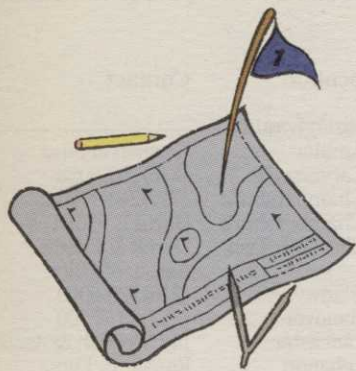


Briefs



**MATTHEWS COURSE TO OPEN IN AUGUST**

Officials expect an August opening for the front nine at Railside, an 18-hole championship course under construction south of Grand Rapids, Mich.

Jerry Matthews of Matthews and Associates in Lansing, Mich., is designing the course. It will be a semi-private facility with 110 home sites.

The course will have Penncross bentgrass greens, tees and fairways, continuous cart paths and seven acres of native wildflowers, according to superintendent William Fountain, who worked with Matthews on the award-winning Timber Ridge Golf Course in East Lansing.

Charles Knowles, who has been head professional at Fiddlesticks, The Vines and The Forest in Ft. Myers, Fla., will be director of golf at Railside.

**PLAYER SIGNS ON FOR ST. LOUIS COURSE**

ST. LOUIS — Sunset Hills city officials have endorsed a golf course and resort community that will feature a Gary Player signature layout.

Tapawingo (Indian meaning "Place of Joy") will be a 27-hole course surrounded by 260 home sites and a 200-unit conference center on 400 acres, according to Stephen G. Symsack, executive vice president of the developer, Symcor Companies.

Gary Player Design Co. President Jim Applegate said preliminary environmental research studies are being done to help maintain "the natural characteristics and historical legacy of the development."

Golf pro Mike Murphy said "a variety of terrain" on the site will offer Player "an enormous advantage for creativity and quality."

**FOUR HOURS, 174 MEMBERSHIPS**

PORTLAND, Ore. — Membership sales for The Oregon Golf Club hit 174 within the first four hours, said Jim Hardy of Golf Services Group, whose Golf Group, Inc. is developing and will operate the private club. Membership will be limited to 400.

The 7,159-yard par 72 18-hole course is being built on 445 acres at a cost of \$12 million.

Tour pro Peter Jacobsen and Ken Kavanaugh of Tucson, Ariz., are co-architects. A July 4, 1992, opening is planned.

**THAILAND DEVELOPER INKS GARL**

RAYONG, Thailand, — American golf course designer Ron Garl has been retained by Dr. Nob Stayasai to design two 18-hole golf courses here.

The courses will be part of the Dokkrai Golf & Sports Club, an 800-acre project that will include a 200-room hotel and 600 homesites and villas.

The development is 60 miles southeast of Bangkok near the resort area of Pattaya.

Thailand has more than 60 golf courses, with another 40 under construction.

Garl is headquartered in Lakeland, Fla.

# 'X-ray' machine breaks into golf

By Mark Leslie

A new technology that surveys underground will help prevent some of the existing vague specifications and faulty judgment found in golf course construction, claims Charles Gockel of Agri-Systems of Texas, Inc.

Agri-Systems, a soil-testing laboratory in Tomball, Texas, and Environmetrics of Houston have introduced "a non-destructive, subsurface survey of golf greens and other sports turf structures," Gockel said.

The companies say the survey is very exact and provides a complete profile of each of the layers of materials used during construction — from the seedbed mix to the choker layer and gravel, as well as the loca-

tion and slope of the drainage tile system.

"The survey is done with a radar signal similar to the oil-field seismic process," Gockel said. "Radar is a shallow investigative tool. It is as precise as one-fourth inch, maybe one-eighth inch."

The technology is used in other fields. Archaeologists use it where they're looking for anything unnatural to an area. Foresters have used it to track the growth of a tree's root system.

Gockel believes faulty construction — most of which is accidental — is a major cause of greens failures.

Saying a lot of the laboratory's work is forensic, Gockel added: "So many times courses were constructed and the folks didn't

get what they thought they were paying for... Sometimes they put on their three-piece suits and find someone to sue. Sometimes they bite the bullet, feeling they thought what they were doing during construction was right at the time."

Gockel said the first job for this subsurface survey is at a prestigious Mid-America golf club that just two to three years ago reconstructed some of its greens. "They have been non-performers since Day One," he said. "It was one of those 'better ideas.' A lot of these cases (of failure) have been done in-house. In this case the superintendent was told to keep his nose out of it... He got fed up and left."

Continued on page 41

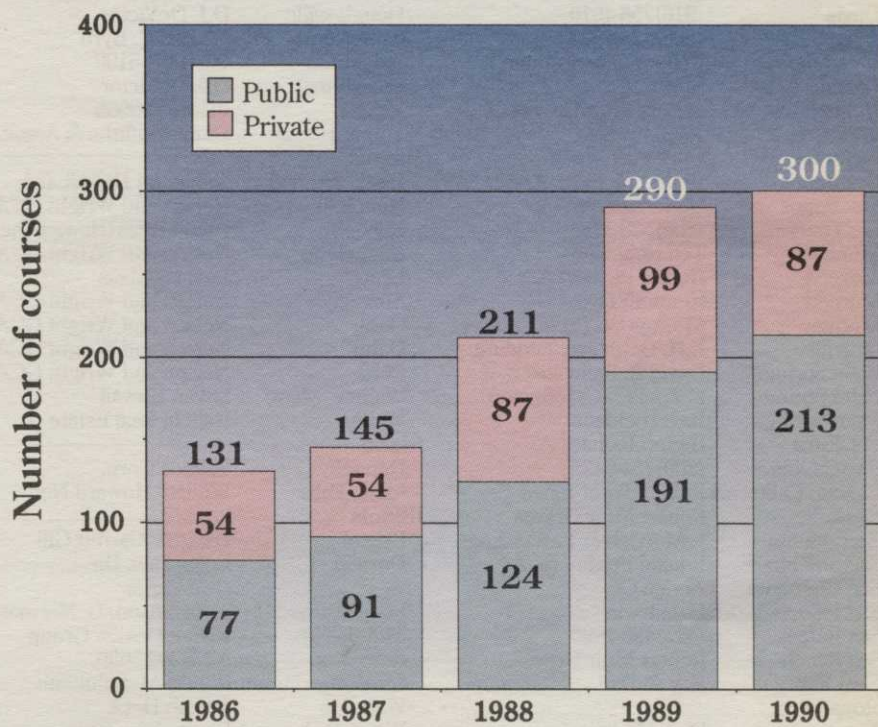
## Figures are in: Construction rose again

New course construction continued to gain momentum in 1990, according to National Golf Foundation figures illustrated here.

The graph, at right, shows the yearly rise in public, private and total number of courses built annually since 1986.

The chart below compares the number of daily-fee, municipal, private and undetermined courses either opened, under construction or in planning through the first 11 months of 1990, along with the same numbers for all of 1989.

## New course construction 1986-90



Source: NGF

	Open		Under Construction		In Planning		Totals	
	1990 YTD	1989 Year-end	1990 YTD	1989 Year-end	1990 YTD	1989 Year-end	1990 YTD	1989 Year-end
Daily Fee	167	156	296	218	352	251	815	625
Municipal	36	35	72	63	125	85	233	183
Private	78	99	186	177	284	245	548	521
Undetermined	—	—	4	5	12	22	16	27
<b>Totals</b>	<b>281</b>	<b>290</b>	<b>558</b>	<b>463</b>	<b>773</b>	<b>603</b>	<b>1,612</b>	<b>1,356</b>

\* All 1990 YTD figures as of Nov. 30, 1990

Source: National Golf Foundation

## Don January returns to design side of business, aims for playability

DALLAS — Longtime PGA Tour professional Don January has returned to the golf course design business in which he was once involved.

January, who designed 15 courses when he retired from the Tour in the mid-1970s, has joined son Tim and Craig Curry in January Group, Inc. here.

Tim January is joining him after 10 years working with Myers Development as well as Wadsworth Golf Construction Co. Curry has been with Jack Nicklaus and Associates and the Nelson Corp. in the golf course development and construction business.

Don will take time from his PGA Senior

Tour schedule to devote to this venture.

January intends to use "the old style or classic designs that allow the golfer to put the ball on the ground and still gain access to the target."

"This gives the player more options of shot selection and, I believe, leads to better shot-making, better players and ... a lot more fun. These are some of the reasons our emphasis will be on classic, user friendly, older style golf courses. We are a new venture selling old ideas."

January has become one of the leading professionals on the Senior Tour, winning almost 30 tournaments.

## Indian water rights play role in resort

By Bob Spiwak

Concern over water shortages by the Yakima Indian Nation and Colville Confederated tribes could affect the proposed \$400-million four-season Early Winters ski resort and golf course at Mazama, in north-central Washington state.

A state-sanctioned water committee recommended a moratorium on building and well drilling in much of the Methow (METHOW) Valley. "Such a moratorium could halt

Continued on page 40

# Sterling CC 'strictly golf' project

STERLING, Mass. — Bucking the trend of tying golf course building to abutting house lot sales, backers of Sterling Country Club say the \$6-million project will be "strictly golf, a walk in the woods."

The 6,800-yard par 71 course, within an hour's drive of Boston, is scheduled to open in June.

The course will be semi-private and, according to president and general manager Richard H. Lowe of Sudbury, 170 memberships at \$7,500 each have been sold.

Sterling is located halfway between Worcester and Leominster, off Route 190.

Walter Lankau Jr. of Sudbury, Lowe's public partner in the project, is co-owner of massive Stow Acres, a 36-hole public course

in Stow.

Other principals are Bernard Cammarata, president and chief executive officer of TJX Companies, Inc., a specialty apparel retailer, and Charles Gordon, president and CEO of Burnes of Boston, a producer and distributor of photo frames and albums.

Cammarata, Lankau and Lowe are members of Nashawtuc Country Club in Concord, Gordon a member at Belmont Country Club.

This quartet has a design team that includes Jim Ferree, a Senior PGA Tour player, golf course owner and consultant, who will be the professional consultant.

Dr. Michael Hurdzan, past president of the

American Society of Golf Architects, is the designer.

S. Vic Jones of Dallas, Texas, will design the clubhouse. He has been involved in more than 400 club projects and was vice president and director of architecture for Club Corporation of America.

The course will feature five sets of tees. Greens will average 7,000 square feet and will be of Penncross turf.

The goal is to use the 250-acre site to build an outstanding New England-style course, working with the natural terrain and wetlands. Parallel fairways will be avoided, as will blind shots, steep climbs and trick shots.

## Fourth city course planned in Minnesota

ROCHESTER, Minn. — The Rochester City Council will spend \$360,000 for 200 acres that will become the city's fourth golf course on land in northeast Rochester.

The land will be paid for over the next two years with tax funds. The site includes the former Hadley Valley School, which will be used as the clubhouse, a barn to be used for maintenance, and a farm.

Construction costs of the \$2.1 million project, due for completion in 1996 or 1997, will be paid through surpluses in the golf operating budget. The land acquisition is being financed primarily with tax money.

The council approved the request, 6-1.

## X-ray

Continued from page 37

Gockel said that of the 1,000 soil profiles with problems he has analyzed in the last five to six years, none have come from greens built according to United States Golf Association specifications.

"But based on what we've seen here in the lab, there is no better way where high rates of play are anticipated, and course longevity is desired. You have to follow the USGA spec to the limit or find some other way. But a "modified" USGA green is an oxymoron. If it's not it's not.

"You find people saying, 'What's all this organics for? We don't need organics down at the bottom of the greens mix. The roots won't go all the way down there, so let's just rototill some in.' So you have 12 inches of greens mix laid on the gravel and rototill it in four or five inches. It usually ends up being too heavy at the very top, it holds too much moisture and impedes the oxygen flow into the system. They'll get three to five years out of it, sit back, scratch their heads, fire the superintendent and wonder what went wrong."

Gockel added: "In most cases with turf, the mistakes are hidden until the grass doesn't grow. The greens committee thinks it's the superintendent's fault. They (superintendents) don't have the respect they deserve.

"The unfortunate part about all this is that it takes time. You can do the worst job in the world initially and the first season you'll still have turf. And after that, it will start to deteriorate.

"It can easily cost \$1 million to rebuild greens. Why not spend the \$100,000 or whatever it costs up front for the choker layer and save the \$1 million later on?"

As part of Agri-System's service it will now also write contract specifications for greens materials to help prevent a problem at the outset.

"Contracts should give a more definitive description for greens construction," he said. "They'll get detailed on irrigation pipe. But when it comes to greens mix they might use the words 'suitable material,' they might not list any gradations, they might use the generic 'organics' (that could be anything from sawdust to Canadian peat)..."

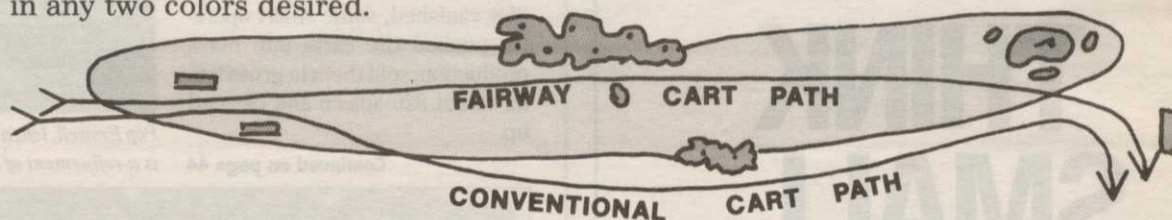
"If you don't say much about it in a contract, it opens the doors to what you're going to get. You also get into a situation of who is in control. So many times no one is in control."

Gockel said his contract work would not detail earth-moving or irrigation or water wells, "but would add definitive paragraphs to that portion that pertains to greens construction. If you have a contract that's too loosely written someone may take advantage of it."

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