

BRIEFS

SOUTHEASTERN GOLF EARNS CERTIFICATION

TIFTON, Ga. — Full-service golf course construction company Southeastern Golf Inc. has earned professional certification from the Golf Course Builders Association of America (GCBA). The program, established in 1992, identifies competent and experienced golf course builders and ensures uniform quality standards within the industry. Certified builders must be in the golf business at least five years, provide professional and financial references, attend one GCBA education session annually, pass a written exam and engage in ethical business practices.

NUGENT TO OPEN TWO PUBLIC COURSES IN ILLINOIS

LONG GROVE, Ill. — Nugent Golf Associates is preparing to open two new public courses in the Chicago area this summer. Construction was recently completed on the Foxford Hills Country Club in Cary, Ill., which has been turned over to GolfVisions to manage. The design for each hole at the Legends, located in Bensenville, was inspired by holes from notable American courses.

ASGCA OFFERS REMODELING BROCHURE

CHICAGO — The American Society of Golf Course Architects (ASGCA) is offering a free brochure titled *Remodeling Your Golf Course* to assist golf course owners, managers, superintendents, greens committees and anyone who may be planning a remodeling project. The booklet covers areas to consider in a remodeling project, including advice on drafting a remodeling master plan and costs, funding and other factors relating to construction. Copies can be ordered online at www.asgca.org.

LAKE KEOWEE COURSE TO OPEN ON SCHEDULE

SUNSET, S.C. — The Jack Nicklaus Signature course at The Reserve at Lake Keowee is currently undergoing construction, which began in 2001, and is on schedule to open Oct. 15. David Heatwole, a senior design associate at Nicklaus Design, will oversee the final implementation of the construction plan. The course is part of a 3,200-acre community with more than 23 miles of shoreline on Lake Keowee.

Continuity leads to consistency during club's reconstruction

Editor's note: This article is the first in a series that addresses the long-range planning and implementation of a reconstruction program at Willoughby Golf Club in Stuart, Fla. The course is an 18-hole residential facility that was owned and operated by a development company and then turned over to the membership after 10 years. The membership has now operated the facility for more than four years but the long-range planning began a few years prior to the takeover. Kevin Downing, CGCS, has been the golf course and landscape manager since the inception of the project and provides valuable insight into initiating their long-range plans.

By KEVIN DOWNING

STUART, Fla. — As Willoughby Golf Club embarks in a full-scale renovation project that will involve closing the course for the next six months, proper long-range planning has been a key organizational advantage. I have headed up the renovation planning process, which began in 1998. Since I have been at the club from the beginning, I have been able to easily identify what steps need to be taken to improve the layout



Kevin Downing, CGCS

because I understand the course's mission.

In the late 1980s the developers of Willoughby set out to create a golf course that focused on the needs of the average golfer. They wanted to create a stimulating round of golf, but realized that most of the buyers were high-handicap golfers.

The developers originally chose the Arthur Hills design firm because of their ability to work with environmentally sensitive property and because they understood the diverse needs of the eventual homeowners and club membership. I worked closely with their firm and the housing configuration to insure that the course hit the targeted market. The result was a 6,600-yard course that still challenged all levels of golfers.

As courses mature, the design characteristics and landscape materials can alter the playing conditions of the best of

Continued on next page

Golf Trail looking for first site

By DEREK RICE

SAN FRANCISCO — Unlike most of the country, the San Francisco Bay area doesn't have enough golf courses. With land scarce, it's difficult to find 150 acres to build on, which means that the daily-fee courses are packed.

Because he doesn't have the time to play at a crowded course, Dwight Pate got to thinking about golf facilities that could be built on less land.

"I started thinking that the whole business of 150 acres in the design of



Dwight Pate says this is the optimal layout for his Golf Trail.

golf courses is dependent on the sanctity of par," he said. "Rather than the sanctity of par, why don't we just create shots. Suddenly the land requirement is about a third. That was the basis of the Golf Trail concept."

Golf Trail is the combination of a golf course and a practice facility. Golfers use standard equipment to hit operator-supplied

balls to target greens and fairways. Players can add a competitive component

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Twin Creeks project progressing

By DEREK RICE

AUSTIN, Texas — Twin Creeks, a 760-acre residential, country club and golf course community located in the Cedar Park area of Austin, will be the first private country club and the first Fred Couples signature course in the area when it opens this fall.

The project is a venture of Twin Creeks Holdings, a partnership between Crescent Resources LLC and SWD Communities. The development, undertaken by Weitz Golf International of Palm Beach, Fla., broke ground last October and is progressing on schedule, said Harry Turner, senior vice president of Twin Creeks Holdings.

"We're currently in construction with a planned opening of late this year," he said. "We hope to have everything planted by the end of August and I believe that we should meet that as long as we don't get

any big rains or anything that's unforeseen."

One reason the project is going so well, Turner said, is the land itself, which he said is attractive to both golfers and homeowners.

"We've got a perfect piece of land. We've got 15 holes that don't have houses directly on the fairway so from a golfer's perspective it gives you the feel of not being in a housing development," he said. "From

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Fred Couples consults on the Twin Creeks project during construction.

UK alum returns for renovation

By DEREK RICE

LEXINGTON, Ky. — When architect Drew Rogers of Arthur Hills/Steve Forrest and Associates graduated from the University of Kentucky in 1991, he never imagined that he'd one day be back to help renovate the Big Blue course at the University Club of Kentucky.

"When you leave school, you never know where your career is going to take you," Rogers said. "Certainly, I didn't have any idea that I'd ever have an opportunity to come back and be in Lexington to do the kind of work that I do, so that was pretty rewarding."



Drew Rogers

The course, which is set to reopen May 18, has undergone what Rogers called a "typical facelift," including rebuilding greens to USGA specifications and renovating tee boxes, bunkers, drainage and cart paths. Along with these traditional items, Rogers was able to bring the course more in line with its Kentucky roots.

"A lot of vegetation that was on the site that was probably not selected to match the pastoral quality of the site, so we removed a lot of

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Course to open on donated land

By DEREK RICE

BATON ROUGE, La. — Thanks to a donation of 200 acres of land and a property tax levy that raised \$3.2 million, the East Baton Rouge Parish Recreation and Parks Commission (BREC) will soon open a new flagship golf course, its seventh in the area.

Although there is no set date for the opening of Beaver Creek, Bill Palmer, BREC director, said conditions should dictate a summer opening.

"We don't have a target date except for somewhere around July or August," he said. It's growing in and doing very well. It's been a kind winter and the grass really looks good."

A group of landowners donated the land in 1999, keeping 322 acres for a residential community that is also under construction.

"The land is worth about 2.5 million. That's a very significant donation," Palmer said.

Because BREC and the developers have worked together from the start, the two projects will avoid many of the issues encountered by such close neighbors, Palmer said.

"We eliminated a lot of the potential problems by working together in the be-

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Holanda wraps up renovation work early

By ANDREW OVERBECK

NEWTOWN, Pa. — Superintendent Rick Holanda here at Aronimink Golf Club has taken advantage of a warm, dry winter to wrap up the final phase of a Donald Ross restoration and renovation project a month ahead of schedule. Architect Ron Prichard and golf course builder McDonald & Sons oversaw the work, which was done to prepare the layout for the 2003 Senior PGA Championship.

Over the past two years, the course's greens, tees and fairways were reshaped and rurfed with bentgrass and all of the bunkers have been restored to their original Donald Ross design.

Holanda, who came to Aronimink two years ago after stints at Chestnut Ridge Country Club in Lutherville, Md., and Merion Golf Club in Ardmore, Pa., has plenty of renovation experience.

"At Chestnut Ridge we rebuilt all the bunkers in-house over two years and at Merion I was involved with the conversion of the fairways," said Holanda. "That helped prepare me for the work at Aronimink."

While Prichard drew up a master plan for the club back in 1995, it didn't go into full effect until Holanda came on board.

REACTIVATING THE MASTER PLAN

"We reactivated the plan and the first stage was to convert to bentgrass and reshape greens, tees and fairways. The greens had been rounded off over the years and we enlarged them by 25 percent to regain the corners that had been lost. We also squared off the tees and recontoured the fairways and made them much wider. We now have 31 acres of fairways compared to 26 acres before the work."

Holanda removed the *Poa annua* greens with methyl

bromide and the *Poa annua*, ryegrass and bentgrass fairways and tees with Roundup. The greens have been replaced with A4 bentgrass and the fairways and tees are L-93 bentgrass. The areas between the tees and fairways are planted with ryegrass, which Holanda said provides striking contrast. All of this work was completed in 2000.

This fall and winter, Holanda tackled the bunker restoration. "We reshaped them and relocated them back to the Donald Ross design. We have made some of them deeper and added grass faces."

The pond in front of the 10th green that had been filled in back in the 1940s was also restored.

"Apparently the green committee took the pond out during World War II because a lot of golf balls went in there and the members didn't have money to

waste on balls," Holanda said. "We have put it back in and it makes the hole much stronger."

All the work went off without a hitch, even with stronger than usual levels of winter play.

"Ron Prichard came out every week to work with us and give us new field drawings, and McDonald & Sons did a great job keeping a low profile," said Holanda. "We didn't work on more than two holes at a time."

PREPARING FOR THE PGA CHAMPIONSHIP

With the restoration work wrapping up, Holanda is looking

forward to getting the course into shape for the Senior PGA Championship next June.

"Our goal is to manicure the golf course and get it into tournament condition. We need a winter with lots of snow so I can take it easy because we have been working a summer schedule in the wintertime for the last two years," he said. "But it has been worth it. I am ready to turn the course back to the members and let them enjoy it because they have been very supportive and a great team to work with."

Continuity aids reconstruction

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layouts. Therefore it is important to observe the course in order to create a fair and competitive golf challenge. Fortunately at Willoughby we have been able to have continuity in staff, which has created an opportunity for continued membership satisfaction.

As the developer finished off sales operations and the membership peaked, long-range planning started in an unofficial capacity. I documented all weaknesses such as tee locations, severely contoured greens and obstacles that hindered the flow of play for future planning and compiled a list of all projects that had been completed over the years.

As membership turnover became an issue, we have created a renovation

plan that we will implement this summer. Arthur Hills' firm will be involved with the renovation process, allowing for a continuity in course design.

In next month's issue, I will focus on the components of our planning process that include: identifying priorities, categorizing improvements or modifications, creating membership excitement, and establishing construction time tables. ■



Before and after: Part of the Aronimink renovation project was to restore the pond in front of the 10th green that the green committee decided to fill in during the 1940s.



The 13th green at Willoughby will be renovated because members' balls keep rolling over the existing bulkhead and into the water.

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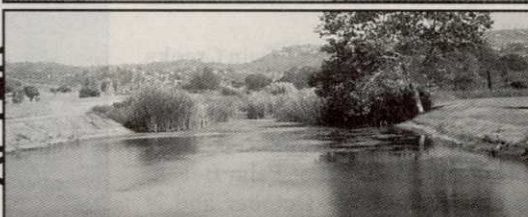


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