

BRIEFS

ECKENRODE LAUNCHES ORIGINS GOLF DESIGN

IRVINE, Calif. — Todd Eckenrode, former lead designer for Gary Roger Baird, has struck out on his own. The 32-year-old designer has formed a new company called Origins Golf Design that

will be based here. In addition to his design skills, Eckenrode is an accomplished golfer. He played collegiate golf at the University of California at Santa Bar-



bara, the University of Arizona, and has qualified in the past for the U.S. Amateur. Eckenrode said his experience with Baird, his playing background, and his interest in the works of early architects such as Alister Mackenzie have given him a unique insight into designing courses for the modern game. His last project with Baird was Shadow Lakes Golf Club in Brentwood.

ROUGH GRADING GOING AT STONEHAVEN GOLF CLUB

BECKLEY, W. Va. — Clearing and rough grading has begun at Stonehaven Golf Club, an 18-hole golf course designed by Ault, Clark & Associates. The new 7,228-yard course will join the existing Cobb Course at the Glade Springs Resort. The all-bentgrass layout will loop around both sides of a new 70-acre lake which will also provide water for irrigation. Rock unearthed during construction will be turned into rock gardens planted with fescue and wildflowers. With all of the readily available rock, walls and man-made outcroppings will be the main theme that runs through all 18 holes.

SEVEN LAKES UNDERWAY IN ONTARIO

LASALLE, ONTARIO, Canada — Work has begun at the Matthews & Nelhiebel-designed Seven Lakes Golf Course here 10 minutes away from downtown Detroit. The new layout will complement the existing par-35, nine-hole course at the site. True to its name, Seven Lakes will feature 20 acres of water, with six new lakes being created. The par-71, 6,800-yard layout will also have 100 bunkers, some of which will be 150 feet long and others that will be 20 feet wide and six feet deep. Ten of the holes will have water in play and seven will be cut out of a mature woodlot. Work at the course is slated to be completed by the end of 2002.

Panks developing a Native American niche

By DAVID HUBBARD

PHOENIX, Ariz. — More than a few sovereign Indian nations across America are building golf courses in their desire to direct the phenomena of Indian gaming into a major hospitality and entertainment industry. With two such projects behind him, Gary Panks would like nothing better than to be the golf course architect they call.

In Phoenix, Ariz., the tribal officials from the Gila River Indian Community liked what they saw in Panks' work at the Raven Golf Club at South Mountain, and invited him to design the community's 36-hole Whirlwind Golf Club as the feature amenity to the Sheraton Resort Hotel-Casino now under construction. Managed by Troon Golf, the first course, Devil's Claw, opened in late 2000 to rave reviews.

"We have always envisioned a very high-end destination resort for this area, and find it very reassuring that Mr. Panks shares our enthusiasm for this venture and can work so easily with the community to make it happen," stated Steven Heeley, deputy general council for the community.



Panks' Twin Warriors Golf Course, built for the Santa Ana Pueblo in Beranillo, N.M., recently opened

For Panks, the commission has turned into to far more than the next project on his to-do list.

"The opportunity to design on Reservation land, essentially free of state and federal intervention has opened a new

world of possibility for our firm," said Panks.

As the second course at Whirlwind, Cattle, moves closer to completion, Panks' recently opened his second project on In-

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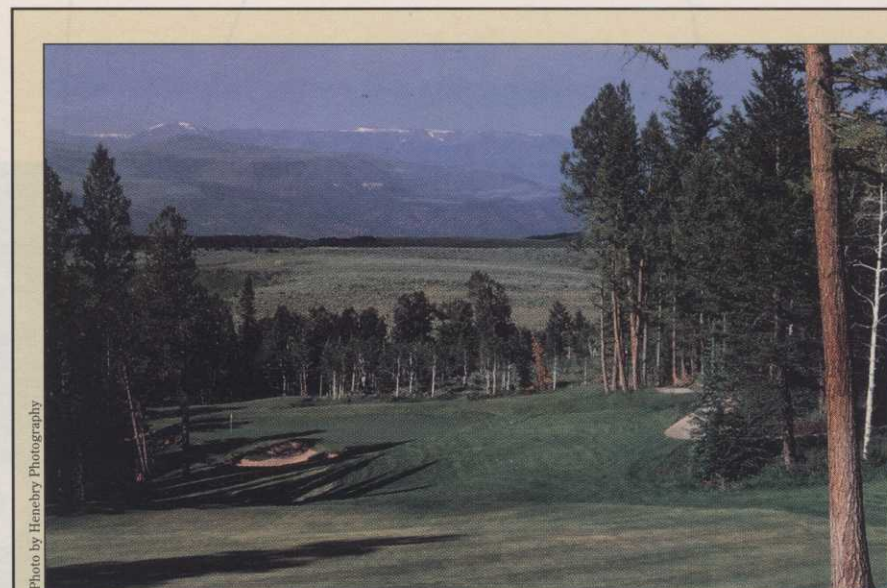


Photo by Henchry Photography

The second hole at the Summit Course

Nicklaus' Summit Course offers 360-degree views of the Rockies

By JOEL JOYNER

EDWARDS, Colo. — The Summit Course, a new Jack Nicklaus signature layout here, was challenging to build due to drastic elevation changes.

The effort, however, was worth it as the layout offers 360-degree views of the rugged Rocky Mountain terrain. Opened in August, the course is situated just 20 miles west of Vail. It is the newest addition for the Cordillera Group that now owns four upscale courses in the area.

The terrain at the Summit layout drops down to about 8,600 feet along the course, only to climb the side of the ridge again to reach up to 9,100 feet at the 18th fairway — its highest point.

PUNCHBOWL GREEN

There are some 70- to 80-foot drops from tee to green on the course, and par-3s that range from 40- to 50-feet in elevation changes. "There's a lot of vari-

ety here," said Glenn Samuelson, superintendent. "We're very exposed on a few holes, and very protected on others. Everything from tall stands of fir 120 feet high to wide open sagebrush."

For the first time at any of the Cordillera courses, flat drainage was used on the greens. "We didn't pitch the greens or anything unusual to try to remove water," said Samuelson. Jack's pinable areas are quite flat, around one or two percent. However, the 8th green, a par-5, sports a punchbowl design.

A fair amount of blasting was required to get the main line in for irrigation and drainage. "There's a lot of rock. That's why they call it the Rocky Mountains," Samuelson said. "It was a chore to get down four or five feet sometimes."

The final cost for building the Summit course fell between \$11 and \$12 million,

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Rulewich's new Wild Turkey Golf Course

Rulewich 'stitched' new Wild Turkey layout together

By JOHN TORSIELLO

HAMBURG, N.J. — Crystal Springs Resort has opened its second Roger Rulewich-designed layout, Wild Turkey, here in northwestern New Jersey.

Rulewich's first layout at the five course resort, Ballyowen Golf Course, opened four years ago and was much easier to design and build according to the architect. At Wild Turkey, which opened in June, Rulewich had to piece together several distinct parcels of land into one seamless golf course.

"If Ballyowen was a piece of cloth, then Wild Turkey was like a closet full of clothes," he said. "We were able to cut Ballyowen from one type of land, while we had several very different sections of property at Wild Turkey that we had to stitch together."

The different sections Rulewich

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GOLF COURSE NEWS

Panks, Native Americans

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dian land, the formidable Twin Warriors Golf Course for the Santa Ana Pueblo in Beranillo, N.M. As the centerpiece of the Hyatt Resort Hotel, Twin Warriors is the Pueblo community's second course, which is adjacent to the older 27-hole municipal layout.

UNENCUMBERED DEVELOPMENT

As he actively pursues new opportunities to work with Native American communities, Panks is enthusiastic about developing a niche in the golf and hotel industries.

"In this day and age, it is a chance to get in on the ground floor and shape a piece of land without having to consider residential development," he says. "Usually, the ancillary construction around a golf course can control or impede upon the best planning effort. For all intents and purposes, what we put together on Indian land is largely unencumbered."

Water, or at least water rights, is rarely a problem for Native American golf courses. And, there are no turf restrictions, such as Arizona's 90-acre allotment on new golf course development. The reservations are free from the usual zoning and permitting associated with pre-construction, not to mention the headaches of remaining compliant in myriad environmental issues. American Indian communities do not require any sort of permitting or approval from the state or federal government to proceed with development of any kind.

The only rules are those imposed by the tribal councils. If the state's historical preservation agency is involved, the final decision on how to handle a significant find lies with the community leaders, who usually quickly determine to build around it, soften the impact, or disregard it and move on with the project.

Panks finds the Indian communities respectful of their land to the point that any outside agency to direct environmental or historic processes is simply unnecessary.

"In fact, the people I have worked with in Arizona and New Mexico are to be congratulated for their foresight to hire only the most expert consultants to help them realize well-planned, well-built, well-designed developments with respect to the environment and surroundings," said Panks. "It is very fortunate to be involved with projects driven by that kind of thinking."

PROTECTING CULTURAL SITES

In the case of Twin Warriors, Panks recalled a dilemma concerning 20 or so cultural sites,

and the sacred landmark, Snakehead Ridge.

At first, there was a little consternation about butting a golf course up to the consecrated area. However, to Panks' way of thinking, golfers are not the sorts of people to leave the course to hike up a hill. Panks suggested the three holes routed along the

base of Snakehead Ridge would actually create a buffer zone to further protect the mountain from intruders. As it turned out, Panks preserved his preferred routing, and golfers can still appreciate the significance of Snakehead Ridge from a respectable distance.

At Whirlwind, with little cultural significance to the site itself, Panks worked with the vi-

sion of the community in what will ultimately be a scaled-down replication of the Gila River in its entirety from the headwaters in northern Arizona to its confluence with the Salt River. With significant landmarks noted, the water feature will welcome guests at the entrance and wind through the property and fill a featured lagoon linking the resort and the golf course.

Understanding the desires of both the developer and the golfer fuels the creative fire of most golf course architects. Panks' association with Native American developers takes it a few steps further, grasping the tribal histories and cultural nuances to inspire his course design. His goal now is to explore this evolving market niche on new sites outside the deserts of the Southwest. ■

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