

Endowment program pays for Duke course repairs



Improvements to the 10th hole at Duke University Golf Course were made through an endowment program

By Peter Blais

With the recession forcing universities to cut back expenses, renovating school golf courses is usually a low priority. Many university facilities, some of which are among the finest courses in the country, are falling into disrepair.

That was the case until two years ago at Duke University, the Durham, N.C. home of the reigning NCAA college basketball champions and one of the finest Robert Trent Jones, Sr. courses to be found anywhere, according to Duke Athletic Director Tom Butters.

"It was starting to look like a lot of university golf courses," Butters recalled. "We just didn't have the money to keep it up the way

we should."

About that time, Butters held a brainstorming session with his staff on how to raise money to make the improvements the 30-plus-year-old course so desperately needed.

Someone hit on the idea of endowing every hole to the tune of \$100,000 and the driving range for \$200,000. It was a good idea, but would anybody buy it? Butters tried it out on a friend, who immediately offered to be the first to sign up.

"In just a few weeks, we raised \$2 million," Butters said. "We used \$1 million to improve the course and set aside another \$1 million to help maintain the improvements. It's turned us into one of the best university courses in

the country again."

With the initial \$1 million, the school rebuilt all 18 tees and four greens; installed a two-line irrigation system; remodeled all 42 bunkers and added six new fairway bunkers; cut back 35 feet of trees that had grown in along all fairways; planted \$100,000 of flowers and trees and developed a \$16,000 master plan as part of a \$300,000 course beautification program; re-did all the cart paths; and widened and lengthened the driving range.

To help maintain the improvements, Duke hired Paul Jett as superintendent last September. Jett had previously been superintendent of courses No. 1 and 4 at Pinehurst Country Club.

In return for their pledges, each donor was given a permanent locker, lifetime membership and a stone marker placed at the tee of their holes and at the practice range reading "In lasting appreciation to (name)."

Three donors, wishing to remain anonymous, had the names of Butters, long-time golf coach Duffy Hagler (practice range) and present golf coach Rod Myers inscribed on their markers.

"It was an interesting idea and one that worked for us," Butters said.

"The individual contributors seem to be pleased with our efforts to bring the course back to where it really should have been all along."

Chamber honors golf course owners

STOCKTON, Calif. — Ty and Nancy Caplin, owners of Elkhorn Country Club in Stockton, Calif., have won the Greater Stockton Chamber of Commerce Small Business Person of the Year Award.

The award, honoring a small business owner demonstrating staying power, growth in number of employees, increased sales volume, innovativeness of service, response to adversity, and contributions to the community, was presented to the Caplins at a ceremony May 4.

During their 13 years at Elkhorn, the Caplins have increased membership from 150 to its maximum of 530, with 57 waiting to join.

An incoming director of the PGA of America, past president of the Northern California Section of the PGA and winner of the Bill Strausbaugh Club Relations Award, Ty Caplin's commitment to projecting and maintaining the professional image of golf is evident in Elkhorn's daily operations, in which he is very involved.

Elkhorn's outside tournament program and

award-winning Junior Golf program attract many members of the community to the facility.

Ty Caplin is a PGA Class A-4 Golf Professional. Nancy is Elkhorn's office manager.

Winning the local award qualifies the Caplins to compete for the state of California Small Business Person of the Year Award.

Dupuis named Shaker Hills Director of Golf

HARVARD, Mass. — Peter P. Dupuis has been named director of golf operations at the new Shaker Hills Golf Club, which opened July 4.

Dupuis is a resident of Amherst, N.H., and a Class A member of the Professional Golfers Association.

Prior to coming to Shaker Hills, he served at Amherst (N.H.) Country Club. He has been the head professional and golf course manager at Fort Devens Golf Course in Ayer, Mass., and served at Cochecho Country Club in Dover, N.H.

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