

Nicklaus, Desert Mountain hook up on 4th course

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — Construction has begun on Jack Nicklaus' fourth signature golf course at Desert Mountain, a private residential and recreational community here. When Nicklaus hits the inaugural drive to the planned 18th green, Desert Mountain will become only golf community in the world to boast of four Nicklaus-designed championship courses, joining Renegade, Cochise and Geronimo courses.

"Not only will we have four Nicklaus courses, we will have four completely different golf experiences," said Dick Neyrey, president of Desert Mountain Properties.

"This will be our friendliest course. Not any less challenging than the other three, but wider,

so a bit friendlier. With Renegade's dual in placement, Cochise's target layout, and Geronimo's dramatic elevation changes, we already offer a full range of golf options for our members. The fourth course adds yet another golf experience.

The site of the fourth course is approximately 3,000 feet above sea level on the east side of the development. Similar in character to authentic Scottish links, a Nicklaus objective is to incorporate as much grass-to-grass transition area (tees to fairways and fairways to greens) as possible, given the topographical challenges of the natural desert. The course is planned for completion in late 1995 or early 1996.

GCSAA targets members from public-access courses

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percent of the record 1,360 golf courses opened for play were public-access.

By the same token, private clubs account for no more than 34 percent of the 14,648 golf facilities now operating in the United States, according to the National Golf Foundation. NGF figures also show the number of private clubs to be falling — by

seven percent over the past five years; from 5,232 in 1990 to 4,915 in '93.

"The association has, in the main, been a private association with membership from the private clubs," O'Brien continued. "It's an overall goal of the association to attract and maintain membership. And we plan on fulfilling that goal."

O'Brien explained the Public Golf Resource Group is an ad hoc committee with no formal standing position within GCSAA. Its findings must first be presented to and approved by the GCSAA board of directors before action may be taken.

"We're going to examine what the special needs of a superintendent at a public golf course might be — in their employment as well as what public courses might need as an organization," he said. "In other words, we don't want to approach the public superintendent saying, 'Here's what we have to sell.'"

"Rather, it's 'What do you need that we could deliver more effectively?'"

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One week before the Public Golf Resource Group met, in late September, representatives of more than 70 golf course superintendent associations gathered here in Lawrence to share their ideas and views with members of the GCSAA board of directors and the Chapter Relations Planning Resource Group.

GCSAA has formed a new Chapter Relations Department, managed by Donn Bretthauer. The September meeting served to create an agenda for this new department, said O'Brien, who explained that various GCSAA chapters will also play a major role in the expanding national membership.

"Because it's nearly always the case that chapters have more members than the national, it makes sense," said O'Brien, who spent many years with the Professional Golfers Association of America, prior to joining GCSAA early this year.

"I was surprised that an association with as many chapters as we have — and with those chapters doing as many important things as they do — was not dealing with them more officially. It's normally the case that large associations have chapter relation departments. It was visible here by its absence.

"One of the major changes here is the view of national serving as a resource to the chapters... Chapters are a foundation of this organization. They really are."

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