

GOLF COURSE NEWS

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MASTER GREENKEEPER

Terry Buchen (right) has earned Master Greenkeeper status, as bestowed by the Right Honourable Lord Griffiths MC (left), captain of the Royal & Ancient Golf Club of St. Andrews. Buchen is one of only three American superintendents to be so honored. See story on page 20.

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HOW TO SPEAK A THOUSAND WORDS

The Wade Hampton Club in Cashiers, N.C., never looked so good, thanks to photographer Mike Klemme. Klemme and colleague Tony Roberts talk about how to prepare a course for photography, and how to market a course with pictures. See pages 22 & 47.

Turf grads face crowded job market

By PETER BLAIS

The job market for turf school graduates shows few signs of improving while the number of wannabe superintendents continues to grow, according to educators and practitioners.

"It's been noticeably slower the past few years," said University of Massachusetts Professor Richard Cooper.

"During most of the 1980s, we'd graduate 40 to 50 students every year and all would find jobs as assistant superintendents. Now about half find assistant jobs, a quarter are able to find work on golf course maintenance crews and the rest end up doing something else."

The situation is a little better in the South. Lake City (Fla.) College Profes-

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Wadsworth Golf: The training ground for aspiring architects

By MARK LESLIE

When project director Glen Doutrich told Craig Schreiner to oversee finished grading of the irrigation heads for an upcoming walk-through of the Fazio Course at Barton Creek in Austin, Texas, the young apprentice said, "Yes, the owners will probably get real touchy about that." Doutrich responded: "I'm not worried about the owners. We far exceed their expectations. The walk-through you've got to watch for is Mr. Wadsworth's."

The Wadsworth Way, Schreiner calls it. It refers to Brent Wadsworth. It defines how he runs his Wadsworth Golf Construction Co. And it may explain why that nationwide firm has become the

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Openings maintain torrid pace

A third straight year of 350-plus courses

By HAL PHILLIPS

A whopping 358 golf courses opened for play during 1993, as public-access development continued to dominate a market that — despite a bevy of cool-headed forecasts — has sustained its considerable momentum.

According to a National Golf Foundation (NGF) report, a full 81 percent of those courses unveiled last year were either daily fee or municipal. Of the 14,639 courses now operating in the United States, 66.6 percent are public-access.

According to Rick Norton, vice president of the NGF, private course development is more adversely affected by recession, whereas public golf is more often aimed at a particular market segment.

"I think golf is being viewed more and more as a business," said Norton. "It was a very good year in 1993, and I think it shows courses are being built for the market. They're more

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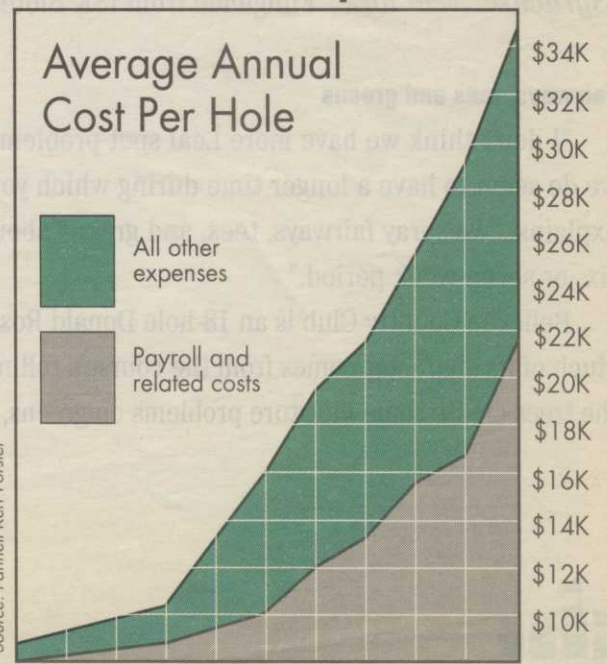
Study: Labor trouble on horizon for private clubs

By PETER BLAIS

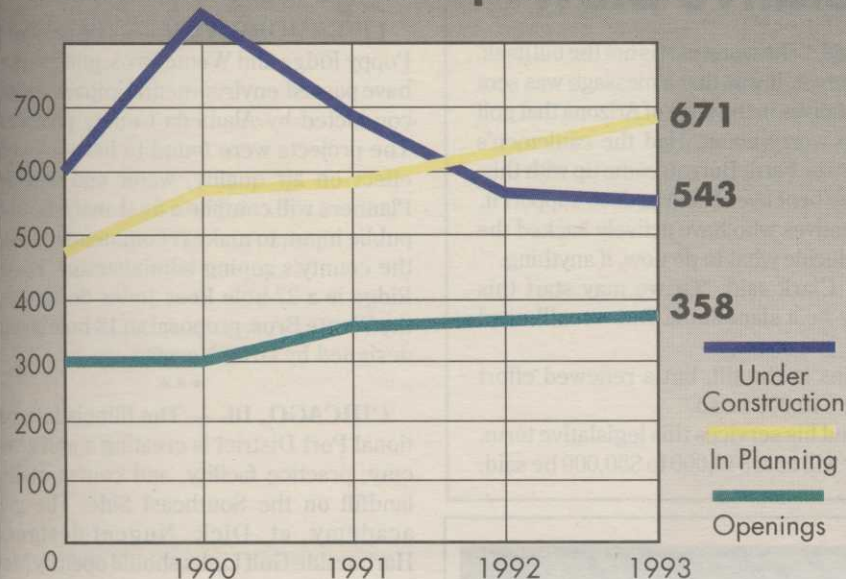
Increasing labor costs, declining membership and less money available for capital improvements are among the disturbing findings in an annual report on the health of private country clubs.

From 1972-82, private golf course maintenance personnel were paid less than the average income paid workers in that general labor pool. Since then, however, course employees have been and continue to be paid more than the pool average, according to Kevin Reilly, national tax director for the international accounting firm Pannell Kerr

Continued on page 48



Golf Course Development 1990-93



Source: National Golf Foundation

1993's Top Ten States in Course Openings

| | |
|-------------------|------------|
| Florida | 37 |
| Illinois | 26 |
| Michigan | 22 |
| Ohio | 17 |
| Alabama | 16 |
| Texas | 16 |
| California | 14 |
| New York | 14 |
| Wisconsin | 13 |
| North Carolina | 12 |
| Virginia | 12 |
| Total | 199 |
| U.S. Total | 358 |

NGF reports 358 openings last year; daily-fees continue to dominate

Continued from page 1

economically driven. Their capitalization is more in line with what they can expect to produce revenue-wise."

For two years now, the Jupiter, Fla.-based NGF has made a concerted effort to downplay its now-memorable rallying cry: Meeting demand with "one course opening per day, through the year 2000." Similarly, pundits and experts alike have agreed the market will settle down during this decade, with approximately 250 courses coming on line each year.

When figures for 1991 indicated that 351 courses were christened, everyone cried *Peak Year!* — sure that 1992 would restore sobriety. However, 354 courses opened in 1992, followed by this year's 358.

What gives?

"If we're talking about the same thing a year from now, we might have to say the NGF was right — this is demand-driven," said Don Rhodes, vice president of golf finance for Textron Financial Corp. "The golf industry has always financed new construction from non-traditional sources: membership sales, assessments, wealthy individuals who want to escape the North-east in the winter.

"To the extent that this new construction is coming from equity sources — as opposed to the 1980s when you just got as big a loan as you could — the industry is healthy."

The number of courses under construction continued to rise, as well. Of those 671 projects in the works, two thirds are expected to open during 1994.

"Apparently, these courses are being financed," said NGF Vice President Bill Burbaum. "That's 671 investments. The economy doesn't seem to have had an adverse effect on that."

The only sobering figures indicate a continued decline of projects in planning: 543 at the close of 1993, compared to 580 in 1992. However, even that downward trend may be misleading.

"The real reason the 'in planning' numbers are declining has to do with our own standards," said Catherine Suddarth, research associate at the NGF. "We're being a little more discriminating as to what goes into our data base. We're trying to determine whether there is some backbone to the project — meaning we try to find out whether the developer is already into permitting, looking for an architect or looking for funding.

"If someone just walks into a planning board meeting saying he wants to build a

golf course, we don't include that any more."

The NGF report reveals other trends and tidbits of development knowledge:

- Real-estate-based projects made a slight recovery in 1993. Though not up to pre-1990 levels, the percentage of real-estate openings rose from 27 percent of all openings in 1992 to 34 percent in 1993. The figure for 1991 was 33 percent.

- A moment of silence, please: 29 golf facilities ceased operation in 1993.

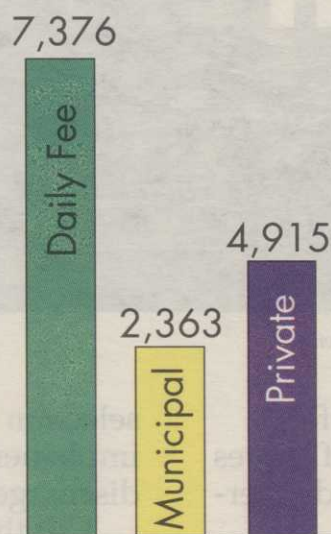
- All told, the eight South Central states showed uncharacteristic vigor: 59 courses opened, 90 percent of which opened to the public. "In the Sun Belt over the last year," Rhodes added, "the housing market has really turned around. In Atlanta, Dallas and Phoenix, new developments are springing up and some have golf courses attached to them. They were dead in the water three years ago."

- The North Central region led the public-access parade, opening 75 last year.

- Nearly 69 percent of the 358 were located at new facilities. Of these 246 new courses, 88 opened as nine-hole facilities, but 32 of the 88 had plans to ultimately go 18.

Updated Golf Course Supply

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