

## Disabled laborer finds home at World Golf Village

ST. AUGUSTINE, Fla. — Even though it hasn't officially opened for play, the World Golf Village's fairways and greens are already home to a winning tale.

Mike Perkins, whose right arm and leg are partially paralyzed due to spinal meningitis, has been working full time on the greens crew at The Slammer and

The Squire Golf Course. Perkins, 25, has been doing something he was told for years that he couldn't — hold down a permanent job.

"It's a big victory," Perkins told *The St. Augustine Record*. "I'm just thankful someone took a chance on me."

That someone was golf course

superintendent Ray Mooney of Scratch Golf Co., which owns, operates and maintains the first of three courses at the World Golf Village. Perkins started working at The Slammer and The Squire as a laborer laying sod. Mooney said that Perkins, with his one good arm, was working faster than anyone with two.

Though Perkins' right arm and leg are partially paralyzed, he can walk with a limp and partially use his bad arm. An implanted tube runs from his head to his rib cage to siphon accumulating fluid away from his brain. He relies mostly on his strong left side.

Mooney was so impressed with Perkins' sod-laying work that he offered him a full-time

job. Perkins now rakes bunkers, waters the grass and lays pine straw. Because of his handicap, Perkins cannot operate some of the maintenance equipment. But, with Mooney's support, and that of assistant golf course superintendent Brian Haines, he tests his limits every day and faces down new challenges. Holding down a full-time job allowed him to afford to buy Christmas presents last year for the first time in his life.

Mooney said Perkins is an inspiration to the 15-person golf course maintenance crew at The Slammer and The Squire. "He's always enthusiastic and happy to be here," he said. "He appreciates his job and works as hard or harder than most. I'd say he's a perfect employee."

## La. city exploring new golf course construction plan

ALEXANDRIA, La. — The city of Alexandria's golf course task force is exploring the idea of building an 18-hole public course with the England Authority.

The task force is working on recommendations on where and how the city should build an 18-hole layout.

The city has set aside \$2.3 million in property-tax revenue and money from the city's sale of the Rapides Golf and Country Club land to build the new course.

The England Authority has plans to expand its nine-hole course to 18 holes and expects to spend between \$2 and \$3 million. Alexandria and England Authority officials have been talking in general terms for almost a year about joining forces to build a course. Alexandria has only one public golf course, the par-3, nine-hole Bingham Golf Course in City Park.

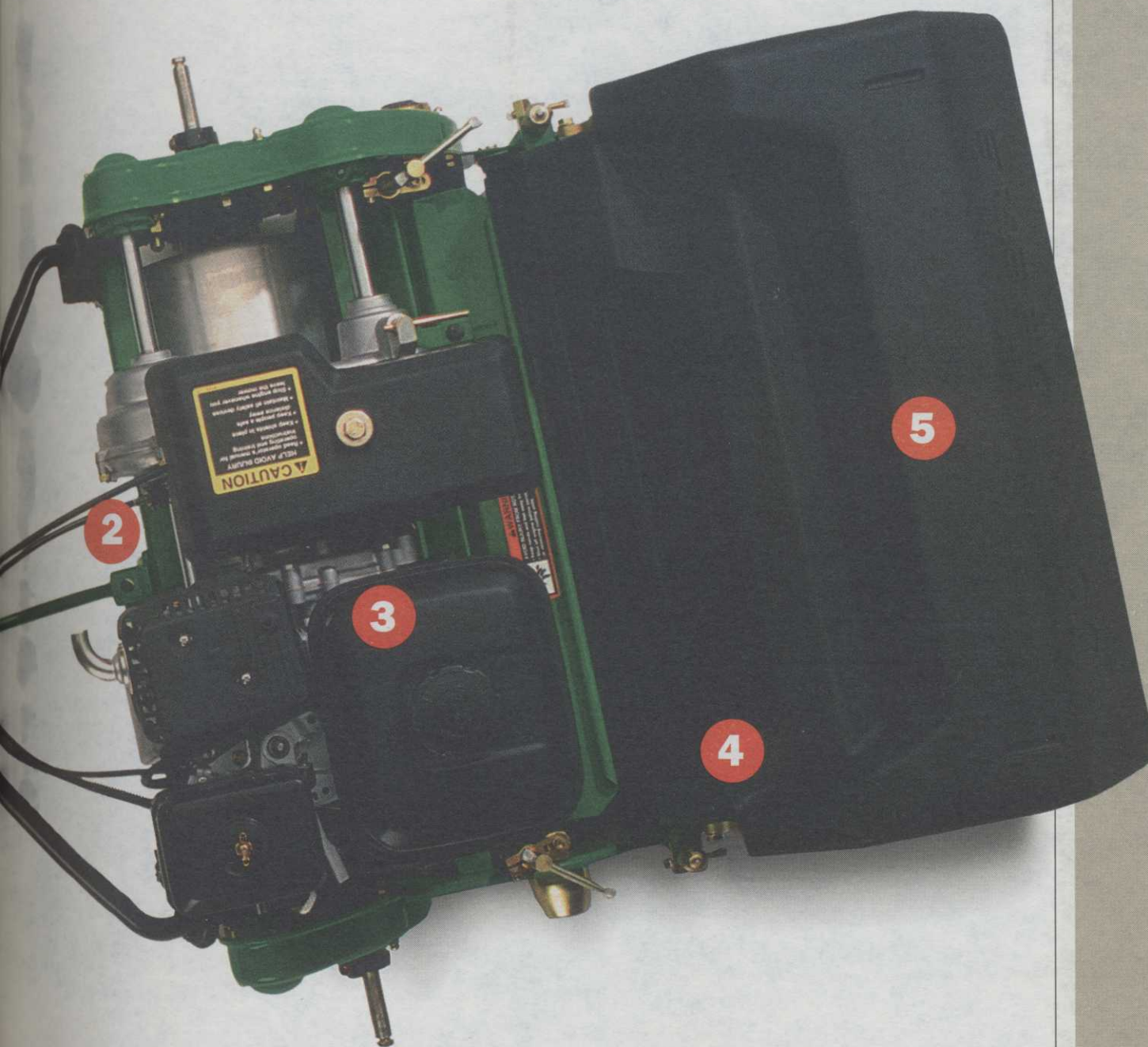
## French Broad on N.C. sales block

ASHEVILLE, N.C. — The city of Asheville is considering buying the French Broad Golf Center and its 18-hole, par-72 course.

The center, with a Karl Litten-designed layout, has been courting suitors since filing for bankruptcy in February 1996. The case was closed recently, with a U.S. Bankruptcy Court giving the owners 72 months to pay back creditors.

Parks and Recreation Director Irby Brinson has been negotiating a \$3.75 million price with the owners of the course, which is located in the adjacent town of Fletcher National Golf Foundation Consulting has recommended the city buy the course.

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