USGA, ClubCorp work to prepare fabled Pinehurst No. 2 for U.S. Open

BY PETER BLAIS

The United States Golf Association is working closely with Pinehurst Club Management and the ClubCorp staff to prepare and maintain the Pinehurst No. 2 course for the 1999 U.S. Open.

"I've been going to Pinehurst for 10 years, so agronomically, I think we're set," said Tim Moraghan, who oversees course preparation for U.S. Open events for the USGA Rules and Competition Committee and was superintendent at Pinehurst Course Nos. 3 and 5 in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

"When we do our course preparation memo, we set the guidelines as far as fairway widths, cutting heights, green speeds and that sort of stuff. I'll work with [Pinehurst Director of Golf Course Maintenance] Brad Kocher and his staff to make sure those guidelines are met. Paul Jett, the on-course superintendent for No. 2, and I have been working together for four years. He knows what we want. We just don't want to have any problems the week of the event...Inside the ropes it will be a piece of cake. They know exactly what I want and I know exactly what they can do."

Said Jett: "Some of the old stories of the USGA coming in and running things have either been blown out of proportion or hasn't happened in this case. Tim Moraghan, [USGA Director of Rules and Competition] Tom Meeks, myself, Brad Kocher and [Pinehurst Assistant Director of Golf Course Maintenance] Bob Farren have worked closely together getting the course set up. The only thing they [USGA] has asked for is fairway widths; contours to be a certain way; a certain height of rough; and no rough around the greens, which we didn't have to begin with. Outside of that, they come in every two to three months, I'll take Tim or Tom around.

They've been fine with everything we've done."

Pinehurst has hosted numerous major championships over the years including the 1989 U.S. Women's Amateur and the 1994 Senior Open.

"We felt through the Women's Amateur and the Senior Open that the greens were not as good as they should be," Moraghan said. "We were a little skeptical about bringing the U.S. Open to Pinehurst with the condition of the putting greens. Pinehurst asked, 'If we rebuild them, will we get the Open?' The USGA said 'Rebuild them and we'll see.' They did it and boom, it's a done deal. They came out wonderful."

The USGA's major concern prior to the Open will be how the new G-2 bentgrass that was selected as a putting surface several years ago holds up, Moraghan explained. "There were

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Cobblestone carved up among two management giants

DEL MAR, Calif. — ClubCorp and American Golf Corp. have completed their joint acquisition of the Cobblestone Golf Group from The Meditrust Companies and divided the courses between them.

On Feb. 11, ClubCorp and AGC announced they had joined to form Golf Acquisitions to purchase the 45 Cobblestone golf properties from Meditrust for $393 million.

The transaction was the largest acquisition of golf courses ever, according to a ClubCorp statement.

ClubCorp winds up with 22 golf properties and 24 courses located in Texas, Florida, Georgia, North Carolina and California. They include:

- California: Morgan Run Resort & Club, Rancho Santa Fe.
- Georgia: Eagle's Landing Country Club (CC), Stockbridge; Trophy Club of Gwinnett, Snellville.
- Florida: Deer Creek CC, Jacksonville; Eastlake Woodlands CC, Oldsmar; Remington Golf Club (GC), Kissimmee; Sabal Point C, Longwood.
- North Carolina: The Currituck Club, Corolla; Devil's Ridge, Holly Springs; Lochmere, Cary; Nags Head Golf Links (GL), Nags Head; The Neuse, Clayton; Oak Valley GC, Advance.

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