

Three Player designs opening

Gary Player Design Co. of Palm Beach Gardens, Fla., opened one course in April and will have two open in June.

River Falls Plantation in Spartanburg, N.C., an 18-hole daily-fee course, opened April 22.

Blackmoor at Myrtle Beach, an 18-hole daily-fee layout, opens June 10.

River Run, a daily fee resort course in Ocean City, Md., will open June 16 and 17.

Player also will begin construction in September on 36 holes for the city of Palm Beach, Fla., in conjunction with the PGA of America.

Player touch a personal one at Pinehurst #9

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"I want a course everyone can play, but also where the pros can go to the back tees and have a heck of a test," he said.

A garden enthusiast, Player said beauty is crucial for a course. "The right landscaping does a lot for your soul," he said.

He also stresses a variety of grasses, especially around the tees and moundings to add character. Yet he is highly selective.

"Some architects have gone to high-humidity areas like Atlanta and put in bentgrass. But you're looking for trouble," he said.

Player decried the huge maintenance costs designed into some courses.

"Some courses in the United States are costing \$2 million a year to maintain," he said. "Any time a course costs more than \$600,000 for maintenance, that's a (sign of a) bad architect."

Water is valuable and you don't buy soil in a drug store, Player said, pointing to the need for conservation.

He said he adds the superintendent to each project "as early as possible, so that he learns our ideas, gets a feel for the course, and plays an important role in the project.

"You need a good superintendent to follow along the lines you want, or the course can deteriorate very quickly."

Player Design Co. President Jim Applegate said: "We consider (the Pinehurst project) a feather in our cap... Gary intends to spend as much time as possible there. It is located on routes getting to and from tournaments.

"Given all the nostalgia, the Hall of Fame, and the other great architects who have been at Pinehurst, it will be hard to keep him away. This is high on his list."

Applegate said the site "is extremely nice rolling land, heavily wooded."

He said Player's design will bring "normalcy." He said the success of that style of golf at Player's Myrtle Beach and Hilton Head National courses "speaks for itself. People keep coming back and coming back to play it.

"When they leave the course they don't feel like they've been beat up by a Mack truck."

Player was to do the initial walk-through on the site on April 24 and construction should begin late this fall, Applegate said.

Jeff Myers, head of the Player design department, is project designer. An Ohio State University agronomy and landscape architecture graduate, Myers is a nephew and apprentice of architect Karl Litten. He has been with Player eight years.

The construction contract will go out to bid to two or three experienced companies in the Pinehurst area, Applegate said.

Player has retained ClubCorp Realty of Dallas to supervise construction, according to George I. Blonsky Jr., managing director of Pinewild and senior vice president of ClubCorp, which owns Pinehurst Resort and Country Club.

Saying the agreement between Pinewild and Player was the result of several months of planning, Blonsky added: "It is a major coup to bring the International Ambassador of Golf here to design a championship signature course for our community. It will positively influence the future tradition of golf at Pinehurst."

Pinehurst #6 opens after redesign work

Pinehurst (N.C.) Resort and Country Club officially reopened its championship No. 6 golf course on March 1, after eight months' work redesigning all of its greens and four fairways.

The original No. 6 greens were removed, then enlarged and recontoured to reflect the character of each hole. The four fairways were redesigned to enhance their playability.

"In 1979, under previous ownership and due to budget limitations, No. 6 was constructed with smaller greens than designer Tom Fazio wanted," said Don Padgett, Pinehurst director of golf operations. "With Tom's input, the redesigning makes No. 6 an even better course than it was because the new greens and fairways allow for increased playability."

Pinehurst No. 6 is a 7,098-yard, par 72 course, with a 74.5 rating.

Officials also upgraded No. 6's driving range and added a new putting green, new golf carts, cart storage facilities and clubhouse.

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