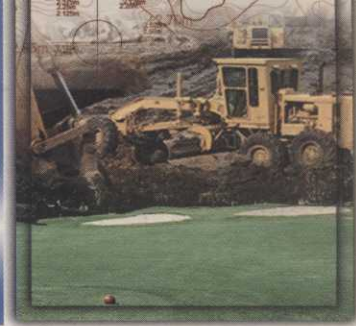


DEVELOPMENT & RENOVATION



BRIEFS

WEITZ COMPLETES ROSE CREEK CONSTRUCTION

NORTH PALM BEACH, Fla. — Weitz Golf International has completed construction of Rose Creek Golf Course in Edmond, Okla. The Arthur Hills-designed course, which also features a large practice and teaching facility, will open for play in early summer 2003. Rose Creek is being developed by The Melrose Co., based in Hilton Head, S.C.

JACOBSON FINISHES PHASE I OF INDIAN LAKES RENOVATION

LIBERTYVILLE, Ill. — Golf course architect Rick Jacobson has completed the first phase of a \$5 million 36-hole renovation at Indian Lakes Resort in suburban Bloomington. He also broke ground in early October on Phase II of the project, which will turn the 1960s-era resort into an upscale, state-of-the-art golf complex. Phase I involved a complete makeover of the front nine of the resort's West Course.

WEISKOPF RESTORES GREENS AT TROON NORTH MONUMENT

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — Renovation at the Monument Course at Troon Golf's Troon North Golf Club has been completed. Tom Weiskopf, who originally designed the course with Jay Morrish, restored the greens to their original specifications over the summer. The most major change Weiskopf oversaw was widening of the long, narrow green on the 14th hole to provide additional pin placements behind the front green side bunker.

OU COURSE RENOVATION NEARLY COMPLETE

ATHENS, Ohio — Architect Barry Serafin's transformation of the Ohio University Golf Course has been mostly completed, with greens and tees growing in and fairways being seeded. The course has been closed this year to allow the builder, Quality Golf of Sunbury, to construct the final phase of Serafin's plans. University officials hope to reopen the course in June 2003.

2002 NEWSMAKERS

Downing's Willoughby GC reborn after renovation

Editor's note: This is the final installment in a series of articles on the renovation at Willoughby Golf Club by superintendent Kevin Downing. After six months of work, the club reopened on Nov. 1.

By KEVIN DOWNING, CGCS

STUART, Fla. — Sitting in the men's locker room on opening day can really provide you with direct feedback on the successes or failures of a project. After having the membership removed from their home club for six months, there are anxious moments while listening to folks comment about their first impression of their new and improved course. Let me share with

you some of the comments that we have received and some that any golf course superintendent can expect to hear after a reconstruction or renovation.

EXPECTATIONS

As I explained in a previous article, we believed most of the comments or opinions would likely be about things that the golfers could actually see or experience. It is only reasonable that most people would render an opinion about an improvement or modification rather than comment about improved drainage or better turf texture. The first four or five groups in the clubhouse commented about the usual things such as green speeds, bunker consistency and tee leveling, which were

major objectives of the overall project. As expected, nobody commented about the new underground tubing, the fairway drainage or the new zeolite-to-sand ratio

in the greens mix. The moral of the story is to make sure you spend adequate time and energy to make visual enhancements to the course.

Our design modifications were

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The ninth fairway at the recently reopened Willoughby Golf Club in Stuart, Fla.

2002 NEWSMAKERS

PGA Village to proceed — maybe

By DEREK RICE

SAN ANTONIO — The cyclical saga of the proposed PGA Village here continued through late October, with the San Antonio City Council unanimously approving a new agreement with Austin-based Lumbermen's Investment Corp. to build the golf resort on environmentally sensitive land above the city's aquifer recharge zone.

The resort would include as many as three courses, a golf education center, two luxury hotels and several thousand residential units, all built on 2,861 acres.

Earlier this year, opponents of the plan collected enough signatures to force a referendum on the issue, which led the PGA to withdraw from the project.

The groups' opposition to the plan is based on two factors. Because of the location of the site, there is concern that chemicals from the golf course could find their way into the city's drinking water. While that is a major concern, Enrique Valdivia of the Smart Growth Coalition, one of the groups that opposed the project, told *Golf Course News* in June that the major opposition stems from

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2002 NEWSMAKERS

Builders weather low construction demand

By DEREK RICE

LINCOLN, Neb. — Golf 20/20's first annual report, released earlier this year (GCN, Sept. 2002), projected that there would be 285

course openings, one of the smallest numbers in years. If that number holds true, this will be the third

consecutive year that openings have declined, which doesn't paint a rosy picture for the construction industry.

Lee Hetrick, executive director of the Golf Course Builders Association of America, said while the market has slowed down, the accredited builders in the association are finding work.

"All my guys are busy right now," he said. "Construction isn't at the volume where it used to be, but if you've established your credentials to where people know who you are and that you can bring a project in under budget, then I think you're OK."

One of the challenges, Hetrick said, is the ability to bid competitively without losing money.

"The bidding is very competitive," he said. "It's a whole new world out there for some of these guys."

Hetrick said renovation work is helping to keep some in the industry busy as they try to

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HIGH-PROFILE RENOVATION



Architect Tom Fazio points out some of the changes at Augusta National to Jim Nantz and Ken Venturi of CBS Sports prior to this year's Masters.

AUGUSTA, Ga. — Without a doubt, the most talked-about renovation of 2002 was the lengthening of Augusta National. The public got to see the result of Tom Fazio's much-anticipated renovation during the 2002 Masters in April.

But last year's renovation isn't the end of it, according to published reports, Fazio is working on lengthening the fifth hole, known as "Magnolia," a 435-yard uphill dogleg-left, in time for the 2003 tournament. According to the *Augusta Chronicle*, the tee has been moved back 15 yards while the fairway bunkers have been moved forward 80 to 90 yards. The entire fairway will also be shifted right to create a more daunting dogleg.

Neither Fazio or Augusta National chairman Hootie Johnson have spoken about the changes, but Johnson said in April that "we are going to address the weakness of the fifth hole."

Renovation

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focused on green surfaces that needed more cupping space with the new ultra-dwarf turf or just a few holes that were improved by rethinking course strategy. The bunker complexes were all adjusted to create a better playing surface in conjunction with some nice visual enhancements to the bunker faces.

"The major focus of our renovation was our greens and tees, so I fully expected to see the effects of those changes," said John Ginnetti, vice greens chairman. "However, I was delighted to see the dramatic changes that have resulted from the work done on our bunkers. The strategic placing of a few fairway bunkers and the facing of bunker edges with sod has given many of our holes more character."

GROW-IN

Our particular grow-in was more challenged by the utilization of personnel rather than the agronomic needs of the turf. Our staffing requirements necessitated a rollback of approximately 25 percent of our team, until it was time to start gearing up for the reopening. We probably didn't accomplish as much as I would have liked, but our major thrust centered on the playing areas and in particular the holes where we performed major construction. After creating two or three priority lists and focusing on all the details, you

must once again stay on top of the grooming issues because that is what everybody will notice.

MEMBER SATISFACTION

Even though our area was predominantly involved with the reconstruction, it was also extremely important that the entire golf team catered to the membership that was in residence. Our pro shop staff and club staff stayed abreast of the members' needs by arrang-

ing a reciprocal program and continued to coordinate special events. Even though these folks had to deal with tractors, bulldozers and various other inconveniences, the entire process was well coordinated and stayed very close to the original timetables. Always take the time to share progress reports with members because the informed individual can become your best ally.

FINANCIAL

Cost accounting and accurate budgeting can also be a success indicator of a re-construction project. I would strongly advocate the golf course department introduce a vehicle to stay current on expenditures throughout the project. My administrative assistant kept me current during the entire process just to help minimize any surprises near the

end of the job. Our performance rating is sometimes measured on financial success rather than how many putts are made or how well they like the new tee signs.

The time and effort involved with planning and implementation really does become enormous when you look back on a job. But to share in the excitement when the players finally get back on their course is something very special. ■

PGA Village

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tax breaks the city extended to Lumbermen's. According to Valdivia, more than \$50 million in public funds would have been available to the developer.

"That area of San Antonio is booming and has seen a lot of development over the last 20 years," he said. "The notion that you need to offer someone an incentive to build there is pretty counter-intuitive."

The new agreement replaced the tax incentive with an agreement that the city would not annex the property for 15 years, which would still provide a substantial financial benefit to Lumbermen's.

On Oct. 27, the day after the city council approved the latest deal, opponents organized as Save Our Aquifer filed a motion in federal court to freeze the plan until a citywide vote could be held.

From the beginning, the process has been one of ups and downs. Each time one side has appeared to gain a victory, the other side has come back with a victory of its own. Just when it looked as if the PGA and Lumbermen's would look elsewhere for a site, the city council came through with a new plan. ■

GOLF COURSE NEWS

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