McFarlane brings a bit of Scotland to America, and vice versa for Garl

By MARK LESLIE

LAKE MARY, Fla. — Citing the travel both ways "across the pond," with Brits seeking golf course design jobs in The States and Americans taking on projects in the United Kingdom, American designer Ron Garl believes he has jumped out in front on both accounts.

Ending a search that began two years ago, Garl has hired Scotsman Steven McFarlane. On the one hand, McFarlane will bring "a touch of Scotland" to the Garl team's designs in North America and elsewhere around the world. On the other hand, having the Scotsman in his stable should help land projects in the UK, Garl said.

A native of Troon, McFarlane graduated from the University of Glasgow with a degree in civil engineering and spent the last 12 years working with British architects Hawtree Golf Design.

"We worked on the renovation of a lot of the old courses in Britain, including Portmarnock and Royal Birkdale," McFarlane said. "A lot of that rubs off. It's going back to the traditional look in design. That style of golf suits me quite well."

McFarlane has spent years playing the great courses of the UK.

Yet, having married a North Carolina lady, he has spent a lot of time on the East Coast, particularly the Carolinas, Georgia and the Boston area.

"I've been planning to come over [to work] for quite a few years," McFarlane said. "It seems a great time to be working in The States. The golf industry is very buoyant now."

At this point in time, he added, there is "a far greater scope of sites" in America than Great Britain.

"In England — and Scotland, to a lesser extent — not many courses are being built," McFarlane said. "Scotland only has five or six courses per year being built. Twenty to 30 in England. Planning and restrictions on decent land are so difficult now in England. You certainly can't get any linksland, though in Ireland you can. In England it's very difficult to even get woodland, or parkland, or heathland either for environmental reasons or the landscape character," where they call the land of Special Scientific Interest.

"On 90 percent of the courses where you can only get permission, it is really dull farmland."

Working with long-time Garl designers Ricky and Ty Nix, McFarlane is especially excited to work on what Garl called "a true Irish-type links course" in Port St. Lucie, called Waterville; a seaside site in Puerto Rico called Cayo Largo, which has 2-1/2 miles of oceanfront; a property 30 miles south of Salt Lake City, Utah; and a couple of courses in Costa Rica.

"I have worked on a lot of different types of land — different characters and different environments throughout Northern and Southern Europe, and on desert land," McFarlane said. "I adapt what I've learned to each project."

Continued on next page

RTJ II changes

Continued from page 39
with RTJ II, Jones said. The two are currently collaborating at the Golf Course De Lage Vuursche in The Nether lands, which is in the early stages of construction. They will also work together at Real Club Puerta de Hierro in Madrid, Spain.

Phillips, a lead designer with Robert Trent Jones II for 17 years, began his own company in 1997. His current work includes The Kingsbarns Golf Links 7 miles from the home of golf, St. Andrews, Scotland, which is scheduled to be completed in the spring; and Golf Eichenheim, in the Austrian Alps, due to be finished in the fall.
At Belfair, choose bent or Bermuda

"We still have some work to be done before the course is completely ready. But most of that work needs to be done during the summer growing season," said Belfair Director of Golf Keith Goodaker. "So in the meantime, we want to give our members a chance to test out the East Course."

Over the summer, the Bermudagrass that carpets tees, fairways and rough will be grown in and native grasses, including Bahia, sweetgrass and spartina, will be planted. Ten holes on the East Course were open for limited play last summer, while construction was under way on the remaining eight holes. Therefore, for virtually half of the course, the coming summer will be the first growing season for the Bermudagrass. This explains the planned summer closing and the fall grand opening.

The original West Course at Belfair, also a Fazio design but with Tifward Bermudagrass greens, opened in 1996. In designing the East Course, Fazio created a traditional style course that encourages walking.

Describing it, Fazio said: "The style is a combination of looks, but the overall result is distinctive. There is some Pine Valley in it; there's some Wild Dunes in it. There's some Jupiter Hills in it, some Shinnecock, some old classic style. But when you put it all together, it really has its own style."

McFarlane and Garl

Continued from previous page

It's simple, PRE-M® is the country's leading pendimethalin herbicide. And no wonder. With over 12 years of proven performance and formulation improvements, PRE-M is here to help you succeed.

What's more, PRE-M comes from the leading supplier in the professional turf care industry, LESCO®.

Talk to your LESCO professional about new, special rebates for PRE-M purchases, or call 800-321-5325. And put the leading edge to work for you.

The Leading Edge.