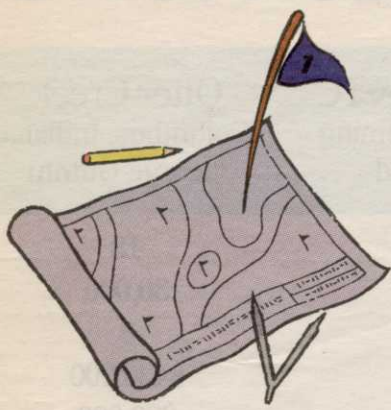


Briefs



MIZE DESIGNING FIRST COURSE

Larry Mize is best remembered by the golfing public for an in-the-cup pitch on the second playoff hole against Greg Norman to win the 1987 Masters at Augusta (Ga.) National. Augusta is his birthplace.

He hopes to score solidly, if less spectacularly, with his first golf course design venture, an 18-hole tract on the northernmost island of Japan.

Though his firm is titled Larry Mize Traditional Design, Mize insists he's flexible.

"I'm more into traditional design than some of the new stuff," he said. "But I can mix it up a little."

He feels 10 years on the tour has provided strong background for his new field.

GRAVES LAYOUT OPENS IN AUGUST

BEND, Ore. — Officials expect an August opening of nine holes at Seventh Mountain Golf Village, an 18-hole championship course under construction 14 miles from Mt. Bachelor Adjacent to the Inn of the Seventh Mountain.

Robert Muir Graves has designed the course. It will be a resort facility with 107 homesites and a proposed condominium development.

The course will have Penncross bentgrass USGA-constructed greens, ryegrass/blue grass/fescue-blended fairways and roughs, and continuous cart paths in a natural forested setting, according to superintendent Walter Mattison, who has been with the project since construction began.

Walt Porterfield Jr., who has been at Sunriver in central Oregon, will be the head golf professional.

DOTHAN MUNI A QUESTION MARK

DOTHAN, Ala. — Two Dothan residents aren't sold on the city's involvement in attempts to procure a municipal golf course.

Mark Pepe asked the Dothan City Commission why funds are available to participate in a possible Alabama Retirement Systems golf complex if "we can't get adequate funding for schools, recreation, roads and sewer and water."

The state Retirement Systems has been officially invited by the city to consider a more than 500-acre tract of land for development into an \$8-million to \$10-million golf complex similar to those scheduled for development in Birmingham, Huntsville, Opelika and Mobile.

Pepe also asked what the city plans to do with the Jeffcoat property, a 200-acre city-owned property under consideration for a municipal golf development.

Tim Sherman asked who would be responsible for running the complex and who would do feasibility studies.

Clark: ASGCA taking major step, releasing environmental document by year's-end

By Mark Leslie

With golf course projects facing constantly stiffer permitting tests nationwide, the American Society of Golf Course Architects is taking immediate steps to resolve disputes.

Newly elected President Tom Clark said by the end of the year the ASGCA should be distributing a document detailing information on all facets of golf course development and maintenance from fertilization to wildlife. The package will be sent to the many federal, state and local agencies involved in the permitting process.

"We have very good factual information and need to publicize it, tell the government about exactly what we do. We don't overdose with nitrates, pesticides and herbicides. We have all these studies to show that we don't. So instead of asking all these same questions at every hearing, these agencies will have this information on hand and won't have to ask the questions or be concerned about them. There will be other issues that will crop up, such as with wildlife..."

"Permitting is our Number One problem," Clark said from his Kensington, Md., office. "We're gathering all the information. It's available. Everybody's doing studies but nobody's coordinating them. We just need to get it out and publicized."

"I'll be working with the Allied Associations of Golf, the GCSAA (Golf Course Superintendents Association of America), USGA (United States Golf Association) and others to help expedite this."

An ASGCA committee with members from a cross-section of North America will work with Co-chairmen Don Knott of Palo Alto, Calif., and Bill Love of Ault/Clark.

Clark said the environmental panel's sec-

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Kiln Creek Golf and Country Club in Newport News, Va., is the latest creation of the American Society of Golf Course Architects' new president, Tom Clark of Kensington, Md. This photo, taken in the fall when the Bermudagrass was dormant, shows the 8th hole and illustrates the wildlife on the course. A par 72 layout, it stretches from 5,316 to 6,888 yards.

ASGCA hears Brits' environmental solutions

From a lengthy drought to wildlife preservation, Great Britain's golf industry faces the same obstacles as in the United States. But the English have some different solutions, the American Society of Golf Course Architects discovered at their annual meeting.

While the industry in America still operates without a lobbying group or central information clearinghouse, the Golf Course Wildlife Trust serves as a liaison between golf

and conservation bodies in the United Kingdom.

While diverse organizations work separately funding turf, water and chemical research in the United States, a corps of scientists in England two years ago formed the Durrell Institute of Conservation and Ecology at the University of Kent to resolve environmental questions.

And while American developers struggle

to compromise with environmental agencies and groups, British companies like Ecoschemes Limited are pushing the idea of "eco-tourism," making golf courses destination spots for those who want to golf and enjoy natural history. Walkways in the woods and meadows would make the golf course accessible to the public while showing courses are home to flora and fauna.

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Ala. state employees financing new courses

See related story in briefs.

Alabama state employees are investing retirement funds in construction of 12 championship-caliber golf courses in Birmingham, Huntsville, Opelika and Mobile.

Additional courses are planned, all to be designed by Roger Rulewich, chief architect for Robert Trent Jones Sr.

Each site will feature three courses — two regulation length and a par 3 — for a total of 54 holes. The courses are scheduled to begin opening this fall.

"This project represents a major breakthrough for Alabama golf," said Dr. David Bronner, chief executive officer of Retirement Systems of Alabama (RSA). "We've known for a long time that golf courses are a sound investment, so we've taken a leadership role in their development and construction."

Bronner added: "Our priority is to improve the quality of life and attract more tourists and retirees to Alabama. Golf is the ideal means to achieve our objectives."

To oversee its golf development business, RSA formed Sun Belt Golf, Inc., headed by former golf pro Bobby Vaughan.

"Each facility will be capable of hosting a major championship event," Vaughan said. "We're not building public courses, but great courses the public can play on."

Sun Belt Golf, which constructs, owns and operates the courses, has persuaded municipalities and developers to donate land at each site.

"We haven't had to buy an acre of land

yet," said Vaughan, pointing to the 8,000-acre Birmingham site donated by U.S. Steel. Other land has been donated in exchange for the option to build housing.

Each site is unique, according to Rulewich. "In designing each of the 12 courses, we highlighted the area's outstanding natural beauty," said the former president of the American Society of Golf Course Architects. "For example, at the Opelika course, we made extensive use of a beautiful 600-acre lake that comes into play on 30 of the 54 holes."

"Some courses are hilly, others flat," Rulewich added. "One has more than 100 bunkers, another none."

"We have the financial backing, architectural team and experience to expand the program nationally," concluded Vaughan.

American architects learn British ideas on environment

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ASGCA members, touring England's famed courses as part of their 45th annual meeting, heard of these and other projects in late April.

Golf Course Wildlife Trust Chairman Michael Harvey, Ecoschemes Ltd.'s Gary Grant, Durrell Institute Director Ian Swingland and Environmental Golf Services Ltd.'s David Stubbs shared their work educating British society and lawmakers about the wildlife-friendliness of golf courses.

The Golf Course Wildlife Trust, whose members include Wildlife Links and the National Turfgrass Council, is geared to independently researching safe chemical and water use and to educating planners and disclosing misinformation from environmentalists and others.

Harvey said most widely-known British courses carry the government distinction as Sites of Special Scientific Interest where the land cannot be altered.

He said the government acknowledges most coastal courses—like St. Andrews and Troon—as preserving wildlife. Inland courses—like Royal Birkdale, Royal St. George's, Sunningdale and Gleneagles—also carry the SSSI designation.

Only 40 percent of Britain's golf course acreage is maintained. The remaining 60 percent equals all the area of all other nature reserves in the country.

Saying paperwork is the biggest obstacle to golf course builders, Swingland suggested that developers and architects weigh the costs and benefits of using sensitive land in their projects.

He also recommended involving top local officials in the projects, giving the officials a vested interest. He said developers must initiate communication with local people and conservationists, since they could be potential partners in removing political logjams.

It is important to balance golf and housing, conservation and economics to get the best total impact in a project, Swingland said.

Bonallack —

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his courses. No good course is complete without them. They test the player's nerve and strength, depending on whether you play safe or go for the carry.

"All of us who play golf are very fortunate when compared to those who play other sports. Football fields, tennis courts, cricket pitching, swimming pools, bowling greens, dartboards and pool and snooker tables are all very much the same. All are flat and built to standard sizes. Generally speaking, their surroundings leave no lasting image in the mind.

"Not so with golf. Every course is different and has its own attraction, resulting from either the planned creation of the golf course architect or from the work of the Great Creator. Happily, on some occasions, it is a perfect combination of both."

Ecoschemes' Grant said derelict land like quarries could be reclaimed and, where locally appropriate, new wildlife habitats recreated to that existing before farmers used tractors.

Stubbs declared that in many ways the United Kingdom and Europe are far behind the United States in research. He cited the Cape Cod Study done by the Environmental Protection Agency at several golf courses in Massachusetts.

Pointing to the drought of the past five years in southern England, Stubbs termed research in irrigation practices as well as water table

levels lowered by ancillary development as important.

Stubbs, like Grant, cautioned against heavy-handed earth-moving, changing the countryside too much.

Golf also is seen as a threat, Stubbs said, to historic parklands—parks associated with old estates and historic sites that might be sold to unscrupulous developers to suburbanize the countryside.

By careful monitoring and using local plant species and an organically managed approach to the golf course environs, Stubbs thought it possible for golf course development to flourish in the future.

Meanwhile, in Europe the key to developing and implementing an environmentally sensitive golf course project is awareness of each market segment's revenue and type of demand, according to consultant Howard Swan.

Swan said growth in Europe will come only from those who never have played golf, and this alone would create a demand for courses for all skills.

Robert Berthet, of the 18-member French Association of Golf Course Architects, said Europe needs golf academies and less difficult courses.

Although there is a 15-percent growth of players, 30 percent give up

after the first year because the course is not attuned to their skills, Berthet said. The courses are difficult and the golfers lack and need instruction.

Spain's courses mostly are geared to tourists. France, Italy, Germany and Sweden target their courses to locals as well as tourists, he said.

He said in the architecturally rich tourist areas of Italy, France and Costa del Sol, large companies begin developments with hotels and several golf courses, then face difficult administrative conditions.

In France, it may take four or five years to obtain for permits from 30 to 40 services.

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