NICKLAUS, PALMER, PLAYER TO CO-DESIGN AUGUSTA CLUB

AUGUSTA, Ga. — At press time, golf course architects Arthur Hills/Steve Forrest and Associates were looking at a busy January, with three course openings scheduled within four days in the state of Florida. The Club at Renaissance in Fort Myers was to open to members and their guests on Jan. 18. Constructed by Golf Forms Inc., the course was designed by Hills as, "a challenging but playable layout.

The city of Miami Beach was slated to reopen Bayshore Golf Course under its new name, Miami Beach Golf Club. Most notable about this course opening is its wide use of Seashore Paspalum, a salt-tolerant turfgrass, said superintendent Jim Torba. "Imagine a turfgrass that provides a carpet-like playing surface, an emerald green color year-round and can be irrigated with salt water," Torba said. "Seashore Paspalum is revolutionizing the golf course industry."

In addition to the paspalum, architects Steve Forrest and Ken Williams had to work within challenging environmental and installation conditions. The project was described by Hills as, "a unique twist. Each of the club's three nines will be designed by a different legendary golfer-turned-architect: Jack Nicklaus, Arnold Palmer and Gary Player. The course is part of a 2,000-acre development project.

WEIBRING TO RENOVATE DALLAS MUNICIPAL COURSE

DALLAS — D.A. Weibring will undertake a renovation of Cedar Crest Golf Course here later this year. The Dallas water department will loan $3 million to the city's parks department for renovations at the municipal course, originally designed by A.W. Tillinghast in 1919. Among the renovations will be the addition of a new pond, where treated wastewater will be held and used for irrigation. Weibring will also add about 20 bunkers and a driving range to the facility.

NEW OWNERS CLOSE JONES CREEK FOR RENOVATION

AUGUSTA, Ga. — Jones Creek Golf Course here closed in early January for several weeks of renovations. Upon completion, which is expected in early March, the course will convert from private to semi-private. Renovation will focus mainly on reseeding greens at the club, which was recently purchased by Jones Creek Joint Venture from Fairways International Clubs LLC and Jones Creek Golf Club LLC.

By DEREK RICE

NEWRY, Maine — While the rest of the state weathered a barrage of snowstorms in late December, Sunday River Ski Resort was looking ahead to finally starting construction on its planned golf course in the spring.

After nearly five years of planning, the Robert Trent Jones Jr.-designed golf course at Sunday River will begin taking shape soon.

The American Skiing Co. resort began clearing land in the Jordan Bowl area of the property in 1998 in preparation for the 18-hole course, but various factors have delayed the project.

"It's something we've been wanting to do for a while and we actually started the plans in '98, now it's finally becoming a reality," said Susan DuPlessis, corporate communications manager for Sunday River.

DuPlessis said the development is on track for a spring or summer construction start.

"It looks like everything's on track. We're going to have the purchase and sales agreement, that will be the next step," she said.

"The last I heard, we

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TOLEDO, Ohio — Golf course architect Denny Spencer may have sold his company, Spencer Golf Concepts, to Columbus, Ohio-based Zande & Associates Inc., but that doesn't mean he's getting out of the business.

According to Spencer, quite the contrary has happened. By selling his firm and going to work for Zande, he is able to concentrate on golf course design without having to worry about making ends meet.

"With the golf industry being as volatile as it is, I had to take a real hard look at my situation at age 60 and just starting a brand new company, my timing wasn't the best in the world," Spencer said. "When you sit down and take a hard look at

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Spencer's sale
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it, what they were offering me was a three-year contract with an offer of a salary so good I couldn't refuse, plus a lot of other perks. It's going to allow me to work for another six or seven years.

Spencer said the situation works out well for Zande as well, as the company has wanted to get into golf course design for a while. “Zande is a 450-man civil engineering company, and they have a very large landscape architecture department, as well as several other arms off that, such as surveying and environmental and traffic studies and land planning, really everything that you would want to employ if you were a developer putting in a big housing development with a golf course,” Spencer said. “They’ve always wanted to be in the golf course design business but they didn’t want to go through the four- or five-year learning curve. I’ve always needed the technical backup and always had to farm that out. It’s been a win-win for both of us. I get the security and the backup that I’ve needed and they get into a whole new area of the business.”

As for Spencer’s own golf course, which he started last year (GCN, April 2002), that has been put on hold, but not because of his new work arrangement. “It’s still alive. It’s on the shelf because financing has been virtually impossible,” he said.

The first project that Spencer and Zande will undertake is the remodeling of Oberlin Country Club in Oberlin, Ohio. Spencer did a master plan for the course, originally built in 1898, late last year.

“They have just recently voted to do the entire plan,” Spencer said. “It’s the first active project that our new merger is going to undertake. We’re working on specs and plans right now.”

Another project that is in the works, which Spencer said would allow him to “die a happy man,” is a course he hopes to lay out on an island off Toronto harbor called the Portlands.

“There’s about 175 or 180 acres of unbelievably mistreated industrial land on the southern and eastern tip of that island,” he said. “The city of Toronto, the province of Ontario and the Canadian government have put together a pool to completely renovate the Toronto waterfront, and included in that renovation is the Portlands. We’ve had a golf course laid out on this thing for years, and it has evolved because of various requirements.”

Spencer said his plan is backed by a high-profile developer who has contributed “a substantial amount of money” to the project. All that remains now, Spencer said, is to convince the city of Toronto to approve his plan for that land.

Spencer said one of the things that excites him the most about working for Zande is that it will allow him to work on only a small number of projects, rather than spread himself thin.

“I believe very strongly in the old-fashioned way of building golf courses, which means that the architect has to be on site very often and very regularly, which precludes me from having 20 different projects going on at the same time,” he said. “With the situation with Zande, I don't have to do 20 projects a year to make a decent living, and it has evolved because of various requirements.”

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Billy Bunkers
Continued from page 13
overlaid with Enkamat, a fiberglass mesh material that keeps the gravel from leaching into the sand layer.

Course Crafters president Bob Pinson said the method is more costly than other methods, but also more reliable.

Pinson said both Fazio Design and Cupp Design, with whom Course Crafters works often, are among the architects who push for Billy Bunkers in their designs.

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