

Stadium courses

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projected to accommodate 1,000 spectators; the same number as had been seated in bleachers in years past. "We figured we would need 18 inches per person or 1500 linear feet. In actuality, the last day of the tournament we had probably 3,000 people watching golf from the mound," he said.

"Some of those occupied a "Skybox" for patron sponsors which was constructed on a flat area, to the golfer's right. To the golfer's left was ABC-TV booth. In past years, ABC had to build a tower and put a booth atop that. In 1989, they simply constructed the booth. They had a great view."

Miracle

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age was also critical. "All eight lakes on the course serve as detention for the initial phases of the development," he said.

The earth, Martin said, was essentially topsoil that had to be moved from housing sites. That topsoil was moved onto the fairways, which were sometimes raised two to three feet, well above the recommended six inches.

The rest was clay, which was used under pads of houses. One way to get clay, he said, is to dig lakes; thus the lakes.

"The design will surprise people in the area," said Martin, who has worked with Jim Spear and designed a half-dozen courses before Carillon. "Cenvill went the extra mile to get things done. They were a great client and knew what a golf course can do for a development."

The 18th hole features a peninsula fairway. Water comes into play on 11 holes. There are only 60-plus sand traps but those are 4,000- to 5,000-square-foot traps. And the builders are still busy creating eight- and 13-acre lakes (deep enough to sustain fish) to buffer the golf course into the housing.

"I was quite nervous about it getting done," said Jones. "No one thought it could be done... This is unheard of."

But Kenova's Balogh said: "I love challenges like that. I'd do another one tomorrow."

He may get his chance. He said he has already been contacted by several groups in the Chicago area that are interested in what he calls "The Fast Track Way."

"We came here into this area (southwest Chicago suburbs) from Florida, and we have found one of the finest situations we've ever had — excellent relationships with the unions and suppliers, dedicated managers, and a great labor force, people willing to give you 12 hours of hard work for 12 hours of pay. Even with all the planning and equipment, it takes good people to do a good job."

People will be able to judge that job on July 1 when the Plainfield course officially opens. But Jones added, "You can play three holes right now."

If Luikens has a problem with his dirt pile, it is one he readily accepts. "We have to mow the rows or benches with a Flymo and a Weedeater. It takes about two hours and that's costly. Over the years we've lengthened holes, moved bunkers, put mounding down the sides of fairways, anything to improve individual holes or groups of holes. The big hill behind No 18 will probably benefit more people in more ways."

How does Luikens justify a \$100,000 "bump" on a daily fee course?

"Ask yourself," says Luikens, "does the daily fee golfer deserve a course with all the excitement he would expect to find on a championship tract played by pros? We think he does."

Gary Rippey, TPC's head professional concurs. Rippey adds the course averages 37,000-40,000 rounds per year, of which 25,000 are tournament rounds.

"Those include corporate outings," advises the pro. "Plus, we hosted the Golf Digest ROLEX Intercollegiate and the U. S. G. A. Senior Womens' Amateur this

spring and summer and will host the Lee Trevino State Open this Fall." In 1988, TPC was the site of the Insurance Youth Golf Classic tourney and several qualifying events as well.

The comment of one PGA Tour official to superintendent Luikens sums up the effort and finished product. "He told me that we had the most natural looking stadium on Tour," said Luikens. And a pretty nifty stage for the fat lady's finale as well.

Frances Trimble is a freelance writer based in Houston, Texas.

Sod Producers schedule plans

The American Sod Producers Association's convention dates are set through February 1992.

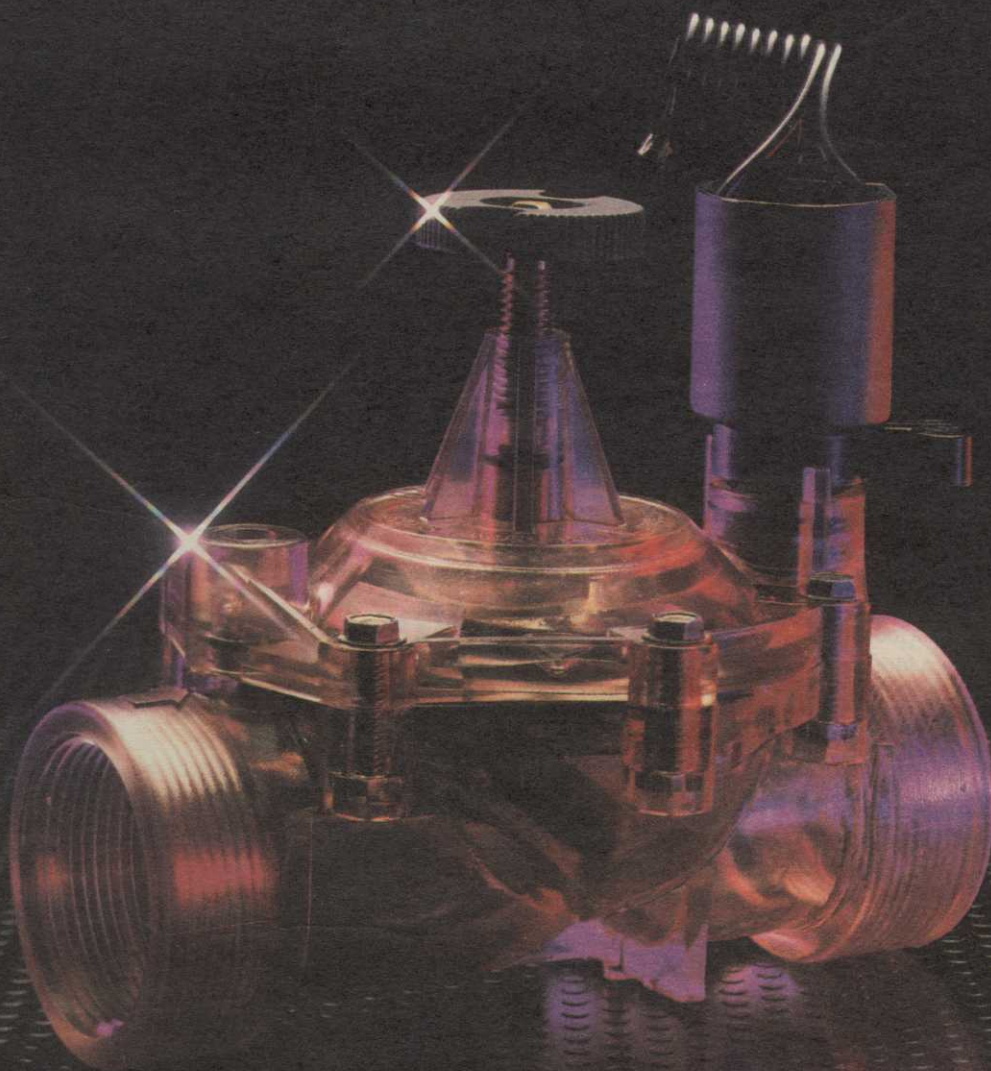
The Feb. 14-16, 1990 midwinter conference in Orlando, Fla., will be followed by the July 25-27 summer convention in Ottawa, Ont.

The Jan. 23-25, 1991, midwinter conference in San Antonio, Texas, will be followed by the July 24-26 summer convention in Santa Barbara, Calif.

The Feb. 5-7, 1992, midwinter conference will be in Las Vegas.

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