

# PGA Tour dedicates efforts to public course construction

Continued from page 29

PGA Tour's involvement with public golf.

Angelo Palermo, vice president of golf course development for the National Golf Foundation, said 60 percent of golfers are public-course players.

"We're trying to promote golf, and the access to golf, through high-quality facilities that would feature a quality conditioned course with a reasonable design that's well maintained every day," Dee said. "The PGA Tour creates an image and an awareness of golf through

the season. Our public facilities promote the game through clinics and various events at the club that are accessible to everyone.

"We think in the '90s, if golf reaches its potential and continues to grow, it makes sense for the PGA Tour to be involved in that growth," Dee added. "It is certainly a revenue source and a potential profit center for the PGA Tour."

Dee said the PGA Tour will design, build and manage facilities on a long-term basis, but won't put up its own money. It built the 18-hole, 6,620-yard par-71 facility in Jack-

*It makes sense for the PGA Tour to be involved in (golf's) growth.'*

— Gary Dee

sonville. But in some cases it might buy and renovate a facility like Miami's, formerly The Country Club of Miami.

The PGA Tour renovated the 6,343-yard par-70 East course and the 7,017-yard par-72 West course last year. A 4,240-yard par-62 ex-

ecutive course opened in January.

"We prefer to start from scratch," Dee said. "You have more control over what's there. The Miami facility had fallen on hard times and needed some sprucing up and modernization. We may find a facility like that too many times in the marketplace.

"We're looking for money from a developer or municipality. We're looking for land and development capital. We provide the golf expertise."

Dee said the PGA Tour will staff the facility, train the staff, and pro-

vide equipment in the pro shop.

The courses will also benefit from the PGA Tour's contracts with merchandise, food, beverage, and golf course equipment manufacturers, he said.

"We bring a significant amount of buying leverage to the table as a multi-course operator," Dee said. "When we start a club from scratch, it's not like we haven't done it before."

The PGA Tour's involvement in public golf will be separate from the development of its TPC courses, Dee said. The public facilities will also be different from the TPCs, both on and off the course.

The courses won't have the stadium golf features of TPC courses, and will be less severe and dramatic.

They will have limited bunkers and other features to be as easily maintained as possible. That will enable greens-fee structures to remain low, Dee said.

"We are looking for a traditional design," Dee said. "We are looking to move as little dirt as possible to keep costs down."

Cost considerations are also entering the design of the clubhouses, especially compared to TPC buildings.

Dee said the public-course clubhouses will be 4,000 to 5,000 square feet, as opposed to the 25,000-square-foot TPC giants.

No locker rooms or evening dining room service will be included. Sandwiches and hot dogs will be available instead, and there will be a full bar. Dee said costs of building the public facilities will be \$6 million apiece, while TPC courses cost \$14 million to \$15 million. Both figures are exclusive of land costs.

Dee said the PGA Tour's public and TPC courses could enter the same market. Yet they won't compete because they're different types of facilities.

"In a major market, a TPC course and a PGA Tour public facility could co-exist quite nicely," Dee said.

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In this case of high speed, the aim is high return, more quickly. When the roads and utilities are completed, buyers will be able to start building their homes in Phase I of the build-in plan. More than 40 Phase I home sites, ranging in price from \$107,000 to \$300,000, were sold, pushing Colleton River over its goal to more than \$6.5 million in sales revenues.

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