

# Universities move forward on 'research' courses

## Clemson's 'working lab' wonderful opportunity, all disciplines agree

By MARK LESLIE

CLEMSON, S.C. — With an anonymous \$1 million donation pushing Clemson University's fundraising over the top, builders in mid-February began construction of an 18-hole handicapped-accessible golf course — designed to be a "working laboratory" for researchers and students, as well as a championship-level track for its golf team and others.

"This is going to be wonderful for us," said Dr. John Kelly, chairman of the Horticulture Department. Construction, he said, coincides with Clemson's expansion of its turfgrass program, an effort to double its research, and addition of a "distance-delivery degree program" to the Myrtle Beach area through Horey Georgetown Tech.

"We have a wonderful opportunity here," said Jeff Martin, director of conference and guest services, referring to the golf course and accompanying conference center. "We're excited about the turfgrass research, and our accessible-golf initiative. It will be totally accessible to every golfer regardless of

physical handicap."

"The design team has worked hard to ensure the criteria set by faculty are met."

Kelly said the project will address three areas:

- Managing chemicals in a golf course environment, and breeding and working with turfgrass species.

- Researching accessibility to the physically handicapped, including what impact that might have on golf course maintenance.

- Dealing with issues of the game, such as speed of play, efficient management, and visitor preferences.

"This is a team approach. We have people from all kinds of backgrounds centering and working together. The ideas that come out are terrific," Kelly said.

Faculty from agronomy to biology, physical therapy and hotel management expect to do a tremendous amount of work and research at the facility.

A host of studies is anticipated — from the movement and fate of pesticides to

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## UGeorgia benefactors will turn back course profits to work of scientists

By MARK LESLIE

GRIFFIN, Ga. — Ground breaking looms as early as

September for the University of Georgia's 21-hole golf course here, and the school may be doubly blessed by the developers — two men intent on being benefactors to the game they love.

Ted Senters and Sam Smith of Macon, who formed Research Golf Inc. specifically to build the course, want to leave a legacy.

"We're looking at three or four different structures of financing. The one we're inclined to go with would generate more dollars back to the university for research and education," Senters said.

"There is a great need for turf research — not only to benefit golf courses but for all the other benefits that come out of research.

"We want to leave a legacy that's beneficial for millions of people rather than generate revenue for ourselves."

Senters and Smith are coordinating investors and seeking contributions toward the course, which they will develop and manage.

They have an extensive list of people in the golf industry — from chemical companies to the irrigation manufacturers — who have expressed an interest in participating, Senters said.

While Bob Cupp has signed on to design

the course, Research Golf has not sought a builder.

UGeorgia faculty are excited by the opportunities the facility will provide them and their research, said Dr. Ed Kanemasu, research leader for the school's Crop and Soil Science Department.

On any day, 18 holes will be playable and three will be used by the researchers.

"The reason for the course is to solve problems," Kanemasu said, adding that the school will, therefore, make it "visible to people involved in the turfgrass industry."

The faculty plans to conduct field days, bringing Extension personnel, superintendents and others onto the course "to see the kinds of research activities taking place, and to get their input as to what individual problems we should be looking at."

In the meantime, UGeorgia officials are still awaiting a decision from the state attorney general.

Since the golf course is a business associated with a non-profit educational institution, the attorney general is investigating issues concerning how payments will be made.

"If they [payments] are related to revenue received, it would give the perception that we're involved in the golf course business," Kanemasu said.

## Penn State's course addition leaves six holes for use by researchers, Athletic Department

By MARK LESLIE

UNIVERSITY PARK, Pa. — Penn State University officials have given the go-ahead for six of the university's 42 golf holes to be maintained and managed by students and serve as a laboratory for scientists.

"By involving the turfgrass, physical education, golf management, and public instructions in the project, these holes will serve to fulfill the university mission of education, research and community service," Penn State PGA pro Jeff Mowrer said in his strategic plan for the six-hole track, called the Nittany Course.

"It's a great learning project. You need more hands-on training," said Scott Rushe, assistant superintendent at Penn State's Blue and White golf courses. "I think it will be the only course in the United States run by students."

"It will give us more of a controlled environment. We have no control of the two other courses. We will be able to do long-term research," said George Hamilton, who leads the school's two-year turfgrass program.

A turfgrass student could be superintendent, while a golf management major could intern as manager of the facility, Hamilton said.

At the same time, setting the holes apart from heavy use will allow more unencumbered research.

"We will probably do more research like low-input — low pesticide and low

fertilizer use," he said.

Minimal green fees would mean golfers, many from physical education classes and public group programs, would not demand high-quality turf, so low-input maintenance will be feasible, he said. "You can't do that kind of research on more expensive courses."

Rushe explained that last year 11 holes were built or renovated on the Blue and White tracks. The result was two 18-hole courses and another six holes "left over."

He said Penn State hopes to receive donations of equipment and products for the student-run Nittany Course.

Hamilton said the Nittany Course "might fit our two-year program better than the four-year program."

The two-year internship is from February to September. Four-year students leave in May and return in September.

Mowrer expects the Nittany Course to alleviate some of the overcrowding problems of the past, and to serve as a place for beginning and re-entering golfers to learn the game. Public junior programs, sports camps and other group sessions are expected to be initiated at the facility.

"The first year there will probably be no clubhouse," Hamilton said.

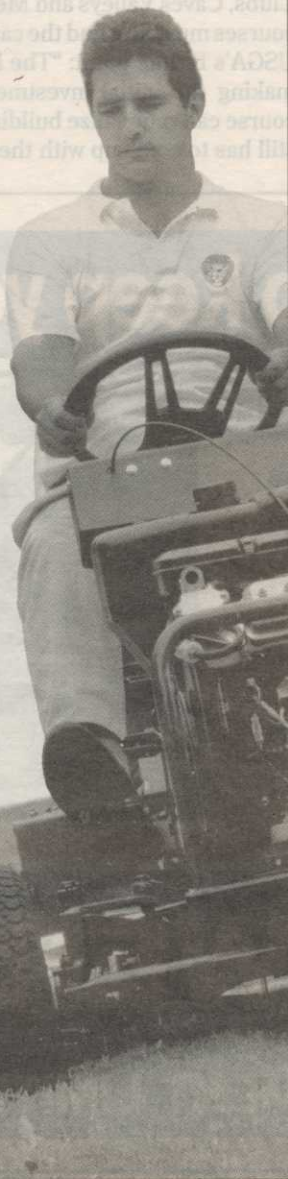
"There could be a starting house/maintenance building. And after the first couple of years, we could build a clubhouse."

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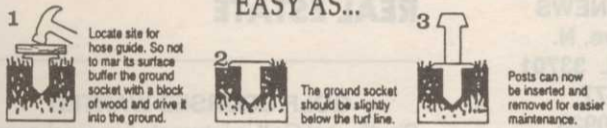
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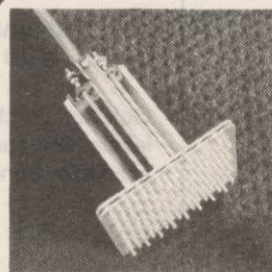
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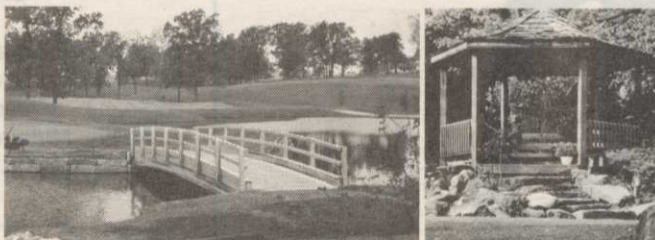
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## Clemson course/lab

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plant pathology.

Dr. Ron Kendall, who is in charge of a study at Kiawah Island's Ocean Course, said, "This kind of integrated thinking will be very important. This will ... continue to build on such efforts as Kiawah and other studies as to how to lay out a golf course and not harm the ground water, surface water and wildlife habitat.

"The course will help us understand pesticide and fertilizer use and timing of applications; identify appropriate turfgrass, shrubbery and habitat that is least dependent on pesticides; and then the best strategies to incorporate environmental concerns."

Kendall has expressed excitement at the opportunity to "look at how courses change over time, model the influence of pesticides and their movement and fate, and potential exposure and impact on the environment."

Coordinated by developer Keenan Corp. of Columbia, S.C., initial construction includes the golf course and conference center. A planned hotel has been deferred for a time.

The course is being designed by D.J. DeVictor of Roswell, Ga., built by Landscapes Unlimited of Lincoln, Neb., and managed by Riverside Golf.

While scientists wait with great expectations for the course to open and tests to begin, officials from the federal Architecture and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board have been involved for months. Only one other 18-hole course in the country — Fox Hollow in Littleton, Colo. — has been specifically designed to be accessible to physically handicapped.

Yet DeVictor said although he was skeptical at first, making the track accessible has had very little effect on his design.

"Everybody put us at ease almost immediately," he said. "The ADA and others don't want to change the character or strategy of the golf course. There is very little impact from adapting ADA regulations.

Tee boxes, greens and bunkers in particular must be accessible, and the cart path must provide access to the fairway every 75 yards, he said.

Basically, these concerns are addressed by building the paths all the way to the tee boxes and without steep inclines.

"The bottom line," DeVictor said, "is that the contractor has to implement the strategies. I call them constraints, but they're really not affecting anything. You have to wind the cart path through the course so that it's not visible but gives you access. This makes us look at it with more detail, but most of it is field directions.

"We think people will have to be told it's built as handicapped accessible."

The fairways should be seeded in mid-summer and the greens with bentgrass in September, and the course could open in November, DeVictor said.

"We're looking forward to doing national golf tournaments for handicapped, and other events at that level," Martin said.

The 52,400-square-foot conference center should open in June 1995, he said, adding that he anticipates the facility may become a model for other research-oriented universities. However, "We are so heavily involved in getting the golf course up and running, we haven't done a lot of that kind of work."

The \$1 million anonymous gift was two-thirds what was needed to begin construction on the \$3.7 million course. It set in motion plans to borrow another \$2.2 million, which will be backed by the Clemson University Foundation, a private non-profit fundraising group. That money will be repaid from proceeds from the facility, Martin said.