

BRIEFS

NELSON TO RECEIVE DONALD ROSS AWARD FROM ASGCA



CHICAGO — Byron Nelson has been selected to receive the 2002 Donald Ross Award from the American Society of Golf Course

Architects (ASGCA), which will be presented at the Donald Ross Banquet on April 30 in Santa Barbara, Calif. Among Nelson's many accomplishments is his assistance in the development of the TPC Four Seasons at Los Colinas, the site of the yearly Verizon Byron Nelson Classic. The Donald Ross award is presented annually to an individual who has made significant contributions to the game of golf and the profession of golf course architecture. Past winners have included Jack Nicklaus, Arnold Palmer and Gene Sarazen.

SADDLE HILL TO GET A NEW START

HOPKINTON, Mass. — Developers Joe Pasquale and Dan McLaughlin have started transforming the former public golf course known as Saddle Hill to a family country club. Architect Ian Scott-Taylor will oversee the renovation, which is expected to be completed by July. The renovation, which Scott-Taylor described as a classic 1930-era design approach, will use the existing topography to create fairways cut from natural grasses. Pasquale and McLaughlin, also plan to construct a 15,000-square-foot clubhouse, adjacent to which will be a sun deck and pool.

GCBAA ELECTS BOARD MEMBERS

LINCOLN, Neb. — The Golf Course Builders Association of America (GCBAA) recently elected six new directors and re-elected four directors to serve for the next two years. The newly elected directors are Ellen Davis of Greensmix, Sam Sakocius of SAJO Golf, Rob Stambaugh of Quality Golf Inc., Bob Steele of SEMA Golf LLC, Dennis Wagner of Rain Bird Corp., and James York of York Bridge Concepts. Scott DeBolt of JacklinGolf, Kirk Kyster of Landscapes Unlimited LLC, Rick Lohman of the Toro Co. and Willie Slingerland of Flowtronex PSI were re-elected to the board.

Houston development boom leads to renovations

By DEREK RICE

HOUSTON — Like most places in the country, the Houston area has seen a lot of golf course development in the last decade. As a result, most of the projects that are underway now, according to Richard Luikens, a consultant for Richard Luikens Golf Services, are renovations.

"In the Houston area, we've had such an influx in the last five to seven years. Thirty to 40 new facilities have opened up, and that is really tapering off," Luikens said. "I can only think of three golf courses that are under construction in the Houston area right now, and there is not a lot of talk of many more."

One Luikens project that is underway is a renovation of Lakeside Country Club. The \$2 million project broke ground on

Feb. 11 and has a reopening target date of July 15. The project includes complete renovation of the greens, replacement of the entire concrete cart path system and expansion of the irrigation system. Luikens is working with general contractor Wadsworth Construction, architect Ron Prichard and superintendent Terry Hutcherson on the project.

The timetable is important, Luikens said, because until mid-July the club's membership has no place to play.

"We spent a lot of time and effort putting the schedules together and getting the contractor in place and the materials in place so that we can turn the golf



A bulldozer builds up a green slope at Houston's Lakeside Country Club.

course back to the membership in a very short time," he said.

At the moment, members are forced to

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Pistol Creek looks to videotape

By JOHN TORSIELLO

BERLIN, Conn. — The owners of recently opened Pistol Creek Golf Club here have come up with unique marketing strategies to make play more enjoyable and keep golfers at the club once they finish their rounds.

Pistol Creek, which opened this month, has cameras located near the 18th green that capture approach shots and action around the hole. The tape is shown on a 15-minute delay in the club's restaurant and lounge.

"It's just a fun thing to do," said Gary Schiarrillo,

president of the Milford-based GRS Group, which developed, owns and manages the new course. "Whether you have had a great round or a mediocre one, being able to go into the grill room and watch yourself finish extends your round a little longer. To my knowledge it isn't being done anywhere else."

The owners of Pistol Creek say they have further made their course player-friendly by limiting the total number of

annual rounds to around 29,000 to ensure speedy play.

"We are limiting the rounds because we want people to get around the course in no longer than four and a half hours," said Schiarrillo, whose company was the consultant and project manager for Great River Golf Club in Milford. "We're taking a more long-range view rather than filling as many tee times as possible. We want people to have a pleasurable experience and come back."

To monitor pace of play, cameras will be installed at several key locations on the course. Golfers will not be let out until the previous group is on the first green. Rangers will patrol the course displaying a series of flags informing groups of their pace.

"We feel the flag system is a non-confrontational way to handle course patrol," said Schiarrillo. "Green means everything is OK, yellow means you're a little slow, and red means pick it up and move to the

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The 10th hole at Pistol Creek.

Spencer building the course of his dreams

By DEREK RICE

TOLEDO, Ohio — Denny Spencer of Spencer Golf Concepts will be the first to tell you that he's been extraordinarily fortunate in his life. After a lifetime of amateur golf, at age 50, he joined the Senior PGA Tour, where he played for five years. At the end of that run, he went to work for architect

Jerry Matthews, where he was able to learn about the golf course design business.

After five years with Matthews, Spencer decided to go out on his own last April, starting his own design firm and working from his home.

Now he can add golf course owner to

his resume. Along with his brother, his nephew and two contractors who own the land, Spencer has designed and is building The Golf Club at Saddlehorn, an upscale public course located just west of his hometown of Toledo.



Architect Denny Spencer modeled the entrance to The Golf Club at Saddlehorn after a Kentucky thoroughbred farm.

Because a lot of thoroughbred horses are bred in Swanton, where the course is located, Saddlehorn is modeled after a Kentucky thoroughbred farm. Spencer said this is part of a push to add a little something extra to the golf experience.

"I believe very strongly that golf has to

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Hills, Forrest see building market heating up

By DEREK RICE

TOLEDO, Ohio — While many in the golf industry talk about the future of the development resting in the area of renovation, Steve Forrest of Arthur Hills/Steve Forrest and Associates said his firm has seen an upswing in the number of new projects it's being asked to bid.

"New work went on hold between June and December last year, but I've seen a change in the last four weeks where people are starting to move forward with new projects," Forrest said.



Steve Forrest

That's not to say that renovation numbers aren't a little higher than normal.

"When I counted up the renovation projects we had, we do have quite a few," Forrest said. "It still probably accounts for 50 percent of the projects. It may be 30 to 40 percent at other times."

The size and scope of the projects the firm is working on recently, such as the first nine holes of a 27-hole renovation at Ivanhoe Country Club in Ivanhoe, Ill., has increased as well, which Forrest said may be another indicator that the industry is turning around.

"There seem to be more extensive renovations these days than perhaps there would have been in the past," he said. "Most of them are rebuilding the majority if not all of their greens, certainly all the bunkers and upgrading the tee complexes without too many exceptions."

In total, the firm is handling about 15 renovation projects, five or six of which—in varying stages—are Forrest's responsibility.

There are two main reasons course owners look to renovate, Forrest said.

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Pistol Creek innovates

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next hole."

The course will also provide caddy service to golfers requesting it, and plans to add a few new twists in their food and beverage operation.

Schiarrillo said Pistol Creek, so named because the course sits on the site of the state's first pistol factory, was designed with

the average player in mind.

"The majority of golfers are in the 10 to 25 handicap range. We wanted to make Pistol Creek a place where those golfers would be challenged and not be overwhelmed," he said.

The result is a course filled with modest sized holes with generous fairways and gently

contoured greens. The course presently measures just 6,450 yards from the back tees, although there are plans to stretch it to around 6,800 yards.

"We designed this course from the middle tee boxes," said Schiarrillo, a former tennis pro turned golf nut. "We have par fours that many players can try and drive and par fives they can try and reach in two. They might not do it,

but they'll have fun trying."

Pistol Creek, however, is no pushover. There are a number of forced carries off the tee box and from the fairway, with ample wetlands lining a number of holes. The layout places a premium on accuracy and proper club selection.

Schiarrillo, Phil Katz, an employee of GRS, and representatives of Vero Golf of Vero Beach,

Fla., were involved in the course's development. The Connecticut firm Site and Earth Technologies assisted GRS in the construction of the course.

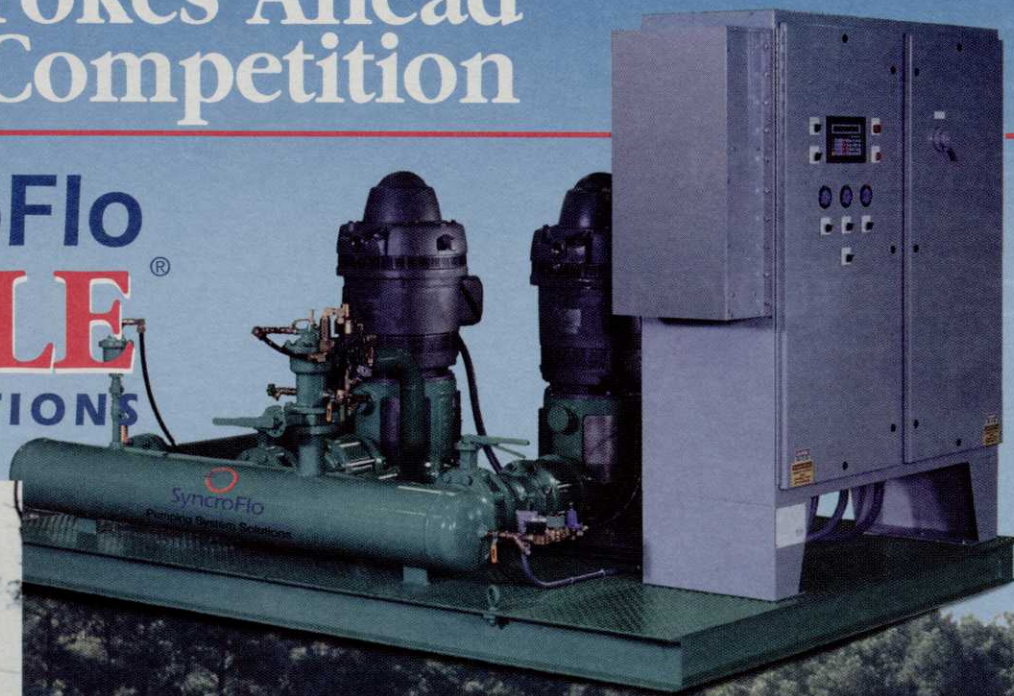
The owners of Pistol Creek have kept greens fees in the moderate range, \$65 on weekends and \$55 on weekdays, cart included. A limited number of memberships are being offered in the club's initial year of operation.

The course has bentgrass greens, fairways and tee boxes with bluegrass/fescue rough. There are two practice facilities on the property, including a golf learning center directed by noted teaching professional T.J. Tomasi.

Looking ahead, Schiarrillo said GRS has approval to build a course to be known as Waterwheel on 380 acres of land in the Great Gorge area of northwest New Jersey. ■

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Todd Daniel - GCS, Atlanta Athletic Club - Highlands Course
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Building rebound

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The first is to remain competitive with the upscale public courses that have emerged.

"I think [the clubs] felt the effect of some members who instead of paying monthly dues just go play some of these new

SOME OF ARTHUR HILLS/STEVE FORREST AND ASSOCIATES' 2002 RENOVATION PROJECTS:

- Belle Haven Country Club, Alexandria, Va.
- Colonial Country Club, Harrisburg, Pa.
- Columbus Country Club, Columbus, Ga.
- Congressional Country Club, Bethesda, Md.
- Country Club of Fairfax, Fairfax, Va.
- Country Club of North Carolina, Pinehurst, N.C.
- The Ivanhoe Club, Ivanhoe, Ill.
- Oakland Hills Country Club, Birmingham, Mich.
- University of Kentucky Golf Club, Lexington, Ky.

upscale public courses and have the same experience and more variety," Forrest said.

The second reason revolves around some sort of problem with green complexes and other cosmetic-type issues, Forrest said.

"Perhaps [the green complexes] were constructed many years ago and have just deteriorated or they are rebuilding them so the superintendent will have the best possible growing medium to grow grass," he said.

As for the future of new courses, Forrest said his firm is optimistic that the demand will return sooner rather than later.

"We're just starting to see some new inquiries in 2002. We're encouraged by what's been happening here," he said. ■

GOLF COURSE NEWS

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