OGRIN DESIGNING FIRST TRACK
HOUSTON, Texas — Community leaders and friends joined Jack Frey of Jack Frey Properties and PGA Tour professional David Ogrin to celebrate the groundbreaking for High Meadow Ranch Golf Club. The course, co-designed by Ogrin, sits on a rolling terrain of sandy soil and features more topographical differences than other courses in the area. This is the first golf course designed by Ogrin, a 15-year PGA Tour veteran and winner of the 1996 Texas Open championship. He is co-designing the course with Nugent Golf Associates. The daily-fee golf club will feature an 18-hole course stretching to over 7,400 yards and routed in three loops of six over a unique rolling terrain highlighted by an abundance of native pine trees and dense hardwood vegetation.

HARBOTTLE GETS WIS. DESIGN
MADISON, Wis. — John F. Harbottle III is beginning a new golf course design at Hawk’s Landing, a 520-acre upscale real-estate development near Madison. The 7,000-yard layout sits on about 200 acres of gently rolling farmland, winding through hardwood groves and around three large ponds. Haen Real Estate of Madison is developing the project. Construction will be completed by Oliphant Golf Construction, Inc., also of Madison. A late summer/ fall construction start is planned. Other new Harbottle projects include a new 27-hole course on the Ralph Ranch in Livermore, Calif., and another 27-hole facility, Harra Country Club, near Nagoya, Japan.

$1M PROJECT PLANNED IN FLA.
INDIAN RIVER COUNTY, Fla. — Capital Golf Development Corp. has announced plans for a new golf club in Indian River County. The $14 million project, Southern Dunes Golf Club, will feature a course designed by Kenneth Kavanaugh. Southern Dunes is located on the natural sand dune parallel of the Indian River Lagoon in Indian River County. Situated on more than 180 acres of land, the course provides 7,200 yards of golf from championship tees. It encompasses pine forests, water and sand dune topography. A special area of the course offers links-style golf. To accommodate golfers who enjoy walking, a caddie program will be in place. Construction is scheduled to begin in April. Course opening is set for January 2000.

BRIEFS

Golf Course News

Lowery ‘builds’ true island green

BRIEFS

Jones pickers; KLC eye diversity

IN THE WAKE OF SPLIT

Golf's future bright

COMMMENTARY

The island hole at Timber Lakes Golf Course presents a tough challenge to finish up the front nine.

By MARK LESLIE

M.T. OLIVE, Ill. — A real island green will face golfers when the new front nine of Timber Lakes Golf Course opens in May here, halfway between St. Louis and Springfield.

"Yes, the island green is unique," said Bill Lowry, owner of Professional Landscaping, Inc., who built the course and co-designed it with owner Mike Favre, "but it also has three peninsula greens, and I don’t think you’ll find that on any course, anywhere."

To play the peninsula greens, golfers will have to wait until fall, when the back nine opens. But the island green stands ready to test them as they come to the clubhouse to finish the front nine.

The 15,000-square-foot island was not always an island, Lowry said. It was a horseshoe-shaped peninsula with a 6- to 8-foot-wide “moat” until Lowry widened the most to 50 to 90 yards.

Lowry said the 6-acre lake was drained and then dug out in order to widen the moat. Water was 5 to 6 feet deep and now it is 30, he said.

Now the piece of land sits as an island, complete with trees and an 8,000-square-foot, three-level green for the 275- to 310-yard par-4 9th hole.

The approach shot from the landing area requires a 90-yard carry over the water. A 50-foot bridge takes golfers to and from the green, which can be seen from the clubhouse.

The back nine, Lowry said, is even more challenging than the front.

"The front nine is a 6 on a scale of 10 for difficulty. The back nine will be closer to an 8 or 9," he said. "The front nine is links style, while the back nine is carved out of the woods, uses natural terrain and of course, anywhere.”

The tranquil air and groomed links belie the difficulty. The back nine will be closer to an 8 or 9," he said. "The front nine is links style, while the back nine is carved out of the woods, uses natural terrain and of course, anywhere.”

The island hole at Timber Lakes Golf Course presents a tough challenge to finish up the front nine.

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Northwest Angle: Golf like nowhere else

By TIMOTHY LYON

The club scuffs the ground hard before impact and the ball bounces 20 yards down the recently mowed fairway. A soft course registers more amazement than anger. George Risser readily acknowledges that his golf game could be better. In all honesty, if he handled his chainsaw and hunting rifle with the same proficiency that he wields a 5-iron, we’d probably be interviewing a military manslaughter charges.

The essence of the story was a gloom and doom report about how the supply of golf courses has exceeded demand, and how operators have had to resort to marketing gimmicks to pull in customers. There are the views of the “half-empty” crowd.

But in a side bar chart it showed the rounds of golf for 1997 (the last year reported) had reached a record high of 51 million rounds, 14% higher than the previous year, and 18% higher than any year in the last century. This is how “half-full” folks see golf.

I unabashedly am one of the world’s great optimists (read half-full), that believes that golf can grow at a reasonably high, sustainable rate if — if, we remember three Continued on page 44

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Picture of Timber Lakes

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Hurdzan: Golf's future bright

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words — affordable, accessible, sustainable.

Affordable means providing golf facilities at a price that appeals to people at average income levels and below. Golf should be competitive in price to movie theaters, professional sports activities, or other amusement areas. Leisure activities are competing for discretionary time and money, so golf should not price itself out of the competition.

Accessible means providing a friendly, entry level introduction to the game in terms of learning the fundamentals of golf, and on facilities geared to their skill level. Bowling uses inflatable gutter guards, skiing has bunny slopes, and there is a nerf or whiffle type ball for nearly every sport, all of which helps beginners succeed as they learn.

Sustainable means building golf facilities that need only small amounts of water, fertilizers, pesticides, fossil fuel, and human energy to run. Together, minimizing these inputs can not only make golf courses better neighbors to the environment; it can also keep the total of the cost of a round of golf to a very low level.

In the USA Today story, the picture that ran as part of the story was of Shadow Creek in Las Vegas, where 40 or 50 million dollars was spent to build it. It costs $1,000 per round to play it and to sustain that golf course in that environment is a near miracle. If there is a problem with golf in America, it is that we are building too many Shadow Creeks.

For golf to continue to prosper and grow we as an industry must build a market, not simply service a market. In the 1950s and 1960s the Big-3 American auto manufacturers were of a mind that their only competition was each other, and that all they had to do was to out gimmick each other, and America would buy their cars. They were a servicing market.

One can rhetorically debate which came first the chicken or the egg, but there should be no debate about which came first when discussing golfers and golf courses. Without a doubt golf courses beget golfers. Build an affordable, accessible, sustainable golf course, even when market studies say no, and years later you'll find the best of parades.

But editorial golf writers, who now think their jobs are in jeopardy, are happy to write about what a slump golf is in.

Enter the National Golf Foundation that does representative sampling and then tries to project trends. A sample error can be magnified in projection that in turn can result in erroneous conclusions (that is why the US Supreme Court has ruled against sampling to estimate our nation's population).

For instance, how in the world can the NGF factor in the influence of El Nino, starter programs like First Tee and golf programs for school kids, and the effect of

Continued on next page
Silva re-instills Raynor at Lookout Mnt.

LOOKOUT MOUNTAIN, Ga. — Back in 1991, when Tibby Gass was sorting through the attic of a recently deceased relative, she stumbled upon a set of golf course design plans— not just any plans, but a color rendering of Seth Raynor’s original architectural blueprint for Lookout Mountain Golf Club.

Believing her discovery to be nothing more than a curious but small window on the past, Mrs. Gass framed the print and gave it to her husband, then Lookout Mountain Green Chairman John “Sweetie” Gass, who in turn presented Raynor’s schematic to the club.

For a time, this picture hung on a dark, mahogany wall in the men’s grille at Lookout Mountain, waiting to be rediscovered yet again.

When Lookout member Doug Stein obliged, his discovery touched off a series of events which culminated last fall, when course architect Brian Silva used Raynor’s plans to complete a unique bunker and green restoration.

“We’ve still some work left to do. Brian still plans to restore two or three more greens in the Raynor style,” said Stein. “But we’ve come a long, long way. Finding those plans was like something out of Treasure Island.”

Originally called Fairyland Golf & Country Club, Lookout Mountain was not built on Raynor’s watch; the architect passed away before ground was ever broken, leaving his long-time lieutenant, Charles Banks, to supervise construction. The course opened for play in 1925—without some 75 sand bunkers Raynor had envisioned.

Recognizing these bunkers had been omitted, Stein and fellow member King Oehmig set about recreating what Raynor had in mind.

“Raynor’s bunkers were largely flat-floored,” said Silva, a partner with Uxbridge, Mass-based Cornish, Silva and Mungeam, Inc. “They were designed to be deep and penal.”

However, for Lookout Mountain members and those who know the course, Raynor’s “new” fairway bunkers provide the biggest visual impact. “We added 55 fairway bunkers that weren’t there a year ago,” Silva said. “Think about adding so many bunkers to the fairways alone. That’s a lot of bunkers. Yet they account for why Lookout Mountain looks more like a Raynor course today.”

There is still work to be done at Lookout Mountain. This year, Silva plans to rebuild the 11th green and restore the 4th. Though Silva lives in suburban Boston, the remaining work will necessitate no special trips as he, Stein and fellow members and those who knew Raynor will soon break ground on a brand new course design.

Hurdzan comment

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David Duval and Tiger Woods battle for number one like Sammy Sosa and Mark McGwire did. I don’t believe it is possible and in fact NGF is not predicting an end to golf, but rather they issued a veiled plea to build affordable, accessible, sustainable golf facilities. But bankers and wall-street types don’t take the time to figure out what is implied; they react to what is said. So when a headline reads “Glut of Layouts...” they read that as golf can, and should, entertain a threat to the potential growth of the game, and in fact NGF is not predicting a glut; they react to what is said.

The cup is neither half empty nor half full. It is what you want it to be, and if you are a writer looking for a story, saying golf is alive, doing well, and growing faster than the population is not sexy enough to get an editor’s attention. As a golf course architect who has observed our industry for more than 40 years, it is my opinion that golf has never been stronger. The sky is not falling.