

Atlanta's new Bear Creek G&CC ready for play

DOUGLASSVILLE, Ga. — Upscale golf has arrived in Douglas County with the recent opening of Bear Creek Golf and Country Club. A semi-private golf and residential community, Bear Creek features an 18-hole, par-71 championship course designed by Jim Ganley of Integrated Golf Services in Atlanta.

Head professional Brian Stubbs, a Douglasville native, sees the opening of Bear Creek as a golfing milestone in his home area. "It's going to be rewarding to bring a quality golf facility to Douglas County," he said. "We hope to bring the north side of Atlanta golf experience to the west side of Atlanta."

Prior to taking the Bear Creek job, Stubbs was a contented assistant pro at Atlanta Country Club. He had no plans to come home until he toured Bear Creek's layout and was wowed by its rolling hills and wooded setting.

"It is a surprisingly beautiful piece of land," said Stubbs. "There is quite a bit of elevation change. There are several elevated tees, with greens set naturally into existing contours. We have very dramatic and beautiful topography."

The course measures just under 6,600 yards from the tips and features four sets of tees, allowing golfers to pick the right level of challenge for their game. Greens are seeded with Crenshaw bentgrass, a variety of bent that thrives in Georgia's heat and humidity. The fairways, meanwhile, were completely sodded with Tifway 419 Bermudagrass. By sodding instead of sprigging the Bermudagrass, the course will open with lush fairways and will already have a mature look to it.

Head superintendent William Leimbach, formerly at Cotton Fields Golf Course, in McDonough, Ga., joined up with Bear Creek a year before the opening, to supervise the growth. Before Cotton Fields, Leimbach served as assistant superintendent at Atlanta Country Club and Hickory Ridge in Thomaston, Ga., where he also was involved in the construction process.

SIGNET IN MANAGEMENT ROLE

The course is being run by Signet Golf Associates of Pinehurst, N.C., a professional management group that specializes in upscale courses. Peter Dejak, a partner in Signet and a honors graduate of Penn State's turf management program, is excited about the conditions golfers will experience from day one.

"Because we sodded completely, the playing areas are in

phenomenal shape," Dejak said. "And the natural beauty really jumps out at you."

Dejak especially likes the inclusion of Bear Creek and Baldwin Creek, which meander through the property, providing a rich backdrop to the golf course.

Bear Creek is not just golf,

however. It is a designed community featuring 483 homesites, a swim and tennis clubhouse, four lighted tennis courts, a swimming pool and nature trails for jogging and walking. Bear Creek lies 17 miles from Hartsfield International and 25 minutes from downtown Atlanta.



The 12th hole at Bear Creek Golf and Country Club in Douglasville, Ga.

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