the land. Neighboring DuPont, however, did own enough property and leased it to Seaford when the course was built.

Meanwhile, DuPont fulfilled its obligations to the government environmental agencies and, in fact, awarded Whole in One Design Group its Safety, Health and Environmental Excellence Award for DuPont Nylon North America.

The project was indeed a challenge for Mandell and partner Robert Rauch.

They not only faced dealing with this huge pile of coal ash, but also working around monitoring wells and electric and water lines throughout the property.

"We incorporated 500,000 yards of the coal ash as fill," Mandell said, "then added a 1-foot cap of soil over that. On green sites we used 4 feet of soil on top of the ash."

The ash, he said, resembles a sandy loam. "It's a decent growing medium, but not necessarily for golf courses," he said.

The property, part of which had been a DuPont company airstrip, was flat, with 12 feet of fall from one end to the other. Mandell and Rauch added contour by moving another 95,000 yards of material.

Part of the material for the cap came from the five ponds that were built — all connected to create a drainage system.

The end result, Mandell said, is a new nine that resembles Tull's philosophy — exactly what Seaford's members wanted.

The original design is "a neat nine holes," he said. "In keeping with it, we kept the flavor of the plateau-style greens and paid a lot of attention to the approaches. Sometimes the greens were

plateau, and in other spots flush with the edge of the fairway. I kept close watch on having no tiers.

"The bunkers all had sand laying flat in very serpentine shapes. We replicated those shapes pretty successfully."

The exception, he said, was that some of the original bunkers were 5 and 6 feet deep, and the most severe on the new nine are 3 to 4 feet deep.

The project was an engineering challenge, Mandell said. With only 12 feet of fall "there was not enough gravity and positive drainage. We had to finagle the earth to make it drain."

Whole in One built two large ridges to create rolling terrain. In many places it is 20 feet high, and a 40-foot-high berm runs along the 17th hole, blocking the view of the factory parking lot. And pipes interconnect the five ponds to maintain the water level.

The result — a 5,505- to 6,612-yard, par-72 18 holes with bentgrass greens and ryegrass tees and fairways.

•••

Meanwhile, Whole in One opened a second course on May 2: an 18-hole executive track that joins a Lindsay Ervin-designed nine-hole par-3 at Greenfields Golf Park in Berlin, Md., outside Ocean City.

General Manager Ed Colbert and Director of Golf Buddy Sass own the facility and plan to have Whole in One add a nine-hole regulation course at some time in the future.

The new executive course plays to a par 65 and ranges from 3,977 to 5,210 yards.

Because of a tight site, Mandell and Rauch designed one triple tee and a 13,000-square-foot double green.

"We built really neat greens and a lot of mounding for protection," Mandell said, adding that golfers will use all the clubs in the bag when they face par-3s greatly varying in distance, seven par-4s, the longest is 405 from the back. Two long par 5s: 590 and 575.



COLUMBIA POINT OPENS

RICHLAND, Wash.—James J. Engh, Golf Design Group, Inc., has opened its latest project here, Columbia Point Golf Course. The course is owned by the city of Richland and managed by I.R.I. Golf Group of Plano, Texas. Columbia Point has been nominated through Golf Digest as one of the country's Best New Affordable Public Courses for 1999. *The Tri-City Herald* described Columbia Point as "spectacularly unique."

New Vista Bella owner hires Snyder, Richardson

KINGMAN, Ariz. — Golf course architects Arthur Jack Snyder and Forrest Richardson have been selected to design Vista Bella Golf Course here. An 18-hole regulation layout previously announced to begin construction in 1996 with a routing by Gary Panks, Vista Bella has undergone an ownership change along with significant site plan and routing revisions.

"We started with an almost blank canvas," said Richardson, of Phoenix. "The objective was to work with the previous site plan, yet add new thinking that would better suit the growing Kingman market."

New design plans reduce the project's reliance on ground water with less formal turf areas, and feature fewer

on-course lakes.

"Things are changing fast in Kingman," said Richardson. "Our goal is to develop a course with tremendous character, yet preserve at all cost the charm and simplicity that makes Kingman such a unique place."

Snyder described the Vista Bella site as having "views so spacious and beautiful it may be difficult to keep your mind on the game. In any direction one gets the feeling the view just goes on forever."

The course is scheduled to begin construction this year as part of improvements to new phases of the Vista Bella master-planned community. PrimeStyle Development Inc., of Phoenix, is the owner/developer.

The First Tee and BLM

Continued from previous page

Foundation to identify public lands suitable for development of golf teaching and playing facilities.

The agreement provides for the World Golf Foundation to:

- Encourage environment-friendly management of golf facilities;
- Work with BLM to identify potential sites for golf facilities;
- Assist in planning and developing golf facilities, ensuring ongoing support and maintenance;
- Design facilities to meet community needs and site constraints;
- Share expertise and experience in environment-friendly design, development and management of golf facilities;
- Incorporate wildlife habitat preservation, enhancement and interpretation into design, development and management of golf facilities;
- Provide opportunities for women, minorities and especially youth, to learn to play golf and participate in the golf industry;
- Participate in activities that encourage inner city and other youth to play golf and pursue careers in golf, recreation or tourism.

Valparaiso moves ahead on course, training center for youth

VALPARAISO, Ind.—Don Childs Associates (DCA) will master plan a golf course and training center for the city here in a project aimed at reaching youth.

"We believe we are the first municipality in the nation to successfully take the golf training center concept as embraced by the Tiger Woods, First Tee, and Hook-a-Kid Foundations to the construction phase," said John Seibert, director of Parks and Recreation for Valparaiso. "Our staff has been working hard for two years on this project from initial ideas to where we are today. With founding and council approvals in place, we are targeting construction to start in late August, with all aspects of the facility open in the spring of 2000."

The City Council has approved the project and the sale of \$3.5 million in municipal revenue bonds to pay for development and construction.

The teaching and training center will feature a 55-station range, putting course, chipping green and sand bunker, and a three-hole training course with par-3, -4, and -5 golf holes. The clubhouse will be designed to feature an indoor teaching center with state-of-the-art video equipment for instruction and swing analysis.

Meanwhile, DCA will soon be designing the new headquarters and training center of the Minority Golf Association of America (MGAA) in Miami. Developers of the site are poised to break ground later this summer with the facility fully operational in 2000. The academy is the project of Tibor Hollo, Hank Thomas and John David, president of the MGAA.

First in Versatility, Dependability, and Reliability

AERA-vator®



FIRST PRODUCTS INC.

The Tool Versatile Enough for Golf Course Aerification, Seeding or Renovating

"We were in need of aerating our new 27-hole golf course and the native soils to the north being sandy/rock, I was ruining the bearings on our crankshaft style machine. Luckily I requested a demo of the AERA-vator and found the right tool to help our situation. It loosened the soil, gave it the much-needed air and pushed some rocks down without disrupting the playability. I ordered one immediately for our course and have implemented a program exclusively for the AERA-vator. I also like the durability of the tines, it saves us time and effort which translates to dollars. Thanks again for such a great product."

— Gary Femrite, Golf Superintendent, Pebble Creek G.C., Becker, MN

First Products Inc., Tifton, GA
1-800-363-8780, from GA call 912-382-4768

CIRCLE #125