

BRIEFS



WESTERN GOLF, US HOME TEAM UP

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — Western Golf Properties has signed on to manage two additional golf courses for U.S. Home Corporation — Heritage at Eagle Bend in Aurora, Colo., and Heritage Hunt in Gainesville, Va. — bringing to four the number of U.S. Home-owned courses that Western Golf operates. Both new courses are Art Hills-designed layouts that are under construction and scheduled to open in late 1999 or early 2000. Western Golf also announced that Raymond Madro has been named the Scottsdale-based firm's director of budgeting and feasibility.

TROON TAKES ON TIDEWATER

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz.—Tidewater Golf Club & Plantation, located in Myrtle Beach, S.C., has hired Troon Golf, the Scottsdale, Ariz.-based golf management, marketing and development company, to oversee the operations of its 18-hole championship course. Tidewater Golf Club has consistently been ranked among the top Myrtle Beach area courses every year since its 1990 opening.

AKW TO MANAGE FLA. TRACK

WINTER HAVEN, Fla.—Classic Golf Group has been hired by AKW Golf of Hattiesburg, Miss., to design an 18-hole "Classic Challenge" course near the town of Freeport in the Florida Panhandle. The owners of AKW Golf are Ken and Gloria Wyninger. AKW is a golf construction and management company, and will, under Len deBoer's guidance, construct the course. The course is scheduled to be ready to plant in the spring of 2000, with an opening anticipated that summer or fall.

PALMER APPOINTS 3

ORLANDO, Fla.—Arnold Palmer Golf Management has made several recent appointments. Ward Weischet is the new superintendent at Oronoque Country Club in Stratford, Conn.; Glen McKinney, general manager of Penderbrook Golf Course in Fairfax, Va.; and Mark Bryant, general manager of the Presidio Golf Course in San Francisco.

LINKSCORP ADDS ILL. LAYOUT

NORTHFIELD, Ill.—LinksCorp has purchased Windermere Country Club. Located 10 miles northwest of Orlando, Fla., Windermere is nestled between lakes Crescent and Roberts in the Butler Bay residential subdivision. The 6,693-yard course was designed by Ward Northrup and built in 1986.

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

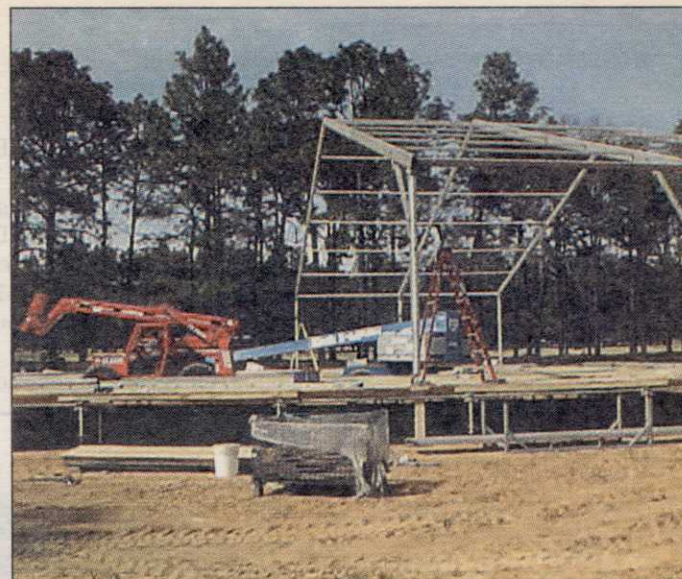
By PETER BLAIS

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.



Pinehurst Championship Management is constructing the Corporate Village located between Pinehurst Nos. 2 and 4 in preparation for June's U.S. Open.

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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John Daly-designed Wicked Stick in Myrtle Beach, a TSC-managed property.

Customer service name of TSC's game

By PETER BLAIS

MYRTLE BEACH, S.C. — "Diamond Back's venom will burn through you as no golf course ever has," reads the TSC Golf management company brochure announcing the September 1999 opening of the North Myrtle Beach, Russell Breeden-designed layout.

But while the course may have an occasionally nasty bite, the Diamond Back staff should help ease the pain. Before the first ball is struck at Diamond Back, every employee will take part in the Customer Service Training Program used at all TSC-managed properties.

"It all starts with customer service and everything else comes after that," said Gary Schaal, one of the principals and the 'S' in TSC Golf.

The TSC program is job specific and consists of training films, role playing and employee feedback. The program keys on each guest encounter opportunity. TSC may interview employees as many as three times before offering employment so that both sides know what the other expects.

All the effort has paid off with one of TSC's courses, Wachesaw Plantation in Myrtle Beach, ranking 13th nationally in customer service in a recent *Golf*

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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 ACQUISITIONS

winds up with 22 golf properties and 24 courses located 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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Pinehurst Championship Management

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pitality sales, operations, presentation, and volunteer coordination will be done by PCM. Inside the ropes, we will receive guidance from the USGA and do as they tell us."

Pinehurst is one of golf's shrines. It was famed architect Donald Ross' longtime home and has hosted many prestigious championships including the North and South Open (the nation's longest continuous-running golf championship), the 1936 PGA Championship, 1951 Ryder Cup and 1982 U.S. Amateur.

Pinehurst suffered from neglect in the late 1970s, but was restored to prominence by ClubCorp, which purchased the complex in 1984. ClubCorp restored Course No. 2 to its original condition and hosted the 1989 USGA's Women's Amateur, the 1991 and 1992 Tour Championships and 1994 U.S. Senior Open.

Pinehurst was awarded the 1999 men's U.S. Open in 1993. Rather than hire one of the larger tournament management firms to oversee the Open — firms such as IMG, Advantage International and Executive Sports — ClubCorp opted to start its own tournament management company. To head up the new firm, ClubCorp selected Wagner, a former PGA Tour marketing and championship director, who had overseen the 1991 and 1992 TOUR Championships on Course No. 2.

"The management here," Wagner recalled, "wanted someone who knew Pinehurst, understood how things are done here and could deliver a seamless presentation of the history and tradition that exists in this championship, rather than just slap up signs and say 'Let 'em play.' What you'll see is a seamless delivery of visual language and presentation from the time someone arrives in North Carolina. The same banners at the Raleigh-Durham airport are the same ones that will be on site at the tournament. The flowers and colors of flowers along the roadsides will be the same ones you'll see at the championship site. Our entire objective is to present the U.S. Open the way no one else could because it is being held at Pinehurst."

Since its inception, PCM has managed golf championships at both ClubCorp and non-ClubCorp facilities, including the 1996 U.S. Women's open at Pine Needles Lodge and Resort in Southern Pines. The firm plans to manage at least one major championship a year and was recently chosen to manage the 2001 U.S. Women's Open Championship again at Pine Needles. By mid-April, PCM also expected to be named manager of the 2002 U.S. Senior Open at Caves Valley near Baltimore.

PCM realized the need for state involvement in hosting a major tournament like the U.S. Open. To make this a North Carolina event, PCM developed a President's Council consisting of 16 of the state's biggest company chairmen, including Gov. James Hunt and former Gov. James Martin. Through PCM's work with that committee, North Carolina agreed to expand state roadways (primarily US1) leading to Pinehurst.

Other aspects of the Open that PCM has dealt with have included:

- Attracting corporate sponsors — PCM recruited 50-plus sponsors, a record number that included many first-timers.
- Building The U.S. Open Hospitality Village — Construction began in late March. The village, which includes more than 300,000 square feet of covered canvas tenting, will sit along holes 1, 2 and 18 of Pinehurst No. 4, another Ross design that architect Tom Fazio is redesigning and will be renamed The Tribute. Construction of The Tribute will begin following the tournament. A Media Village is also planned.

- Preparation of Course No. 2 — The course will close almost three weeks prior to the Open. PCM recruited 60 volunteers, many of them superintendents at U.S. clubs, to help prepare the layout. There will also be close to 18,000 bleacher seats.

- Traffic issues — Coordinating traffic and the 50,000 daily spectators in and out on the one road leading to and from Pinehurst will involve shuttles operating from two remote parking facilities 4.5 miles from the course.

The Corporate Village will include 217 corporate hospitality clients plus 13 Pinehurst corporate alliance partners, making it the largest hospitality contingent in the history of the U.S. Open, Wagner said. The corporate alliance partners have long-term relationships with Pinehurst. They not only purchase a corporate tent for the Open, but also spend a certain amount at Pinehurst every year.

"Pepsi, for instance, is designated the preferred soft drink of Pinehurst and the U.S. Open," Wagner explained. "We created an event for Pepsi at Pinehurst called the Pepsi Fall Invitational. Pepsi invites its 100 biggest bottlers, who in turn invite their biggest clients. Our surveys of the bottlers has shown this is the best thing Pepsi does all year. Second, Pepsi gets to say to their bottlers that Pinehurst Championship Management, which runs this invitational tournament for us, is the same company that runs the Women's,

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USGA/ClubCorp

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a lot of questions from people whether Pinehurst should go with a new relatively untried cultivar," Moraghan recalled. "It's turned out quite well. There was a learning curve, like there is with anything. But Paul and his staff seem to have that under control."

Added Jett of G-2: "It was relatively untried around the country. But we had G-2 at Pinehurst for three years before it was ever put on No. 2. We had test plots and practice putting greens

that were 3 years old before we planted No. 2. And we had the advantage of having it on No. 8 the year before it was put on No. 2. So we got to see it for a year under golf course playing and maintenance conditions. We had no concerns with putting it on. We knew what it was going to do."

Said Moraghan: "The only other issue would be the rough. Being a Bermudagrass situation, we could not have it at the height we normally would for a cool-season grass. We're down between 3 and 4 inches and the intermediate rough will be at about 1-1/2 inches. The greens will be

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Pinehurst CM

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Senior's and now the U.S. Men's opens. That helps Pepsi and the bottlers build up their credibility and builds up the event itself."

PCM hopes to turn the traffic situation, which many see as a marketing disadvantage, into an advantage.

"We're in the middle of no-

where, but [geographically] we're also central to everything," Wagner explained. "We have a lot of land. We've secured over 200 acres on the north and south side of Pinehurst. One lot is three miles away and the other is five miles. We're able to feed those lots with some pretty good roads. The state began improving the roads leading into Moore County back in 1993.

The state is going to construct more than 1,000 trail signs leading from the major arteries at the state's borders and major airports to the championship. We've relied heavily on the state Department of Transportation [DOT] to develop a plan for us."

Those who say the state has little experience handling the crowds likely to descend on Pinehurst are vastly underesti-

ating North Carolina's capabilities, Wagner said.

"Every year, the DOT and Highway Patrol handle four NASCAR races at Rockingham and Charlotte that make this look like a go-cart race," Wagner said. "It dwarfs what we'll do here. They park 50,000 cars a day at Rockingham and 80,000 at Charlotte. Since we're not in a major metropolitan area, we won't have

the congestion problems they had last year in San Francisco when the U.S. Open was at The Olympic Club, or that they'll have this year for the Ryder Cup at The Country Club outside Boston."

The original business plan for the Open called for 25 tents and 50 corporate hospitality clients, basically break-even figures for PCM, Wagner said.

With more than 200 corporate clients, the Open stands to be a big money-maker.

"It wasn't our intent to make money on the U.S. Open, but to further position Pinehurst as the premier golf venue in the United States," Wagner said.

USGA/ClubCorp

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at least 1/8 inch and the green speeds between 10-1/2 and 11."

PCM's decision to allow public play to continue until 2-1/2 weeks before the Open doesn't concern Moraghan.

"It depends on the club and what they feel they can do," Moraghan said. "If it's a private club, it's what they feel the members will tolerate. From our standpoint, we'd like to have as much closure time as possible. But we don't have that strong a say. We can suggest that a club does this or that, but it's up to the club. As a resort, Pinehurst is doing us and the players a favor by closing down the end of May. That's above standard. This is the 13th or 14th Open for me and I don't think we've ever had that much closure time. The place will be perfect when the boys roll in there."

Added Jett: "The last day of play will be May 27. Tournament week starts June 14. We're looking to have all the fairway divots and ball marks on the greens healed by then. We want the course to be spotless by tournament week. The 17 days will give us plenty of time to do that."

Jett expects to have 60 volunteers, many of them head superintendents from around the country, helping the Pinehurst crew prepare and maintain No. 2.

"My staff that week will be around 90 people," the head superintendent said. "Many of the volunteers are from the Eastern part of the country. One gentleman is coming from Scotland. Marsh Benson from Augusta National and Mark Michaud from Pebble Beach will be here, too."

As for the Tom Fazio redesign of Course No. 4 that is currently underway, Moraghan said: "That's an incredible project. They've really turned that all around."

Moraghan said he had little objection to the changes, despite the fact No. 4 is a Ross design. "It has been tinkered with a lot. It's a great piece of land. But Pinehurst had some concerns about the way the course flowed and thought they could make it better. And they did."

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