

412 golf ranges open in U.S. during 1992

By HAL PHILLIPS

Four hundred and twelve golf ranges opened during 1992, according to figures released by Forecast Golf Marketing & Financial Systems, Inc.

This figure represents a drop-off from the 768 ranges which opened during 1991. However, the news is actually less disheartening than it might appear, especially for owners of existing golf course facilities.

"Last year, we predicted that as existing courses recognized these ranges as viable profit centers, the openings would increase. And they have," said Scott Marlowe, presi-

dent of Richmond, Va.-based Forecast.

Of the 768 ranges which opened in 1991, 19.7 percent were constructed at an existing golf course facility (4.6 percent were indoor ranges while 75.8 percent were free-standing).

However, of the 412 which opened during 1992, 34.8 percent were built at an existing golf course (7.5 percent were indoor facilities and 57.7 were free-standing). In real numbers, there were 137 on-course ranges built in 1992, while 153 were constructed the year before.

New York State led the way last year with 34 range openings, followed by Florida

with 31 and Texas with 26. The Lone Star figure represents a 50 percent increase over 1991.

Unfortunately, supply may have already outgrown demand in Florida, New York and Texas, said Marlowe, who added that Washington, D.C., Dallas/Fort Worth and the New York suburbs are nearing the range-saturation point.

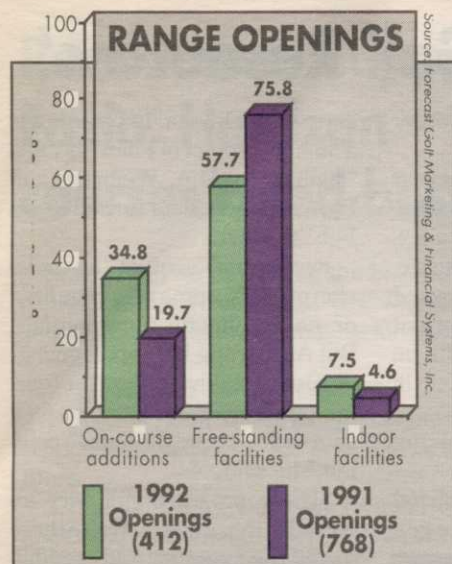
"What we're saying is, an alarming number of facilities are going up on top of each other," he said. "Further, the entry of [Jack] Nicklaus and [Lee] Trevino into the market has raised the specter of large metropolitan areas being less than ideal for mom and pop operations."

Marlowe hastened to add that while 412 ranges opened in 1992, 104 closed their doors.

"Do your market due diligence before you put a spade in the ground," he warned. "That means an in-depth market survey of consumer attitudes and a thorough appraisal of competitors, existing and potential."

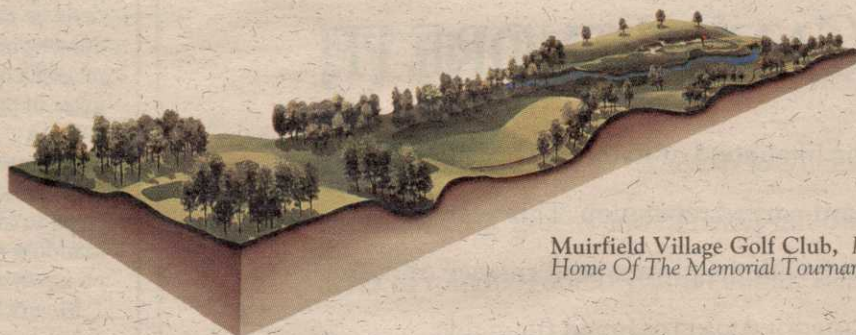
Ballantrae boasting Nicklaus-designed 18-hole golf course

PORTST. LUCIE, Fla. — Ballantrae Golf & Yacht Club, a new residential and recreational community on the St. Lucie River featuring a Jack Nicklaus-designed golf course, has broken ground and commenced construction on the community's inaugural patio homes with locations on golf fairways, lakes, nature preserves and the mile-wide St. Lucie River. According to Robert Comparato, president of Compson Development Corp., the projects developers, the carefully sculpted golf course will open early next year. It comprises more than 180 acres of winding pine and oak forests along the scenic St. Lucie River.



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