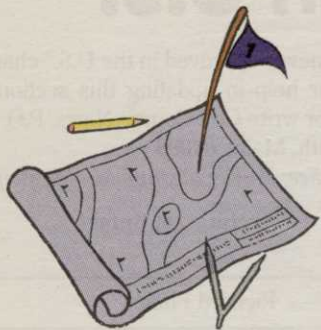


Briefs



JAPAN CITES VON HAGGE COURSE

Von Hagge Design Associates of Spring, Texas, has learned its Horai Country Club in Tochigi Prefecture, Japan, north of Tokyo, will receive the country's Best New Course award for 1990.

Earlier, Robert von Hagge accepted "Le Premier Trophée Du Meilleur Golf De L'Année" (the first trophy for the best golf course of the year) for France 1990 for the Golf du Seignosse.

Last year, the firm's Golf International "Les Bordes" received the only new five-star rating in 20 years on the European continent.

Recently, associate and lead architect Rick Baril and Mr. and Mrs. von Hagge attended the opening of another von Hagge Design Associate course, Golf Club National.

The Golf National, outside Paris, is the first stadium-style golf course on the European continent and will be the permanent home for the French Open.

PALMER PUTTING IMPRINT ON LAYOUT

COLUMBIA, S.C. — Arnold Palmer is adding his personal touch to Plantation Pointe here, with a 18-hole championship golf course carved from the woods along the shores of Lake Murray.

Palmer and the Palmer Course Design Co. team will master-plan the remainder of the more than 550-acre community surrounding the lakefront course.

INDIAN TRAILS NEARS OPENING

BUCK GROVE, Ill. — The back nine of the new 18-hole Indian Trails Golf Course should be ready for play in March, and the other nine playable by early to mid-summer.

Course superintendent Paul Pierceall said he irrigation system is in place on the back nine and the holes seeded.

The course is on 145 acres, five miles south of Mattoon. Lakes come into play on seven holes.

PGA professional Kelly Spaulding will be course director.

YOUNG, CLASSIC GOLF ON PROJECT

MARIETTA, Ga. — Mike Young Designs, of Watkinville, Ga., and Classic Golf Management of Athens, Ga., will redesign and renovate the former Marietta Country Club.

Construction of the 18-hole layout is under way and the course, purchased by the city, is expected to reopen as the Marietta Municipal Golf Course early in the fall of 1991.

The clubhouse dates back to before the Civil War, when it housed the Georgia Military Academy.

GOLFSCAPES CHOSEN FOR COURSE

LINCOLN, Neb. — Golfscapes of Arlington, Texas, will design the 18-hole Highlands golf course in the northwest section of the city.

The course is a major aspect of the development plan in the Highlands, annexed into the city in December 1989.

Construction is scheduled to start next fall, grass to be seeded in August 1992 and the course open in June 1993.

Pesticides last hurdle for major Sherman Hollow project in Vermont

By Vern Putney

HUNTINGTON, Vt. — The proposed golf course at Sherman Hollow here, which since 1984 has suffered more rejections than 5-6 Atlanta Hawks guard Spike Webb attempting a scoop shot on basket-guarding Patrick Ewing of the New York Knicks, tried for the umpteenth time to live up to the Tenth Commandment of the state Environmental Board.

The board held rigid to its dictum, "Thou shalt not permeate the ground with pesticides not meeting our standards."

Developer Paul Truax and Sherman Hollow

Inc. associates, cleared on nine counts, have been relentless in pursuit of golf course approval, considered a necessary first phase to transform this chosen land into a destination resort, bedecked with a hotel, restaurant, conference center and swank condominiums.

The original project price tag was \$22 million. Truax and partners, while declining to be specific on costs aimed at obtaining approval, won't quibble with a "hundreds of thousands of dollars" guesstimate. The current cross-country ski area can not survive unless allowed to expand, Truax ventured.

Town officials, hard-pressed for the Yankee dollar, can break their expenditure down to pennies.

Residents fighting Sherman Hollow claim the town has spent \$13,422.76 on legal expenses defending and supporting the project since 1985. That kind of coin buys a lot of hay and maple syrup in the belt-tightened Green Mountain State.

Project opponents find it especially galling that their taxes are being used to further the pro-golf course lobby. Despite this, Huntington

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The par 4, 331-yard 4th hole at Cypress Knoll Golf Course in Palm Coast, Fla., is vintage Gary Player design. The tee shot is critical, carrying a wild-growth area. The second shot is a short iron to a green guarded by three pot bunkers.

Int'l golf future bright

By Peter Blais

The opportunities for overseas golf course development are excellent in most of the 126 countries where golf is played, according to a panel assembled at November's Golf Summit 90.

The panel was moderated by Gary Wiren, president of Golf Around the World and master teacher at PGA National Golf Club.

Panel members included John Gordon, managing editor of Score magazine, Canada's largest monthly golf publication; Jillian Yorke, editor of the magazine Japan Golf Report and vice president of International Golf Research Institute; Australian journalist Douglas Mason; Lage Engebo of the Swedish Golf Federation; and John Laupheimer, staff vice president of International Management Group.

CANADA

Canada's population of 25 million, about the same as California, is spread over a land mass larger than the United States, Gordon said. Yet, 95 percent of Canadians live within 100 miles of the U.S. border.

Gordon said there are 5.1 million golfers in Canada that represents 21 percent of its citizens, giving Canada the highest participation rate in the world.

Canada has 2,000 courses with 200 more under construction or planning. The hotbeds are southern British Columbia and Alberta in the west and southern Ontario farther east.

In the past 15 years, the number of golfers and courses has doubled.

Canada has a rich golf history. The Royal Montreal Golf Club founded in 1873 was the

Continued on page 50

Blenders, golf courses a perfect mix

By Mark Leslie

A million things can kill a green and there is no excuse for opting for the cheap choice in mixing soil, according to experts in the soil-blending industry.

"The top architects and the aggressive leaders in the industry are specing the blending into contracts," said Troy McNeill of Transamerican Soil Blenders in Lubbock, Texas. "The greens are the heartbeat of the golf course. If you don't have good greens, people won't play your course."

"A first-class green only costs two to three percent more than a third-class green. The

money saved won't be saved a year later when you have to rebuild a green," said Tom Briddle of Tectonic, Inc. in Longmont, Colo.

Briddle, who said he recently blended the soil for a 22-green facility for \$18,000, could only question why a developer would choose to mix the soil with a front-end loader or rototiller.

Golf course architect and builder Jim Fazio of Juno Beach, Fla., agreed. Putting the cost of blending for 19 holes at \$30,000, he said: "On a \$3-million golf course that's only one-tenth of one percent. The average cost of buying the materials and building 19 greens is \$275,000 to \$300,000, and no one's going to

take a chance with that kind of money of not having it right."

Though there are only a handful of blenders in North America, the field is expected to grow, since, as Briddle said: "Anything that's successful always attracts more players."

Christine Faulks, president of Greensmix of Waupaca, Wis., explained the rising importance of blending: "In the past five years or so the whole industry has become more sophisticated. And, in turn, a lot of contractors have been burned—gotten into lawsuits, and had jobs shut down—because their mix was not accurate."

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International report: Golf courses are

Continued from page 29

first club in North America, Gordon said. By 1903 every province in Canada had at least one golf course. A year later the first Canadian Open was held at Royal Montreal GC and George S. Line (sp???) of Toronto won the gold medal in golf at the St. Louis Olympics.

In 1911, the Canadian Professional Golfers Association was founded, five years before its U.S. counterpart. The Canadian Ladies Golf Association opened shop two years later. In 1966 the Canadian Golf Course Superintendents Association was born. The Canadian

Golf Foundation was formed in 1979 and 10 years later the first Canadian Golf Summit held. The second summit will be held in 1991.

Geography varies greatly over the 10 provinces. Golfers play year round in southern British Columbia, but are limited to two months in the far north. Memberships at some of the better clubs in the Toronto area cost as much as \$25,000 to join and have 10-year waiting lists. Equity memberships in Ontario's largest city range up to \$75,000, although equity clubs are virtually non-existent elsewhere.

Unparalleled interest in golf ex-

ists in Canada. A Score magazine survey revealed that courses throughout the country were at or beyond capacity.

"But there is disinterest at all levels of government in supporting the foundation of the game or new courses," Gordon said.

Agricultural land preservation and environmental concerns "that sometimes border on hysteria" are other barriers to new development, Gordon said. Many years and millions of dollars are sometimes required to get the necessary permits.

What is done in the United States

affects its northern neighbor. Canadian golfers watch U.S. television and expect the PGA conditions they see to be available at their courses, Gordon said. They also want courses built by well-known U.S. architects.

On the plus side, Canadian golfers, like Dave Barr, have benefited from scholarships at American colleges. Companies like TaylorMade, Links and Ram have opened wholly-owned subsidiaries in Canada instead of the traditional distributor system. The Canadian Open is the only foreign stop on the PGA Tour, although many Canadians are dis-

pleased with the lack of television coverage given the world's fourth oldest national championship.

Canadian courses are looking to the United States for expertise in running their operations, Gordon said. For example, Fairway Capital Partners issued a \$216 million public share offering last summer to build 10 golf courses designed by Canadians but managed by Club Corporation of America. The offer didn't go through because of economic problems similar to those in the United States.

Canada has some of the best golf courses in the world, Gordon said. Among them are Jasper Park Golf Course in Alberta which Cypress Point designer Alister Mackenzie called the finest golf course he'd ever seen. Jasper Park, Banff Springs and other western courses draw thousands of Japanese visitors every year.

But Canada has done little to promote itself as a golf destination, said the author of *The Great Golf Courses of Canada*.

"Canadians are restrained and low key, for the most part. We need schooling in the hospitality industry and the financial realities of attracting tourism," Gordon said.

A Canadian Golf Foundation study is looking at Ontario as a tourist destination for golfers. British Columbia has been designated a PGA Tour destination.

As for the recession overtaking the United States, "There is no doubt we are in one, too, particularly in Ontario and Quebec," Gordon said. He predicted the current downturn will force some courses to close and membership rolls to decline at others over the next few years.

Equity clubs have been a successful investment since coming on the Canadian market four years ago. Before the recession, it was a good way for a developer to build a course and get out quickly. But that's changed with the economy.

Investors used to buy multiple equity club memberships as investments. A membership at Toronto's National Golf Club, the country's top-rated course, jumped from \$39,000 in 1987 to \$65,000 today. Devil's Pulpit memberships that sold for \$17,000 in 1989 are now listed at \$56,000.

"But both of those now have line-ups to sell," Gordon said. "And buyers are around, especially from the Far East."

Buying farm land near a metropolitan area for a golf course and then "flipping it" has become common, Gordon said.

"One Toronto architect I know is dealing with his fourth set of owners for a project he started two years ago," he added.

In the Vancouver area, Gordon said golf course restrictions have been eased and 80 projects proposed. "The question arises: 'Once these projects are cleared, how many will stay in the hands of the original developers?'"

But economic trends are cyclical and the recession won't be around

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GOLF COURSE NEWS

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forever, Gordon said. One need only look at Toronto to see the demand is still there.

A provincial study rated Toronto the third largest golf market in the world after San Diego and Chicago in rounds played annually per capita. The 5-million round demand is running into a 3.5-million round capacity at Toronto's 100 courses, meaning everyone who wants to play won't be able to.

JAPAN

Asian golf dates back to 1829 with the founding of India's Royal Calcutta Golf Club, making it the oldest golf club outside the British Isles, Yorke said. There were 12 clubs in India by 1900 and 140 today.

The growth of golf in Asia was influenced by the British and other colonial powers who helped build the first courses in Sri Lanka, Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand in the 1880s and 1890s.

During the American occupation after World War II, the Japanese were forbidden to play on their own courses, although the Americans kept the facilities in good shape.

Golf has been a game for the rich in Asia, but is gaining popularity among ordinary people, Yorke said.

There is a construction boom in Asia, particularly in Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia. Thailand has 58 courses with 50 more in the works and memberships costing up to \$30,000.

"While the boom is very good for golf as a whole, it has very little to do with the vast majority of Asian people for whom there are far more pressing problems, like survival," she said.

Other golf course development problems in Asia include lack of land, difficulties locating water, heat, monsoons, snakes, lack of knowledge, few professionals to educate the people and the difficulty in obtaining equipment, Yorke said.

On the plus side is a greater awareness of Asia as a golf market; upcoming Asia Golf 91 which will bring equipment manufacturers to Singapore in April; and the growth of professional golf. Golf has returned to Communist China, where seven courses have opened and several more are under construction.

While the game is growing throughout Asia, Japan is the country most people think of when discussing the game.

Japan's first course was built in 1901 by an English tea merchant. It remained a game played mainly by foreigners during the early 20th century.

The country is enjoying its third golf boom. The first was in 1957 when the Japanese won the Canada Cup, now the World Cup. From 1957 to 1961, the number of courses grew from 74 to 263.

The second boom lasted from 1973 to 1976 when 100 new courses were added to the Japanese landscape.

The recent upswing has brought

the course total to 1,700 with another 300 planned or under construction.

Many of the new courses are being designed by famous American architects. While the American presence has resulted in many beautiful facilities, it has also jacked up the price of golf course design, Yorke said.

Memberships in Japan are an investment generally made by corporations rather than a recreational expense incurred by an individual as in the West. Memberships are bought and sold on the stock market like stocks and bonds. The av-

erage membership price for newly built courses is \$270,000.

The high prices are directly related to the high price of land. But the combined effects of the Middle East crisis, the high price of oil, the coming of winter and the general slowdown of the Japanese economy have led to a drop in the Japanese stock market and a 30 percent decline in the cost of golf club memberships over the last few months.

"We feel that the economy of the past few years is a bubble that will decrease in the near future," Yorke said. Yorke called this a positive development that could bring

prices down to a more realistic level.

Yorke predicted the recent rise in interest rates for Japanese bank loans will slow golf course construction over the next few years. The tightening of regulations concerning golf course development, environmental restrictions, the movement against the use of agricultural chemicals on golf courses and the lack of land will also brake new development, she added.

But practice facilities should remain a hot commodity. Since the first driving range was built in 1922, the number of Japanese practice facilities has grown to 4,600. Many

Japanese play only at driving ranges.

While the three-tiered ranges are well-known, most practice facilities are far smaller. The average driving range has 48.2 bays and a hitting distance of 160.3 yards.

The numbers of women golfers are growing in Japan. Of the 60,000 students enrolled in golf schools, 51 percent are women. Still, only 10 percent of the golfers at courses and 25 percent at practice ranges are women.

As for those interested in investing in Japan, Yorke said, "It is

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International

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possible to succeed in the Japanese market if you take the time and effort to do your homework, study your market and build good relations with Japan.

AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND

The number of courses in the two countries has grown steadily over the past 20 years, Mason said. Australia went from 1,218 to 1,441 facilities during that time. New Zealand's course total rose from 365 to 402.

There are slightly more than 1 million golfers in Australia and 276,000 in New Zealand.

Resort courses have grown significantly, particularly in northern

New South Wales and Queensland, Australia. New Zealand's growth has averaged just two to three courses a year and the number of golfers has remained static.

The game is booming in Australia thanks, in part, to the success of professional golfer Greg Norman, Mason said. There are waiting lists to join private clubs, although memberships are much less expensive than in the United States.

Apart from resort courses, few new facilities are being built — 10 to 12 annually in Australia and one or two in New Zealand. There is potential for greater growth in Australia and moderate growth in New Zealand through the year 2000, Mason said.

"The down side to that growth is

the two Es. The economy of both countries and the environment. The economy in New Zealand has been static for several years... The economy in Australia is quite depressed, although it seems not to be having any effect on the golf industry," Mason said.

In terms of the environment, Australia is the driest of the continents and has serious water problems that must be addressed before more courses are built, Mason said.

The main thing the U.S. and Australian governments can do to help the Australian game is reduce the high tariffs in both countries, Mason said. Because of tariffs and taxes, a \$700 set of golf clubs in the United States costs \$2,000 in Australia.

On the plus side, it is less ex-

pensive to play golf in Australia than the United States. The speed of play is also much faster Down Under.

"While golf may be inexpensive to play down there, it is very expensive to equip yourself," Mason said.

As for maintaining Australian and New Zealand courses, Mason said: "They aren't manicured down there to within an inch of their lives. A par 3 in Australia and New Zealand consists of a tee and a green. In between is rough. It's expected that if you're on a par 3 you hit it onto the green or into the bunkers.

"On the par 4s and par 5s the first 100 yards is rough.

"That cuts down on maintenance and is one of the reasons golf Down Under is relatively cheap," Mason said.

SCANDINAVIA

The recent success of Scandinavian golfers like 1988 Ladies' U.S. Open winner Liselotte Neumann and the four-man Swedish team that won this fall's world amateur championship in New Zealand is largely responsible for making Scandinavia one of the fastest-growing golf markets in the world, Engebo said.

Sweden, Norway and Denmark make up Scandinavia. If golf is booming in the United States, it is exploding in those three countries. While the number of golfers is growing at seven percent annually here, it increased in Sweden by 130 percent from 1985-90.

The Nordic countries, including Finland and Iceland, boast 380,000 players. Of those, 290,000 are in Sweden, 41,000 in Denmark, 30,000 in Finland, 15,000 in Norway and 5,000 in Iceland. The biggest increases have been in Sweden and Finland. In Sweden, 3-1/2 percent of the population plays golf.

Approximately 460 courses are in operation in the Nordic countries with another 200 on the drawing board. Sweden has the most, 290, giving it an average of 1,900 people per hole.

Predictions call for an annual increase in golfers of 10 to 15 percent through 1992 and three to seven percent for the remainder of the 1990s. That would project out to 550,000 golfers and 600 courses by the year 2000.

There are barriers to reaching those goals, Engebo said. The primary one is the lack of land, particularly near the cities. Lack of political will, environmental problems and lack of financing will also hinder growth. In Sweden, where most everything is government-subsidized, only five of the country's 290 courses have received any government assistance.

Building a course in Scandinavia costs between \$1.5 million and \$6 million. Most new courses are coming in under \$4 million, Engebo said.

"This is what we need, ordinary courses for the ordinary man," he said. "We would very much like to share the results of your research in the areas of new architecture, construction, environmental issues and how to run a course. We would also like you to continue to provide us with good golf equipment."

There are five things anyone interested in the Scandinavian golf market should know, Engebo said. They are:

- Organizing sports is done by local, non-profit organizations, creating commitment and many leaders at all levels. In Sweden you might find 200 to 300 volunteers picking stones to make way for grass on a new course.

- The Swedish Golf Federation is one of 62 members of the Swedish Sports Federation. Similar organizations exist in the other Nordic countries. Cooperation between countries is done within the Nordic Golf Union.

- To play on a Swedish course you must be a member of a golf club associated with the SGF and must have completed practical and theoretical tests to get a club handicap

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International

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between 36 and 54.

• Twenty-four percent of golfers, approximately 72,000, are juniors. The SGF tries to keep it at this level or higher through inexpensive junior memberships. Engebo said his 10-year-old son pays \$30 annually for his membership.

• The climate is similar to Canada. One-fourth of Scandinavia is beyond the Arctic Circle, where play is limited to three to four months a year. Warmed by the Gulf Stream, play in the south extends 10 to 12 months.

EUROPE

"Europe is undergoing a metamorphosis in golf," Laupheimer said.

Golfing interest was basically limited to the United Kingdom and Ireland until the mid-1970s. But since then interest has spread throughout Europe.

"Europe has become the most exciting and fastest growing continent in terms of golf development and participation in the world," Laupheimer said. "But remember, we are starting from a low base."

From 1974 to 1989 there was a 231 percent increase in golfers and a 70 percent jump in courses, higher on both counts than any other continent.

But Europe is "at an embryonic stage of development" compared to North America. North America has 21,000 courses and 23 million golfers. Europe, including Scandinavia, lists only 3,600 courses and 4.2 million golfers.

With a geographic area comparable to the United States and a surge in golfing interest, the number of golfers is expected to more than double to 10 million by the year 2000. A 25 percent growth in courses is expected over the next two years.

Increases in leisure time and disposable income are the driving forces behind golf's new status as the "No. 1 growth sport in Europe," Laupheimer said. Then there is the success of professional golfers like Nick Faldo, Ian Woosnam, Sandy Lyle, Seve Ballesteros and Bernhard Langer as well as the European Ryder Cup team. Television coverage and tournaments have also increased.

The increase in incomes and courses have opened the game to more people. But the growth is different in various countries.

Laupheimer divides Europe into four development categories. Great Britain and Ireland are traditional golf nations; Spain and Portugal are holiday golf nations; France, Germany, Italy, Austria, Belgium, Netherlands and Luxembourg are emerging golf nations; and Eastern Europe consists of potential golf nations.

Demand exceeds supply throughout most of Europe, Laupheimer said. Public courses are in very short supply since 82 percent of Europe's courses are private.

Environmental restrictions and financial difficulties are the two major stumbling blocks to building the necessary facilities, he added.

Sherman Hollow faces pesticide hurdles

Continued from page 29

selectmen have sent out another round of letters to Chittenden County's state senators, declaring that the controversial Act 250 process has let them down. They contend that "during the Sherman Hollow permitting debacle, several other (golf courses) are now operating with little or no opposition and/or scrutiny." Truax concurs, accusing the District Commission of holding Sherman Hollow to tougher environmental standards than other Vermont golf courses.

Michael O'Connor, serving as representative on the Vermont Industry Policy Board, an executive board under the Vermont Golf Association, strongly disagrees.

O'Connor, course superintendent at Basin Harbor CC, Vergennes, perhaps is the most knowledgeable and informed on the Sherman Hollow infighting. He's been president of the Vermont supers and prominent on area and state environmental boards.

Said O'Connor: "Currently the industry, comprising 54 golf facilities in Vermont, has expended more than \$25,000 just in meeting the current pesticide regulations adopted Oct. 25, 1990. The Vermont Industry Policy Board has raised an additional \$25,000 just to comply with the industry's need to hire a turfgrass position within the Vermont Department of Agriculture."

O'Connor is concerned with golf's good name in the wake of develop-

ment. While it bothers him that Vermont is perceived by the rest of the country as the villain, he applauds the applicant's decision to appeal.

Decisions like this, left untouched, he said, set a precedent that others would have to overcome. He hopes for a settlement soon in a case that has become known as "Politics, Pesticides and a Permit."

Opponents contend they must come up with their own Stamp Act and propaganda campaign to counter "official" mailing. "They (town fathers) might as well have a franking privilege," commented one dissenter.

While project opponents lack the impressive array of scientists enlisted

by Sherman Hollow advocates, they have a distinguished voice.

Dr. Hugh Brown from the University of Vermont, representing naysayers, testified that when he used his input data, he found three times as much runoff and 40 to 90 times more leaching than the model had shown by Sherman Hollow.

If the state board overturns the second and latest District 4 Commission veto, Sherman Hollow can proceed with course construction.

Should the Board dash Sherman Hollow hopes, the Vermont Supreme Court appears the next step. Or, Truax could start from scratch with a new set of hearings studying all potential impacts of the golf course.



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