

What does it take to design a golf course?

I wish I could string together four great rounds, say on a Thursday to Sunday as I march to win any one of the PGA Tour's events. I'd win a nice chunk of cash and certainly pick up the momentum necessary to place second or fifth, or even first on another week during the rest of the PGA calendar.

That would appear to be all I need to do to launch my supplemental golf course architecture career — you know, in case my game starts to slip.

As I wade deeper into the knowledgebase of the golf business, I've repeatedly asked the top players in the design field what it takes to be a well-sought course architect. The answers are as varied as the designers themselves; yet the common piece of any response is that one must be able to look at a site, no matter how perfect or how raw and awful, and picture a layout, figure out how each hole should be framed in the context of a given piece of land.

That skill alone takes "an eye," the same eye that separates Irving Penn or Helmut Newton from the rest of us simple camera owners. Yes, I own a camera, but what I choose to frame is what separates me from one of the masters. That master frames the shot before the eye gazes into the viewfinder.

A good designer is not necessarily a great golfer (I've seen this fact proven on two occasions), but a person who has an eye for the layout, someone who has stepped on countless acres of undeveloped earth and has seen thousands of holes materialize in the minds eye.

Now this is where I remain somewhat mystified. PGA pros have walked thousands of fabulous holes, but how many raw spaces has a pro surveyed prior to the layout of 18 new holes? Is being a great golfer any help in being a great course designer? Are the two skills related in any way?

Just prior to The Masters, Tiger Woods was caught saying that he has, in fact, entertained the thought of hovering over some blueprints.

"I think it's going to happen a little bit later," Woods said in an Associated Press wire story prior to the big event. "I've got some things in my head of styles I like and things I want to incorporate into my own course designing." Woods went on to say he needed to play more courses around the world and learn more about drainage and slopes and development around the tract of land. "I'm very creative," he said. "I like to create that way."

International Management Group (IMG) is readying a few new "design products" in the forms of Jesper Parnevik and Annika Sorenstam, two excellent players who will have "design teams" put in place to support their new endeavors.

According to IMG, there are more new stars on the horizon, all with slick marketing packages and niche-oriented business plans. How Jesper and Annika will do is yet to be seen. However, as more and more marquee names enter the field, it will be the market that will eventually decide what it takes to be a golf course designer.



Michael Levans, editor

This is the Official Typeface of a Mark Leslie editorial column

We've seen The Official Sneaker of the Boston Celtics, The Official Eye Wear of the U.S. Olympic Team and The Official Vehicle of the U.S. Ski Team. I wouldn't be surprised if there is an Official Underwear of the Jamaican Bobsled Team.

Now this Official hype has hit the golf industry. I'm not talking about Tiger wearing the Nike hat, or Norman wearing a Reebok sweatshirt, or Kite wearing Hogan paraphernalia, or Payne Stewart wearing ... well, let's not get into that.

No, that stuff has been around since the advent of television. What I'm referring to is that we've moved into the upper echelon of this marketing madness that makes the normal person ask, "What!? I mean, what!?"

The light went off when I received a press release in February announcing that Pepsi-Cola is the "Official Soft Drink of Golden Bear."

We all know that Golden Bear means Jack Nicklaus — he, who, by the way, wears Golden Bear golf shirts (and I'm all for self-promotion). As part of this agreement, Pepsi and other Pepsi-branded soft drinks will receive exclusivity and "pouring rights" at all Golden Bear-owned facilities including Golden Bear Golf Centers and Golden Bear Golf Clubs.

For Pepsi drinkers, this is no big deal. But for you poor Cocaholics, we feel so sorry for you. You'll have to go to Golden Bear Club's competition down the street to get your favorite drink. I only wonder if those facilities will be able to gauge the revenue lost because Coke drinkers went elsewhere.

And Golden Bear does not stand alone. American Golf Corp. is now in the hunt to sign on to Official Soft Drink, Official Greens Mower, Official Golf Club ... everything.

Can ClubCorp., Palmer Golf Management and the Golf Course Builders Association of America be far behind?

But all that unimportant stuff is beside the point. The important issue here is that we at *Golf Course News* need some Official thises and thats. You know, an Official Soft Drink of *Golf Course News*, an Official Golf Club of *Golf Course News*, an Official Golf Ball of *Golf Course News*, Official One-rider Golf Car of *Golf Course News* ... everything. Cobra and Titleist, are you listening? Dr. Pepper, Toro and Dragonfly?

I'll be waiting, with baited breath, at my phone for your calls.

Helping the environment also helps your image, golf facilities are discovering. It's a double effective sword. (See page 1 story.)

"We use our Audubon Signature status just like Proctor and

Continued on page 70



Mark Leslie, managing editor

Letter

WGA looks to work with industry

Edit note: The following is a letter from Graham Whatley, executive director of the Walking Golf Association (WGA).

Thank you for writing the article on the establishment of the Walking Golf Association (WGA) and including it in your recent issue of *Golf Course News* (GCN, March).

Everything in the article was a fair articulation of the statements we have made and our views so far. There is, however, an aspect of our goals for the association which was not strongly stated and which could allow golf courses to perceive that we are a threat to them.

Fundamentally, we do not intend for the Walking Golf Association to be adversarial with golf courses which prohibit or restrict walking. We, in fact, plan for golf courses to join the WGA and for us to be a partner which helps solve problems for the good of all — both walking golfers and golf courses. We know that some portion of players will

always want to use a cart. We respect that decision and don't want to impede these golfers in enjoying their rounds the way they choose.

Being trained as a lawyer, I was taught that lawyers who tell you what you can't do are a dime a dozen. But the lawyer who can tell you how you can legally and appropriately accomplish your goals are worth a million bucks. The WGA wants to be the organization that is worth a million bucks to golf courses.

How do we accomplish this? First, we truly do understand the revenue and economic pressures that golf courses face today and the reason many in the upscale golf course arena must rely upon cart revenues. Michael Hurdzan, my fellow Board member, works and deals with these issues every day. We are certainly not naive to the forces at work. And

we certainly don't have all the answers.

But we are in a unique position to work with golf courses to create answers which will allow them to maintain revenues while allowing walking. We want to be an organization which creates solutions and then tests their veracity in partnership with interested golf courses. If they succeed then we look forward to other golf courses utilizing the knowledge we have gained.

Rounds of golf at far too many courses are taking well over 5 hours, especially on weekends when the vast majority of rounds are played. If something could be done in a systematic way to increase the speed of a round to 4 hours, this would make a significant impact on the number of rounds possible on peak days and revenues.

Admittedly, far too many times golfers are their own worst enemies. Honestly, too many golfers who have played for years don't know the rules like they

should and aren't well educated on the speed-of-play issues. For example many of us have no clue even what the speed rating for a golf course is, let alone do something to moderate our speed of play!

Therefore, one of our first priorities is to help educate golfers on these issues and what they can do about them. We want to make golfers aware of their responsibilities to others on the course. Make them aware so that they know how to make adjustments to their speed without

Continued on page 65

CORRECTION

The designer of the Indian Summer Golf and Country Club was incorrectly named in the story "Microsoft executive buys Puget Sound layout" on page 8 of GCN February. The designer was Peter L.H. Thompson.

GOLF COURSE NEWS

THE NEWSPAPER FOR THE GOLF COURSE INDUSTRY

Publisher
Charles E. von Brecht

Editorial Director
Brook Taliaferro

Editor
Michael Levans

Managing Editor
Mark A. Leslie

Associate Editor
Peter Blais

Editorial Assistant
J. Barry Mothes

Contributing Editor
Terry Buchen, CGCS, MG

Production Manager
Joline Gilman

Traffic Manager
Candice Russell

Editorial Advisory Board

Raymond Davies, CGCS
CourseCo
Kevin Downing, CGCS
Willoughby Golf Club
Tim Hiers, CGCS
Collier's Reserve
Ted Horton

The Pebble Beach Co.
Dr. Michael Hurdzan
Hurdzan Design Group
Mary P. Knaggs

Bass Rocks Golf Club
James McLoughlin
The McLoughlin Group
Kevin Ross, CGCS
Country Club of the Rockies
Brent Wadsworth
Wadsworth Construction

Editorial Office
Golf Course News
Box 997, 106 Lafayette Street
Yarmouth, ME 04096
207-846-0600; Fax: 207-846-0657
mlevans@golfcoursenews.com
mleslie@golfcoursenews.com

ADVERTISING OFFICES
National Sales:
Charles E. von Brecht
Box 997, 106 Lafayette Street
Yarmouth, ME 04096
207-846-0600; Fax: 207-846-0657
cvonb@golfcoursenews.com

Western Sales:
Robert Sanner
Western Territory Manager
2141 Vermont
Lawrence, KS 66046
785-842-3969; fax: 785-842-4304

Marketplace Sales:
Trish Hoffman
207-846-0600; fax: 207-846-0657
Public Golf Forum Sales
Phil McKay
207-846-0600; fax: 207-846-0657

Subscription Information
Golf Course News, P.O. Box 3047
Langhorne, PA 19047
215-788-7112

United Publications, Inc.
Publishers of specialized business and consumer magazines.
Chairman
Theodore E. Gordon
President
J.G. Taliaferro, Jr.



Copyright © 1998 by United Publications, Inc. All rights reserved and reproduction, in whole or in part, without written permission from the publisher is expressly prohibited.

Letter/WGA

Continued from page 14

harming their enjoyment of the round. This is a golfer issue not a walking v. cart issue.

And we are doing something about it.

We are currently negotiating with the City of Rockville and the professional staff at their municipal layout, Redgate Golf Course, to partner in the creation of an educational video for golfers which will be filmed this spring.

This 15 minute video would be displayed in pro shops or concession areas and explain to players in a simple clear way a dozen speed of play or rule of play tips to speed their rounds. We want these tips to be something players immediately take to the course and use.

Once we are successfully educating golfers, then we want to help golf courses to train their marshals on how they can enforce these rules effectively. Marshal training is currently time consuming and potentially expensive for a golf course.

Marshal turnover is high, forcing continuous reeducation on part of the golf course creating inconsistency at a particular golf course and one course to the next.

To this end we intend to create a Marshal Training Program. This program, which will include a 30 to 60 minute video, work book and test will save golf courses hundreds if not thousands of dollars.

You know as a golfer, there is nothing more frustrating than a marshal flying up to your group and yelling at you for slow play when you have been the person waiting for others during the entire round and doing everything you can to get the group to pick it up.

You leave the golf course with a bad taste in your mouth feeling like that marshal has no idea what your group was doing or how to manage play on the course — let alone how to talk to

people.

Through our training program, a marshal will be taught how to quickly observe a group and then strategically engage with them in a positive way to speed up play. The program will, even more importantly, teach marshals how to manage and maintain play in the first place!

Many times marshals are the ambassador of a golf course. Other than the guy that took your money and the kid at the concession stand, you might not meet any other staff at the course. Therefore, it's in the interest of the golf course that marshals are well trained, personable and good shepherds.

'Once we are successfully educating golfers, then we want to help golf courses to train their marshals on how they can enforce these rules effectively.'

—Graham Whatley

This is actually where the opportunity comes in for *Golf Course News* and ourselves to work in some way with Redgate and the City of Rockville. How could we partner to distribute these marshal training videos and publicize this program? Our issue is not the pro-

duction but building a solid distribution network.

Furthermore, we are going to be conducting a lot of research in partnership with golf courses and the National Golf Foundation.

Redgate, for instance, is very interested in working with us on some of the problems they face.

Bottom line, our goal is not to be adversarial. Your article, I'm afraid appeared to portray us that way. We will not be able to work with and attract golf courses if they perceive we plan to order them to simply allow walking. It's unrealistic.

We believe this can definitely be a win-win situation for everyone.

Furthermore, I hope there is a way we can work together in the best interests of the spirit of the golf.

*Thank you,
Graham Whatley*

Hurdzan/flat pipe

Continued from page 15

pretty harsh thought I would admit, but not without a fair amount of truth.

We are living in a period of rapid technological innovation and application that is trending toward a pattern of life that is more naturally sustainable. This period has no foreseeable end and the pace will only quicken as we learn more about the complex world in which we live. Hence it is an individual decision to either grow or not, but to frown on a new idea or concept without giving it an unbiased delibera-

tion, to me, signals being past your prime.

For all of those reasons I am surprised that flat tile in greens would generate controversy — stimulate thought perhaps, but not generate controversy.

Build a test green by first sending off your rootzone material to a certified lab to be sure it meets some performance standard or selection criteria. Then build a test plot with about 1 1/2% slope as you would in a golf green, divide the green with an impermeable barrier, install round tile on one-half and flat tile on the other, with each system having its own sampling pit to catch leachate — then make a decision.

YOUR "ONE-STOP" SOURCE
FOR AMERICA'S LEADING
GOLF SURFACES & SUPPLIES!

PARTAC®
GOLF COURSE
TOP-DRESSING



HEAT TREATED

FLEXIBLE GOLF COURSE MARKERS
TURF DRAG MATS & BRUSHES
WINDSCREEN & BALL NETTING

TYPAR®

GEOTEXTILES & TURF BLANKETS

Terra-Green®

THE POROUS CERAMIC
SOIL CONDITIONER

NEW **PARTAC®** NEW
COLORED CERAMIC
GREEN SAND
DIVOT REPAIR MIX
PARTAC® GREEN SAND BLENDED
WITH PARTAC® PREMIUM
TOP-DRESSING FOR EXCELLENT
GERMINATION AND
DEEP GREEN COLOR!

THE BEST DIVOT REPAIR MIX AVAILABLE!

AVAILABLE NATIONWIDE

800-247-2326

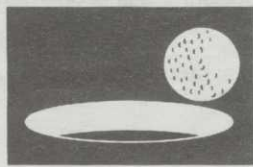
IN N.J. 908-637-4191

PARTAC PEAT CORPORATION
KELSEY PARK, GREAT MEADOWS, N.J. 07838
ORLANDO (FL) MEMPHIS (TN) RENO (NV)

CIRCLE #157

HIGHLIGHT GOLF HOLES,
IMPROVE VISIBILITY,
& MAINTAIN CONSISTENCY

U.S. GOLF HOLE
TARGETS™



STABILIZER®
BUNKER SEAL

TerraFlow™
Drainage Systems

AND MANY MORE
GOLF SPECIALTY PRODUCTS

CIRCLE #151

NEW PRODUCTS

Jake's SandScorpion ready to strike

Jacobsen has introduced its new SandScorpion bunker and infield rake to provide a convenient walk-through deck with generous leg room. Jacobsen also designed the operator position for 360 degree visibility while keeping the operator away from sand and debris. A tilt steering wheel allows customizing the wheel position for individual comfort and peak productivity. Steering requires minimal effort. Customers can purchase an additional battery tray, which holds six 8-volt batteries, to extend operating time. The SandScorpion Electric operates an average of up to six hours per charge in most conditions.

For more information, contact 414-637-6711.

CIRCLE #205

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

CIRCLE #156



Water Soluble
Fertilizer

Bring out the best in your turf with our water soluble fertilizer. Our turf grade is available in a variety of analyses and is designed for light, frequent application and maximum nutrient control. It is compatible with control products and dissolves with minimal agitation. Count on consistent products and reliable results, every time.



1-800-298-4656