**It’s a ‘softer, gentler’ Nicklaus in design**

*By Ted Johnson*

He is an icon of golf. Perhaps the greatest golfer ever, his face recognizable the world over. He has rung up scores of PGA Tour and Senior Tour victories, was named Athlete of the Decade for the 1970s and, in 1988, was selected Player of the Century. He has a closet full of green jackets from Augusta National for his Masters victories.

Yet, the 58-year-old Columbus, Ohio native’s work as an architect may be more lasting than his playing records.

"Of the early courses I did, more than half were for tournament golf," he said during the ceremonial first round at Grand Haven Golf Course in Palm Coast, Fla. "So I got a reputation for doing difficult courses because I had to build them that way. I have opened 164 courses. Of those at least 100 you probably won’t hear of. The few you won’t hear of Grand Haven. Yet more than 60 of my courses have held more than 300 professional tour events. We’re very proud of it."

After the round, Nicklaus sat down for an interview.

Golf Course News: Is there anything on this property that shows how you have evolved as an architect?

Jack Nicklaus: Twenty-five years ago, I thought I was going to do more links. But then, I got a call from a developer to do a par-3 First Tee course. A new clubhouse will also be built to serve as home for a broad range of instructional, educational and vocational golf programs for juniors, officials said.

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**NASHVILLE GETTING FIRST TEE**

**KINGSTON SPRINGS, Tenn. —** Nashville’s Metropolitan Parks and Recreation and the Tennessee Golf Foundation’s Vinny Pro-Celebrity Invitational are bringing to Nashville a First Tee golf course and ongoing programs for minority and at-risk youth through a new agreement. The Riverview Course, a nine-hole short course at Shelby Park in East Nashville, will be extensively renovated as a par-3 First Tee course. A new clubhouse will also be built to serve as home for a broad range of instructional, educational and vocational golf programs for juniors, officials said.

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**CEC Properties purchases First Golf**

**NEWPORT BEACH, Calif. —** CEC Properties, Inc. of Newport Beach has bought substantially all of the assets of First Golf Corp. of Tempe, Ariz.

First Golf manages the construction of golf courses nationwide and has built more than 25 courses since 1987. Its newest course, Harbor Links in Nassau County, Long Island, N.Y., recently had its grand opening and had a very strong first month. First Golf Acquisition Corp. becomes a wholly owned subsidiary of CEC Properties.

"CEC Properties, a golf services company, has now acquired both a golf course construction management and golf course facility management company as wholly owned subsidiaries," said Paul Balais, CEC Properties president, chairman and chief executive officer. "This gives us a tremendous advantage in being able to provide excellent and expanded services to the golfing industry."

First Golf currently has contracts for the development and construction of 13 golf courses in the Pacific Rim, including Shanghai Links in China, New Capital in Japan and Borneo Golf Club in Malaysia.

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**Ex-Paragon employee starts fresh**

*By Michael Levens*

**ATLANTA, Ga. —** Terry Bohannan — a 20-year veteran in the golf development business — believes that you learn from the mistakes of others.

As a matter of fact, he’s so certain that this lesson applies to the golf course construction business that he’s gone off on his own to form Live Oak Golf Construction Co., based here.

"Being in this business for so long I was able to see that there’s a lot of work out there right now," said Bohannan. "And with the right management and the right people it’s a great time to be in this business and do it right."

For the last four years he worked with Paragon Construction International as project manager and director of field operations. In that capacity he managed the construction operations of 13 golf courses in the Pacific Rim, including Shanghai Links in China, New Capital in Japan and Borneo Golf Club in Malaysia.
CUMSHNET, Mass. — As home to Titleist and FootJoy Worldwide for the past 80 years, the town of Acushnet has become synonymous with golf's biggest company. Amazingly, while this tiny New England hamlet could boast its own line of eponymous golf balls — who could ever forget the Club Special? — the town of Acushnet has never been home to a single golf course. Until now.

Acushnet River Valley Golf Course, a layout designed by Cornish, Silva and Muneam (CSM), opened for play in August. CSM partner Brian Silva has fashioned an interesting assortment of golf holes here, on a parcel of land that features three distinct environments: a rolling meadow, a dense New England forest, and an abandoned gravel pit.

"All architects say this, but Acushnet River Valley will truly feature a unique degree of variety," said Silva.

Once municipal funding was secured in November 1996, the town and CSM didn't waste much time. Ground was broken in April 1997, with International Golf of Arlington, Mass., handling course construction.

Acushnet River Valley GC plays more than 6,800 yards from the tips and 4,600 from the front, with three sets of tees in between.

Bohannan starts fresh

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Prior to Paragon, Bohannan was a design associate for Nicklaus Design from 1988-94, working as a liaison between the design and construction functions for courses in Taiwan and Thailand. A previous association with Holmes & Co. had him building such regarded courses as Pinehurst National and Grand Cypress golf clubs.

With the experience of the Asian projects under his belt, said Bohannan, the standard U.S. jobs appear to be fairly cut and dry.

"If you can build a golf course in Asia you can surely do it here," he said. "The complications you run into there are too numerous to mention, nothing is easy. There's equipment and manpower problems, language barriers. It's a nice surprise when you come back and realize just how easy it is to get materials."

Getting the venture like Live Oak off the ground is a series of small steps, he said. In past few months, he's taken time to spread the name and talk to course architects and developers in order to stress the company's mission.

"You have to explain to the client up front what they're going to get. It's simple. You have to be honest with them. You have to tell them what it's going to cost and when it's going to be done. I've seen it too many times where too many people come in and lowball and the client doesn't get what he wants. Completing the job on time is a real stickler in this industry."

For starters, Live Oak will concentrate on renovation work as it gears up to take on some full-service, turnkey work. The company is currently doing some renovation work at Meadowbrook Golf Course in Rutherfordton, N.C. "I'd like to stay in the Southeast, but we've recently bid jobs up in Michigan and Pennsylvania. So, we'll see what happens."

CEC Properties

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construction of nine new golf courses, three of which are already under construction. It will transfer all of its existing golf course facility management contracts to Classic Golf Management, a wholly owned subsidiary of CEC Properties.

Sam Gunderson will become president of First Golf Acquisition Corporation, Balalis said. CEC Properties began operations in 1994 and is focusing on becoming a major provider of services to the golfing industry.