

NEWS

Jones predicts more 'munis,' public courses

A greater mix of new municipal and public-fee courses will be built in the 1990s, says American Society of Golf Course Architects President Robert Trent Jones Jr.

Although the trend of the last five years has been to integrate new courses into real-estate developments and resorts, Jones said, "Upscale public golf definitely is on the rise, and municipalities and entrepreneurs will be working to fill the demand gap in the next 10 years."

Jones said that although the demand for residential and resort courses is being met in many regions, "we must in the next decade

develop more innovative ways to finance the very strong demand for municipal and public-fee courses."

Some communities, such as Brooklyn Park, Minn., have combined efforts with local builders, who have developed housing around new municipal courses, and that trend is expected to continue.

Other public bodies are considering sites — from landfills to retired military posts — that are undesirable for commercial or real-estate development.

Jones feels the public-fee and municipal courses of the 1990s

will be higher quality than in the past.

"We'll be seeing better-designed courses that will feature aesthetics, playability and easy maintenance which will generate revenue for their cities' parks departments," he said. "Golfers see so many great courses on television and play many more while on vacation or attending business meetings, and they want to play comparable courses near their homes. And, they are willing to pay a premium for quality golf."

Jones pointed to the profitability of new, quality golf courses throughout the country, including

areas like the Northeast and Midwest that once were considered "mature" markets.

"With sound management, these new facilities will become solid profit centers for municipalities and private owners. Public golf is one of the great opportunities today in the entire recreational spectrum," he said.

Major project will take 15-20 years to finish

A golf course along Limestone Creek is part of the largest proposed development in the 101-year history of Orange, Calif.

After nearly four years of negotiations with the Irvine Co., the City Council in December unanimously approved a plan that calls for construction of 12,350 new homes on the east side of town.

Plans also call for a commercial/retail center that will create 27,000 jobs, a recreational complex along Lake Irvine and the golf course. The entire project will take 15 to 20 years to complete.

The proposal could be stalled, however, by the Serrano Irrigation District which is concerned the project could pollute Irvine Lake.

The district, which provides drinking water for some residents of Villa Park and Orange, is considering suing the city for approving the plan without, what it considers, adequate safeguards against polluting the lake.

GCA reports 'ballooning' roll of members

Total Golf Course Association membership ballooned to 306 during 1989, a year of growth for the association for privately owned public golf courses.

That growth was reflected in GCA's management newsletters, ranging in topics from marketing to internal controls, which are now being published 10 times a year. A record-breaking attendance was also expected at January's annual GCA conference in Palm Springs, Calif.

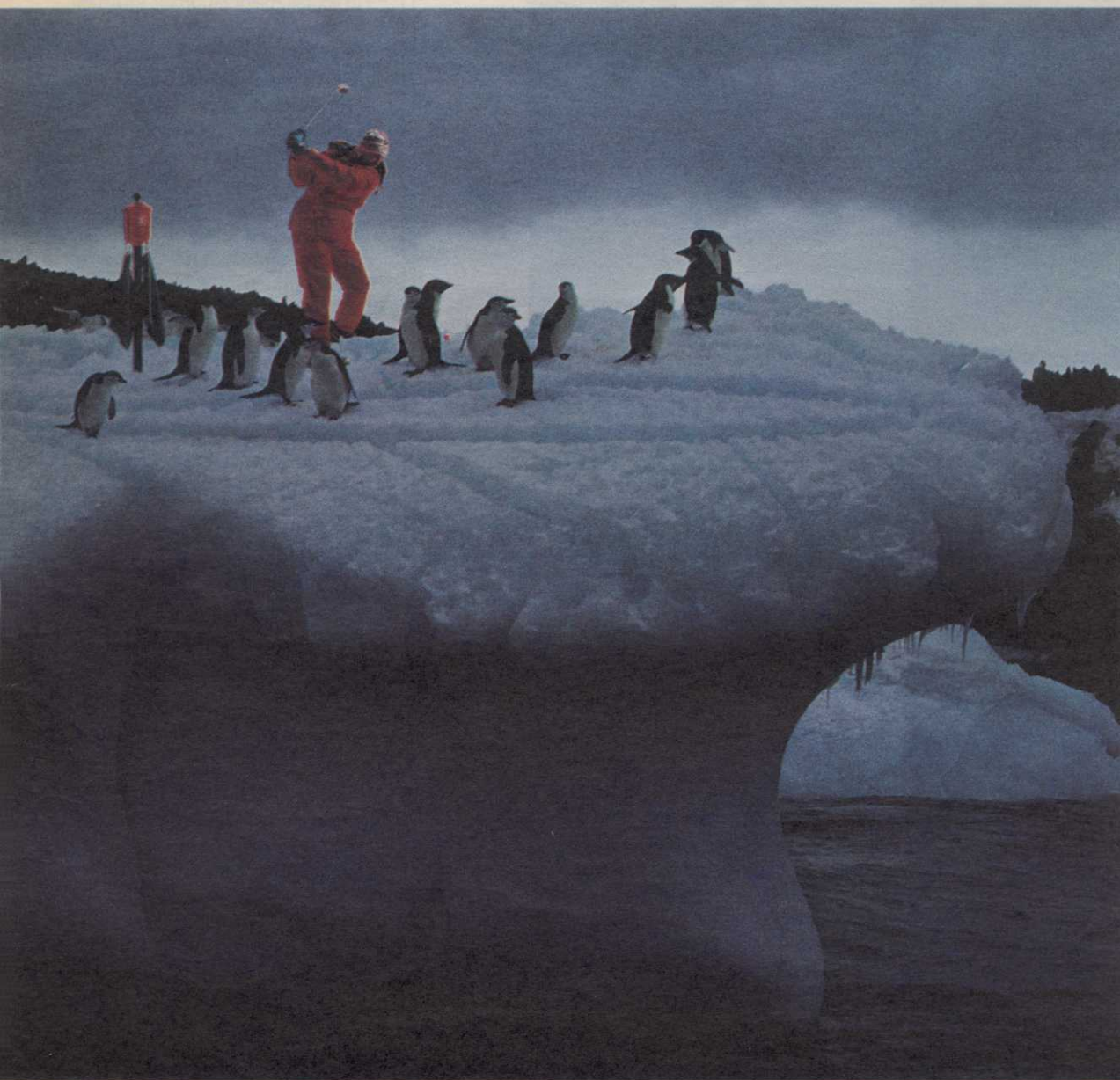
The GCA has participated on national task forces dealing with tax equalization for golf courses and the environment. Panelists representing GCA have appeared at both National Golf Foundation summits and the GCA has a lead role in developing a uniform system of accounting practice for public golf courses.

The association has also benefited from its membership on the National Golf Foundation board, appearances at the Professional Golf Association annual meeting, and past GCA president Peter Trenchard's nomination to the Executive Committee of the United States Golf Association. It also planned exhibits for January's PGA buying show and February's Golf Course Superintendents Association of America annual conference and show.

Deere winners

The winners in the 35-team third annual John Deere Team Championship hailed from the Country Club of Louisiana in Baton Rouge. The January issue reported the winning team was from the Country Club of Indiana.

Team members were Tolby Strahan, Dean Alexander, Luis Romero, Ben Skillman and John Deere golf and turf distributor Howard Ruiz.



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Pictured above: The inaugural drive at the world's first Antarctic Open.

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