

## European golf development

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courses, which now tend to be run by management companies. These courses also show a tendency to open up the courses for non-club members.

Great hope regarding future golf course development in Europe often focus on Eastern Europe, after the fall of the Iron Curtain. Only 17 new courses over the last four years show the reality, though. There may be lots of attractive sites for golf courses; there may be big plans for new developments; there may even be financial power of investors in the European East. Investors have been discovering, however, there is very little demand for golf, as there is no sufficient buying power among the population in Eastern Europe.

This has been proven true on the fields of East Germany, where more than 120 applications for new golf course projects have been filed — only 8 of which actually have come into existence. Most of them are concentrated around Germany's new capital Berlin and until now and most of them, with memberships of around 200 each, are not posting wild success. East Germans, suffering from higher unemployment and lower wages than their fellow countrymen in the western part, prefer spending on new cars, new household goods or traveling rather than putting down some 20,000 Deutschmarks for a share in a new golf course.

Estimates of the European golf federations show there are some 360 new courses under construction — or in an advanced stage of planning — in Western Europe. At the same time, only nine new courses under construction are reported from the countries of Eastern Europe.

Most of the new golf course developments are actually promoted by professional golf management companies watching out for the profitability of their projects. One major problem that does effect these economic targets is the very strong influence on planning and construction costs stemming from environmental constraints. The need to provide much larger golf course sites (85 to 100 hectares for 18 holes), so as to establish ecological compensation areas on the courses, has resulted in much higher costs. Further, bank deposits are required by authorities in order to secure the implementation of such ecological motivated measures.

The European golf industry in 1992, as shown in a European golf market survey provided for Messe Muenchen (Munich trade fair) last October, amounted to around one billion U.S. dollars in retail for golf equipment, plus some 210 million U.S. dollars for golf course equipment. Despite past impressions, there is little doubt Europe has to be taken seriously as a rapid growth market.

## Broadcaster Ben Wright to design first U.S. course

TRAVELERS REST, S.C. — Journalist and historian Ben Wright of Flat Rock, N.C., will design his first golf course in the United States for The Cliffs Golf & Country Club, according to Jim Anthony, president and chief executive officer of The Cliffs Development Co.

Wright, who designed several courses in France and England before joining CBS-TV in 1972, will create The Valley Course for The Cliffs Golf & Country Club.

The Valley Course will be the centerpiece of Cliffs Valley, a 600-acre private planned community in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains

in the northwest corner of South Carolina.

Wright will incorporate a classic golf course architecture philosophy at Cliffs Valley.

The course will flow with the land around a 12-acre lake and past the two streams on the property. Several small waterfalls are expected to be integrated into the creeks to enhance the visual and audio aesthetics of the golf round. Bunkering is expected to be used sparingly, and more as a directional than penal element. As a means of giving a common signature to both The Valley and Cliffs courses, Wright will use native granite boulders to frame lakes, streams and fairways.

## New nine this fall at Weston Hills

FT. LAUDERDALE, Fla. — Greensmix recently completed blending the root zone soil mixture for the new nine holes here at Weston Hills Country Club, a Robert Trent Jones II design that annually plays host to the PGA Tour's Honda Classic. Greensmix also performed the blending for the club's original 18 holes in the spring of 1990. The new nine, built by Jones' in-house construction firm, Greenscape, is expected to open this fall.

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