Pascuzzo tackles technology, affordability issues

**Q&A**

**EL DORADO HILLS, Calif.** — The American Society of Golf Course Architects has taken a stand this year, issuing position papers on golf club and ball technology and affordable golf. Golf Course News recently caught up with ASGCA president Damian Pascuzzo to discuss how these two interrelated issues are impacting the game of golf.

Golf Course News: Why has the ASGCA tackled these weighty issues this year?

Pascuzzo: When I became president I sat down with my next two successors, Jay Morrish and Clyde Johnston, and came up with an agenda. We prioritized them and narrowed it down to the impact of golf club and ball technology on golf course design and the need for affordable golf. This allows the association to focus its efforts for the next three years.

**GCN:** Why is golf club and ball technology at the top of your list?

Pascuzzo: We don’t make the rules and we don’t make the equipment, but we certainly see the ramifications of the clubs and balls on today’s golf courses. We can also see what it is going to do to tomorrow’s golf courses if some checks are not put in place.

We are seeing a direct linkage between the ball flying farther and the increased acreage required to contain the ball not only in length but also in width. When the ball is hit badly it is now going farther left and right. As a result, the corridors that we create for golf have to get wider and that requires more acres which means that development and maintenance costs increase.

**GCN:** What is the art of the long iron dead?

Pascuzzo: I wonder, are we really seeing shot-making at its highest level today in professional golf? How do you design a par-4 where a pro has to play a driver, long iron? Part of the skill of the game is certainly gone.

**GCN:** What is the best solution to the problem?

Pascuzzo: Jack Nicklaus has talked about the idea of a tournament ball. As an organization I don’t think we would support that. We don’t want to see a stratification of the game because one of the cool things about golf is the level playing field. We don’t care if something is done to limit the clubs or the balls. Our point is that something needs to be done. We are bearing the brunt of this and we need to get people talking about this issue.

**GCN:** How does technology impact affordability?

Pascuzzo: Cost is the other part of the equation. We have had flat participation rates for the last four years and in the

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**Boston’s Quarry Hills nears its decade-long goal**

QUINCY, Mass. — Seeding was completed this fall on the first nine holes of Quarry Hills, the 27-hole course being built atop the Quincy and Milton landfills a mere six miles from downtown Boston. The course is using fill material from the capital city’s massive “Big Dig” highway.

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**Public golf boom continues despite construction slow down**

**By DOUG SAUNDERS**

Although golf course construction started slowing in 2001, the trend towards public golf remained constant. According to the National Golf Foundation 72.5 percent of all facilities opened last year were daily-fee courses.

The continued popularity in the game, and the severe lack of quality public courses in many major population regions accounts for this steady figure. Large states such as California, Florida and Texas lead the way with new openings, and the trend towards public courses shows in the statistics. In Texas, all but three of the 37 courses opening in 2001 were public facilities, in Florida, 32 of 40 openings were public, and in California, 19 of 26 new openings were geared towards public play.

This trend has given golfers who aren’t members of private clubs the enjoyment of playing on courses just as good as the ones behind the hedges and gates. It has also forced a distinct shift in the trends among golf course architects.

“Fifteen years ago 90 percent of the golf courses that I designed were for private golf clubs and today 70 percent,” Pascuzzo said. We’ve got seven holes seeded and may

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