Superintendent Sapochak's first golf course design called a hidden gem

BY PAUL L. KAUFMAN JR.

EGORGETOWN, S.C. — About 30 miles south of Myrtle Beach lies Winyah Bay Golf Club, a hidden gem opened a year ago as the first design effort of former golf course superintendent Matt Sapochak.

Sapochak had honed his design skills as a shaper and construction superintendent for Pete and P.B. Dye at Debordieu Golf Club in Georgetown and Prestwick Country Club in Myrtle Beach, and had done a substantial in-house renovation while superintendent at Deertrack Golf Course in Surfside Beach.

The current general manager of Winyah Bay, Sapochak said: “When I had the opportunity to design Winyah Bay, I

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Winyah Bay Golf Club south of Myrtle Beach is receiving international acclaim.

Austin course recreated from memory

BY FRANCES G. TRIMBLE

The task was straightforward: Take readers of a club history back in time to 1924 and show them a golf course that has not existed in its entirety since the late 1940s and, to the best of anyone's knowledge, was never represented on a scorecard or in the local newspaper.

Without the recreation, modern golfers would have difficulty believing that the course where teaching legend Harvey Penick once caddied, and early Southwest Conference golf championships were contested, once featured tee shots over a now-bustling north-south thoroughfare called Red River Street. The holes on the east side of Red River were replaced by a shopping center in the early 1950s, after the course was sold to the city of Austin. The land west of Red River remains a nine-hole municipal layout known as Hancock Park.

All agreed a recreation was historically important, though golfers who played the course in the 1920s and '30s were in short supply.

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VILLAGE OF IGLS, Austria — Golf course architects Matthews & Nelhiebel have begun their first European project: design of renovations to the Innsbruck-Igls Golf Club, in the Austrian Alps here.

America's Bruce Matthews and Vic Nelhiebel traveled to Austria at the invitation of the club's agronomy consultant, Josef Leinauer of Petting, Germany. Leinauer is a pioneer in the use of combined subsurface irrigation and drainage systems for golf greens and athletic fields.

Innsbruck-Igls Golf Club is one of the older courses in Austria, founded in 1935 as a nine-hole course. Its 18-hole course in nearby Rinn lies on the forested lower slopes of the Patscherkofel Mountain, site of the 1964 and 1976 Winter Olympics downhill ski venue. In fact, the community of Rinn's local ski slope crosses several holes. From almost anywhere on the course, there are views of the Inn Valley below and 10,000-foot Alpine peaks beyond.

Nearly all members of the club prefer to walk the course, despite the challenging terrain. Played from the championship tees, Innsbruck-Igls measures 5,945 meters, with a par of 71.

The initial design renovation focuses on improved bunkering and green visibility, as illustrated by the 12th Wildbach hole, a 345-meter par-4, playing uphill. Because of the sidehill locations and surrounding fir forest, drainage of spring water and defining the fairway limits in

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Tournament Players Club planned for Mexico City

By PETER BLAIS

MEXICO CITY — Construction is scheduled to begin late this summer on a PGA Tour Tournament Players Club golf course 30 miles northwest of the Mexican City.

Hurdzan/Fry Golf Course Design — in conjunction with professional golfer John Cook and PGA Tour lead designer Chris Gray — has completed the preliminary design for the 18-hole, private/resort course scheduled to open in 2002.

“The housing plan has been wrapped around the golf course,” said Hurdzan/Fry Senior Design Associate David Whelchel. “They let us put the golf course where we wanted it, within reason.”

Group IUSA, which has built several courses throughout Mexico, is the developer, according to Whelchel. The first phase of the TPC project will include the course, a hotel and commercial area. A second course is under consideration. Corporate villas are also planned in hopes of eventually landing a PGA Tour event, Whelchel said.

Whelchel said the property is located at 7,000 feet altitude, which should allow for plantings of bentgrass, ryegrasses and fescues, although the final turf selection has not been made. Bisecting the property are two small rivers, one of which has carved a bluff that will play an important part in the course design.

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Cook’s father, Jim Cook — who runs a tournament management firm and oversees the Mexico Open — brought the Hurdzan-Fry team in on the project, Whelchel said.

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