

Garl goes with paspalum at Crown Colony

By DEREK RICE

FT. MYERS, Fla. — While Crown Colony Golf & Country Club is a “fine golf course and a great community,” according to architect Ron Garl, its grass is a major attraction as well.

The Garl-designed course, which opened in late February, uses the certified hybrid paspalum developed by the University of Georgia. The grass is attractive,

Garl said, because it can survive on salt water and brackish water.

“This is the first major breakthrough in warm-season grass in 30 or 40 years,” Garl said. “There are a lot of places in the world that have brackish water and this grass is going to help.”

Even after the course opened, crews continued to pump brackish water onto the grass.

“We’re pumping mostly efflu-

ent water on it, wastewater, but it runs 2,400 parts per million of salt, and it’s doing very well,” Garl said. “It won’t take constant salt water, but it will take brackish water and it will take salt water if you flush it once the salts build up in the root zone and the soil.”

Garl said his firm is looking at two or three more places, in Florida and the Caribbean,

where paspalum would be beneficial.

“If you think about all the places in the world that are close to the ocean that would like to have a golf course but don’t have a constant source of fresh water, this is going to be a major break-



Ron Garl

through,” Garl said. “Our golf course is one big laboratory right now. As time goes on, we’ll know more. We’re very pleased at this stage with how this is handling the water.”

The environmental impact of using the hybrid paspalum was another factor that contributed to the decision to use it at Crown Colony, Garl said.

“We think it’s very important to be good stewards of the land. We

Continued on next page

Former Air Force course to reopen

ARLINGTON, Texas — The former Carswell Golf Club in Westworth Village, west of Fort Worth, has undergone extensive renovation of its golf course and



practice facilities since the Westworth Redevelopment Authority acquired the property

from the U.S. Air Force.

Now known as Hawks Creek Golf Club, the course will be ready for play this summer. Architect John C. Colligan said the new design “will offer resort course features at fees the public player can afford.”

Colligan said he approached the project with the idea that golf course architects have a responsibility to the golfing public and course owners to be prudent in the design process in an effort to keep green fees reasonable without sacrificing the look and feel of the course.

Colligan said anyone who played the old Carswell course will be surprised by Hawks Creek. His design retained many of the unique features of the original course while incorporating many new concepts, including a double green formed by the second and fourth holes, a large beach bunker on the 14th, and an alternate route fairway on the 16th.

The overall course has been lengthened to 6,800 yards from championship tees and will play to 5,200 yards from the forward set of tees.

Other course improvements include larger tees, 419 Bermudagrass fairways, 6,500-square-foot average bentgrass greens, a new 1,250-head irrigation system and strategically placed sand and grass bunkers.

Moving forward, the course has plans to complete a tournament pavilion, remodel the clubhouse and complete a golf car storage facility prior to its reopening. ■

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Houston boom leads to renovation

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play at other facilities, but Luikens said the course owner has a unique way to deal with that problem.

"The golf pro actually secured daily tee times at other facilities. His membership basically has a lottery system. His members call in and there's, say, 30 or 40 tee

times and the club is picking up the cost of the green fees," he said. "When you think about it, the member is still being charged his monthly dues, and he doesn't have a golf course to play on. I admire the golf course stepping up and doing that for the membership. It's a way to appease the membership because they don't

have a course to play on."

THE DRIVE TO RENOVATE

Money, Luikens said, is one driving factor behind most renovation projects. Rather than trying to build a new course, owners are looking at ways to breathe new life into existing facilities.

"It's a little tough to borrow money right now to build a golf course. If you've got an established club, owners can go out



Terry Hutcherson and Richard Luikens talk strategy.

and borrow the money because they're just improving their own property, but they're not betting on the fact that they're going to sell lots or they're going to attract a new membership or a new set of golfers," Luikens said. "They have already captured their audience."

Another driver is the need to update courses that were built many years ago and bring them up to a level where they are competitive with the newer courses that are being built.

"[In the Houston area] we had a lot of golf courses that were built in the '70s that are, I hate to use the word 'worn out,' but they are," Luikens said. "They're 25 years old, and they don't meet the expectations of today's golfers. With all the new properties that have opened up that do meet the golfers' expectations, the other guys have got to keep up, so they've got to put money into their projects."

"Technology just in construction methods has changed so much in the last 25 years that just to keep up, the new kid on the block is better, whether he really is or not, just because he's got updated technology in his construction," he added. ■

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PERIODICAL

Secondary turf equipment market shows growing pains
By JAY FINEGAN
OVERBECK
A three-to-four-year-old John Deere 3235 fairway mower (left) retails for around \$22,000, compared to \$36,000 for a brand-new 3235B model. It comes with a one-year warranty.

Chicago credit giant to finance golf
By JAY FINEGAN
CHICAGO — A new source of capital has entered the golf industry, and this one comes with deep pockets.
Heller Financial, a \$20-billion credit firm, recently established a golf lending unit when some of the void created when Bank of America abandoned the golf financing field last fall.
Ironically, two of the key players in the new Heller golf brain trust have sailed in from Bank of America. Kick Nekorowski, who completed \$275 million in golf course investments for Bank of America, will be in charge of the new Heller unit.
Seeburger, a West Coast loan officer, will be in charge of the Heller unit's eastern half of the country from his office in Denver.
"I'm excited to be in charge of the Heller unit," Seeburger says. "It's a great opportunity to help golf courses in the U.S. and Canada. Heller is a great lender for the golf industry."

Wolf Creek offers high drama in Nevada desert
By DOUG SAUNDERS
MESQUITE, Nev. — The fairways of the recently opened Wolf Creek Golf Club pour through the stark desert terrain like green lava flowing through the landscape. Their stunning contrast against the multi-colored sandstone cliffs creates a spectacular setting that begs a golfer to come out and play in this high desert setting in southeastern Nevada.
Your first thoughts are: how could a year Heller...
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Drought-stricken N'west faces dry summer
By JOEL JOYNER
SPOKANE, Idaho — A drought-stricken Northwest is facing a dry summer. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the U.S. Department of the Interior, and the U.S. Forest Service have declared a drought emergency for the region. According to Scott Gudes, acting administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the Northwest is the most drought-stricken region of the United States.
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Superintendent for the 'BIG DIG'
After swanning the globe building golf courses most of his life, Massachusetts native Gary Reeser, 42, has returned home to oversee construction of one of the most ambitious golf projects ever undertaken in the United States — Quarry Hills Golf Course. The John Seayford design is taking shape just outside Boston. The story begins on page 13.

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Garl goes with paspalum

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want to be good neighbors and we want to be environmentally sensitive," he said. "Using this new grass is just another step in that direction. We want to build golf courses that lie softly on the land."

Garl also had nothing but praise for the project's contractor, Highland Golf.



The Ron Garl-designed Crown Colony Golf & Country Club uses hybrid paspalum.

"You can't build a great golf course without a great contractor," he said. "Often the contractors don't get enough credit. The architects get too much. These really fine golf courses come from a combination of good owners, great sites and contractors that have the ability to pull it all together with the architect." ■

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