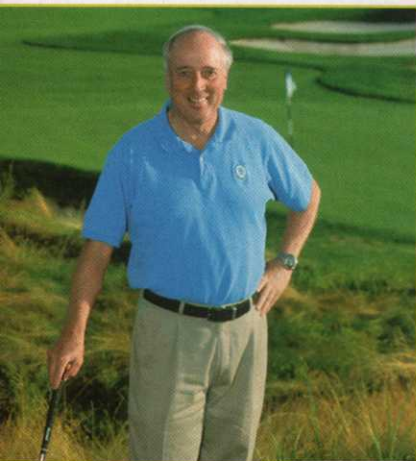


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arrived, primarily because user fees were too low to sustain operations. After implementing new fee structures, Woodward cut the deficit in half. He says the deficit will drop even more once the facility installs a new irrigation system along with other upgrades spelled out in the business plan.

Although Mission Bay Golf Course and Practice Center breaks even, Woodward had



The Good Doctor

Rees Jones is more than the USGA's Open Doctor for Torrey Pines. He's the chief of medicine.

He's tweaked myriad U.S. Open venues, but the considerable time he has spent at the public venues that host the national championship illustrates his dedication to growing the popularity of golf and giving back to its public players.

He coined the phrase "The People's Open"

prior to the 2002 U.S. Open on the Black Course at Bethpage State Park. His complete overhaul of the A.W. Tillinghast layout is well documented. "We had to resuscitate Bethpage," he says.

And before the success of the first People's Open could be determined, Jones was on to his next public tour de force: Torrey Pines.

It was a dream of Jay Rains, a San Diego attorney who spearheaded a private trust of 29 donors that came together as The Friends of Torrey Pines, which eventually raised about \$3.5 million to finance renovations at Torrey. Rains, now a USGA vice president, recruited Jones in 1999 to help woo the USGA to San Diego.

Jones finished renovations in 2001, and Torrey was awarded the 2008 Open in 2002. At about 7,640 yards, it will be the longest U.S. Open in history.

"There was a lot to do to ensure we still had a wonderful public venue but still a U.S. Open venue," Jones says. "We built the bunkers deeper and built a lot of contours in the greens. We built greens on diagonals and put a lot of plateaus on the backs of the greens to make it hard to access for the best players in the game yet with a lot of open entrances to the green so the average public golfer could still enjoy the golf course if he played the safe routes."

Jones donated much of his time the past few years making small tweaks, including moving the No. 4 fairway closer to the bluff that overlooks Black's Beach.

Jones also has been modifying The Black Course to prepare for next year's national championship when it goes back to Bethpage. Among the changes will be new pin locations on No. 14 and a new bunker to guard them, a new championship tee on 13 along with a new fairway bunker, and new or enlarged championship tees on holes three, five, seven and nine.

The changes won't amount to the drastic facelift needed for the first People's Open, but organizers hope it will still generate the groundswell that made the country's first public open a success.

"In order for golf to grow, we need to embrace the public player because there are more public players than private players," Jones says. "With Torrey and then Bethpage next year — along with Pebble Beach (2010), Pinehurst (2014) and now Chambers Bay (2015) in the rotation, there are five golf courses that can be accessed by the public."

Just watch your ball in that secondary rough.

— David Frabotta

to take the boards off the clubhouse windows as one of his first tasks of taking it over. When he visited the facility while interviewing for the job in 2005, he said "golfers were everywhere, but the building had boards over the windows. I wasn't sure what was going on."

You wouldn't think a business plan and renovation schedule would be a hard sell to residents who watched their golf facilities dwindle into disrepair, but Woodward eventually won them over. That's little surprise for those who know him. A self-described type-A personality, Woodward has thrived in the community enterprise throughout his professional life.

His previous job involved a 31-year stint for the city of Mesa, Ariz. He eventually grew to manage two golf courses, parks and a cemetery. He was a fixture in that community, and in just three years his status evolved in San Diego from golf pariah to savior. The Open will generate about \$100 million for the city in addition to worldwide attention.

But his plight hasn't been easy. Besides death threats and disgruntled local golfers, Woodward has prepared for the national championship amid the South Course's 60,000 annual rounds, dozens of renovation projects and years of neglect that had to be amended (the North Course welcomes more than 90,000 rounds each year).

"It takes three to five years to get ready for a championship of this caliber, and we were probably 15 years behind the eight ball because of deferred maintenance and general neglect of the golf course and the facility as a whole," he says. "I told my boss I wouldn't have given him \$25 for the experience when I got here. It was in that poor of shape."

These were no small projects, either. Although the South Course had a major renovation in 2001 by of Rees Jones, heavy play and poor maintenance created some serious agronomic issues.

First, Woodward had to deal with the traffic, so he created a continuous cart path around the South Course. Neither the United States Golf Association nor the PGA Tour, which runs the annual Buick Invitational in February on the North and South Courses, wanted to take primary responsibility for the

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