Doak's Apache Stronghold 'new-fangled' for desert

By MARK LESLIE

LOBE, Ariz. — The San Carlos Apache Nation had The Apache Golf Casino, a couple thousand square miles of Apache land and plenty of Apache labor. What were they missing? A golf course.

But that will be remedied in May or June when the Tom Doak-designed 18-hole Apache Stronghold opens to public play here.

It will be a new-fangled type of course for the desert: wide (200-foot) landing areas, a lot (100 acres) of turfgrass, plentiful water supply, immense length (7,500 yards from the back tees), and cooler weather than most desert tracks (leading to a choice of dwarf bluegrass fairways and Dominant bentgrass greens because Bermudagrass would die at this 3,200-foot altitude in the mountains above Phoenix).

"The Apache Nation wanted to build a golf course that was good enough to make people want to stay," said Doak who, with Apache Stronghold, has his first design west of the Mississippi River. "We think we've done that."

Given a couple thousand acres to choose from in building his course, Doak said he found "a terrific piece of land." So

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A DREAM REALIZED

Affordable golf in Kansas' sand hills

By MARK LESLIE

ABILENE, Kan. — The sand hills of Nebraska produced one of the best golf courses of the last couple of decades in Sand Hills Golf Course. The sand hills of Kansas produced Perry Maxwell's top-rated Prairie Dunes in nearby Hutchinson in 1937. Dr. Jon Thayer hopes the same magic has been woven through the sand hills of Abilene — specifically on his Chisholm Trail Golf Course, which opened for public play here April 1 to far less fanfare than his famous neighbors.

Chisholm Trail was "laid gently on the land," Thayer said, "a rolling piece of"

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Architects honor Palmer, elect president and new members

An 'icon of golf,' life given Ross Award

By MARK LESLIE

CHARLESTON, S.C. — Hailed as an icon in both golf and life who receives "grand and profound respect from all ages," Arnold Palmer received the Donald Ross Award from the American Society of Golf Course Architects (ASGCA) at the group's 33rd annual meeting at Country Club of Charleston here March 22.

Citing Ross as a man who designed hundreds of golf courses which are "still the best in the world," Palmer said it was a pleasure and privilege to be there and accept the award. The man whose Ed Seay-led design company has laid out scores of courses over the last 35 years, made an appeal for golf course architects to maintain the traditions and integrity of the game of golf.

Palmer pointed to Jack Nicklaus, another designer/PGA Tour great who was in the room as an ASGCA member

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Lafoy named president of Architects Society

CHARLESTON, S.C. — John LaFoy of Greenville, S.C., who has built a national reputation with his new course designs and remodeling projects, was elected president of the American Society of Golf Course Architects at the group's recent annual meeting here.

"This is a great honor for me," LaFoy said. "I am proud to be president of the society, whose members are the most experienced, creative and professional practitioners of golf course architecture in the world."

As head of his own golf course design firm and a former partner with prominent golf course architect George Cobb, LaFoy has designed, renovated or master planned more than 100 courses.

Among his designs and remodels are: Linville Ridge Country Club in Linville, N.C., Neuse Golf Club in Raleigh, N.C., Country Club of Charleston...
New members
Continued from page 23

Hale Irwin Design, Mark Hollinger with Michael J. Poellot; and Art Shaupeter, who once worked with Keith Foster. The election swells the ranks of ASGCA members to 146.

"It's a dream come true. It's been something I've wanted to be a part of ever since I started working with Dad 10 years ago," said Phelps, whose father Dick was ASGCA president in 1980-81.

Personally, Phelps said, the "what it takes to get into the society adds instant credibility to you. As far as the firm goes, to have two ASGCA members in the same company is a benefit as well. We can start marketing differently and approaching clients who may not have wanted a firm with only one ASGCA member. "It gives us more flexibility in how we work on projects, too. A good percentage of our clients have wanted Dad to be heavily involved because he was the one who carries the credentials and experience. Once we got to know them and worked with them, they realized I had experience and know-how. But now they can look at my credentials as well and know I've passed muster."

The Phelpses now hope to expand their work area.

"We definitely want to expand to new territories," Rick Phelps said. "That's one of the things I like best about the job: traveling to new places in the country, seeing new places and new people, experiencing new golf sites, different vegetation. That makes it exciting."

Saying that until the last five to 10 years it was perceived as unethical for architects to advertise and promote themselves, Phelps said: "But that has become more the norm than the exception. We will do it very cautiously and carefully so that we maintain a high ethical standard. But it's obvious you have to do it if you're going to compete with the big boys."

"I want to be able to compete on the same platform as the Fazios, Dyes and Joneses, and work on some of those exclusive projects that they get all the time."

Liddy, who formed Tim Liddy Golf Course design in 1993 and has worked with the Dyes on and off for 12 years, said: "Pete and Alice changed my life, as they have a lot of people's. To me, they're icons of the profession of golf course architecture and of golf. I learned everything about design from them."

Liddy is one of a long line of architects whose careers were jump-started working with the Dyes. Among them: Bobby Weed, Tom Doak, Lee Schmidt, Bill Coore, William Newcomb and David Postlethwaite.

Calling the Dyes "an unbelievable team," Liddy said: "The first thing you learn is, you design from many levels — the routing, the laying out of a golf hole and the details of building bunkers, tees and greens. Pete is a master at all three of these levels."

"I go to Alice a lot of times for both her artistic sense and logical sense. Artistically, she has helped me with spatial organization and with the logic of how people play golf. She has a great artistic eye."

A landscape architect who was working with a large engineering firm in Indianapolis when he first worked with the Dyes, Liddy's work includes Rock Hollow Golf Club in Peru, Ind., named among Golf Digest's Top Ten 1995 Best New Public Courses; and Coffin Golf Course, winner of a 1995 Merit Award for Excellence in Design in Indianapolis.

Liddy was the Dyes' project architect for The Fort Golf Course in Indianapolis, which in 1998 was named 3rd among Golf Digest's Best New Affordable Public Golf Courses and was among Golf Magazine's The Top Ten You Can Play.
Palmer
Continued from page 23
ber, and said: "The competition — in golf and course design — is what we’re all about. It’s what makes America what it is today ... Jack and I agree on a couple of things. One is the golf ball. We need to slow it down."

The way in which the golf industry controls the golf ball, he said, "will keep all of us going in the right direction in the years to come."

Returning to the $2 million annual maintenance cost for his Bay Hill Golf Club in Orlando, Fla., Palmer said: "Somewhere along the way we have ... ‘back away’ [on high maintenance] if we’re going to keep the game going."

"We need to look at all the aspects of the game — from players and their equipment to superintendents to people coming into the game — in order to retain the traditions of the game."

Seay, a past president of the ASGCA, introduced his design partner, saying, "Everything he does is measured at different lev-

ASGCA issues
Continued from previous page

the scenes to center stage," speaking of environmental stewardship, explaining the financial viability of maintaining the cost side of the game, and "explaining to people what the beauty of golf is all about: the landscaping, the tournament conditions."

While the GCSAA pursues these aims, golf course builders have determined to put money and labor behind its Sticks for Kids Program, the premise of which is to get golf clubs into the hands of people who wouldn’t normally get them.

"The GCBAA has donated more than $125,000 to date," said Kubly. "We have 10 programs across the United States, in cities where we have builder members."

Also, he said, his colleagues have agreed to build the first 100 courses in that program at cost or a deeply discounted price. This contribution is estimated to amount to $10 million to $15 million, Kubly said.

To give developers and would-be developers an idea of the cost of building golf courses, GCBAA has updated its regional construction cost databases and is making them available on CD-ROM and sending them to all USGA Green Section members and First Tee participants, Kubly added.

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CIRCLE #116

GOLF COURSE NEWS
Chisholm Trail
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unbroken sod with wild grasses as tall as
a horse. The golf and the terrain are
perfect."

"I always had the ambition to have my
own golf course," said the 75-year-old
Thayer, a semi-retired optometrist and
10-handicapper who has played the game
since he was 23. "When I found this per-
fect piece of ground, that did it."

Occupying 140 of the property's 320
acres, the 18 golf holes simply "were
there," said Bruce Dixon, a course de-
signer with Grant Golf in Winnipeg,
Manitoba, who was a graduate student in
landscape architecture specializing in
course design at Kansas State University
when planning began in spring 1997. "We
didn't have to move too much earth.

"It had some topographic changes," Dixon
added. "We found good green sites,
then worked backwards to the tees, came
up with a dozen layouts and went from
there."

The layout includes four double tees:
for holes 2 and 11; 1 and 10; 13 and 15;
and 7 and 9.

Dixon said he and Thayer, a design
aficionado who tinkered with most all the
holes once Dixon had taken the job in
Canada, "tried to aspire to Sand Hills and
Prairie Dunes. The course has the same
strengths as Sand Hills. And with 320
acres we had to ability to choose where to
put the features."

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LaFoy elected
Continued from page 23
whenever he was able.

The property has good soils as well as
natural drainage and surface runoff, he
said.

Indeed, the "soils" are 70-percent sand,
a major reason Chisholm Trail could be
built for less than $1 million — despite a
double-row irrigation system — and ful-
fill another of Thayer's dreams: "I wanted
to build an affordable course for the people
of Dickinson County."

Affordable? How does $13 weekday and
$15 weekend green fees sound? Annual
membership is $400, plus $100 for each
additional family member.

And while Chisholm Trail plays from
4,746 to 6,568 yards, "Don't let the yard-
age mislead you," Thayer said. "You'd
better bring your 'straight' game."

The greens were seeded with L-93
bentgrass and the fairways with an 80-20
bluegrass-ryegrass mix. The first rough
is fine-leaf fescue and the second native
bluestem grass that grows 6 feet high.

Thayer hired the husband-wife super-
intendent team of John and Mary Haun,
who had been operating Palo Duro Creek
in Canyon City, Texas, and the municipal
course in Hereford, Texas, respectively.

But the Hauns wanted to return to their
native Kansas.

Mary Haun, who grew up 3 miles from
where Chisholm Trail now sits, said: "I
thought, growing up, that we needed an
18-hole golf course."

Little did she know that later in life she
would be working on one.

LaFoy elected
Continued from page 23
in Birmingham, Ala., and
Glenmore Country Club
in Charlottesville, Va.

As ASGCA president, LaFoy will
focus on informing golf course
developers, golfers and the public
about golf course architecture. He
will work to highlight the profes-
sionalism, talent and code of eth-
ics that distinguish the members
of the society. He also will pro-
mote the continued development
of affordable and accessible golf
facilities.

Raised in Greenville, LaFoy re-
ceived a bachelor's degree in ar-
chitecture from Clemson Univer-
sity in 1968 and began to work for
Cobb. After a three-year stint in
the U.S. Marine Corps, he became
a full partner in the business.

LaFoy assumed much of the de-
sign responsibilities when illness
slowed Cobb in the early 1980s
and he took over the design busi-
ness after Cobb's death in 1986.

LaFoy is joined on the ASGCA
Executive Committee by Vice
President Brian Ault of
Kensington, Md., Treasurer
Damian Pascuzzo of Walnut
Creek, Calif., and Secretary Jay
Morrish of Flower Mound, Texas,
Bob Lohmann of Marengo, Ill., is
immediate past president.