

## BRIEFS



## NATIONS FOCUSES ON GOLF

ATLANTA, Ga. — Large, golf-oriented complexes will receive particular loan attention from the newly-formed Nations Financial Capital Corp. Offered will be flexible first mortgage loans on sports resorts, stand-alone golf courses, bowling centers and marinas. Vice President Donald Rhodes started and managed golf course financing operations at Textron Financial, doing more than \$200 million in golf course loans.

## HIDDEN VALLEY HIRES ROBBINS KOCH

GAYLORD, Mich. — Robbins Koch Golf Designs, Inc. of Tampa, Fla. has been selected to provide land planning and course design services for the new golf course community at Hidden Valley Resort & Club here. The golf course and resort community will be located on 1,000 acres that features dramatic views; many mature trees; and a rolling terrain with elevation changes of nearly 500 feet.

## BURNS BUSY ON STATE PARK COURSE

WAYCROSS, Ga. — Construction has begun on Laura S. Walker State Park Golf Course. Designed by Steve Burns Golf Design of Fernandina Beach, Fla., the course is being built by Niebur Golf, Medford, Ore. Yardage will range from 4,717 to 6,820 yards. There will be three lakes, several grass bunkers and 30 sand bunkers. About 320,000 yards of dirt will be moved to create elevation changes of up to 20 feet.

## FOREST RIDGES OPENS NINE

CABLE, Wis. — Play has commenced on the North Nine of Forest Ridges Golf Course, while the South Nine will open for play this month according to Phil and Kathy Rasmussen, co-owners of Lakewoods Resort, Lodge & Conference Center on nearby Lake Namakagon. Because of its adherence to environmental and wildlife preservation standards, Lakewoods' Forest Ridges has been approved for membership in the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary System.

## WOODS FORT CC OPENS

TROY, Mo. — Troy Development Co., Inc. and Mid-America Golf Management, Inc. have opened Woods Fort Country Club here. Open to the public, it features a 6,600-yard, par-72 layout. The course has multiple zoysiagrass tee boxes, bentgrass greens, 24 sand bunkers, four lakes and uses a double row automatic irrigation system. There are also 20 residential lots on the property. They average 1/2 acre plus and are currently being sold.

GOLF COURSE NEWS

## Ault, Clark take to new heights

By MARK LESLIE

WILLIAMSBURG, Va. — "The best three golf courses I have ever designed." That is how Tom Clark describes three new tracks from the palette of Ault, Clark & Associates — LedgeStone Golf Course at Stonebridge Village in Branson, Mo., Diamante Golf Course in Hot Springs, Ark., and The Woods Course at Kingsmill on the James here.

"We're getting better and better sites, plus well-budgeted projects, good property and good contractors," said Clark, adding that with increased sodding, new courses are better from Day One.

The home of entertainer Kenny Rogers, LedgeStone was expected to open nine holes on Oct. 1 and the other nine the first of November.

Playing off Rogers' movies and songs, Clark has nicknamed holes Gambler's Revenge, Sidewinder, Straight Shooter, Deception, Ruby, Ambush — you get the picture.

In the heart of the Ozarks, Clark called it a "true mountain golf course



A view of LedgeStone Golf Course's 16th green viewed from the 17th tee. The par-4, 392-yard 16th, nicknamed The Big Chill, features a sharp dogleg right — and Kenny Rogers' new home on the hill.

with tremendous elevation changes," plays from 5,000 to 6,724 yards, and includes the most-expensive hole Clark has ever built.

That hole, the 15th, is a 177-yard downhill par-3 that falls about 100 feet and required blasting the side of the

mountain to create the green and a lake. The green is built on a rock shelf. Rogers' mountaintop home sits just to the right of the hole.

LedgeStone was totally sodded with bentgrass greens, zoysia fairways, tees

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The 6th hole at the Tom Doak-designed StoneWall Country Club outside Philadelphia, which measures 446 yards from the back and 347 yards from the forward tees. The no-carts-allowed, par-70 course measures 6,300 to 6,700 yards.



**Q & A** Doak: A designer of the ages

*It almost sounds as if Tom Doak's interest in golf course design were pre-natal. Exposed, at an early age, to golf on business trips with his father, he went on to study landscape architecture at Cornell University, travel the United Kingdom under a fellowship to study course design, and write on design for Golf Magazine and his own book, "The Anatomy of a Golf Course." He worked under Pete Dye — then briefly for Perry Dye — before going out on his own and designing a half-dozen golf courses, among them High Pointe in Traverse City, Mich.*

**Golf Course News:** Tell us about your organization.

**Tom Doak:** Bruce Hepner is my number two designer, and Jim Urbina, my shaper out of Denver and worked for the Dyes for awhile. Both are invaluable as we start getting bigger and get more commitments in advance. Not knowing exactly when they will happen, I can't promise I'll be on every course every day. These guys understand and we're a real good team because we're not afraid to get down in the dirt a little bit and we have a lot of construction expertise among the three of us.

**GCN:** You've studied a lot of courses in the UK. But you must have special memories of caddying for a couple of months at the

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## ASIAN ROUNDUP

## Designers prolific overseas

OSAKA PREFECTURE, Japan — Despite the decline in new golf course development here, **Jacobson Golf Course Designs** of Libertyville, Ill., has been asked to design two new courses — World Country Club here in Osaka Prefecture and Cherry Hills Country Club in Gumma Prefecture.

Both projects, backed by Japanese investors, are expected to be open for play in 1996. Principal Rick Jacobson cut his architectural teeth with Nicklaus design before forming his own firm in 1992.

QINGDAO, Peoples Republic of China — The Qingdao Golf Club in the southeast part of the Peoples Republic of China is still awaiting final approval, according to the builder.

"It could be another month, it could be three," said **William Kubly**, president of Landscapes Unlimited of Lincoln, Neb.

Japanese architect **Shiro Tashiro** is working with American designers **Greg Nash** and **Billy Casper** on the 18-hole resort layout. Casper Golf Management opened its Asian office here Sept. 1.

Qingdao GC was originally scheduled to open in late 1995. It will include a hotel and villas, Kubly said.

YONGIN-KUN, Korea — **Palmer Golf Design Co.** has completed one golf course here, which is awaiting grand-opening ceremonies along with two in the Philippines and one in West Java, Indonesia.

Arnold Palmer's architectural team, which has designed dozens of courses in Asia-Pacific, has put its final design touches on Eunhwassam Country Club here.

The Philippine facilities now ready for golfers are Orchard Golf and Country Club's Legacy Course in Manila and Evercrest Country Club in Nasugbu, Batangas, which is near Manila.

Emerald One, in the Cimanggis District of West Java, is also complete, while Palmer Design continues construction of eight other projects in the region.

MANILA — Make it two Johnny Walkers in a row for **Gary Player Design**. Arguably Asia-Pacific's most prestigious professional tournament, the 1995 Johnny Walker Classic will be held at The Orchard Resort, which features a Player-

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## Q&A: Tom Doak

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Old Course at St. Andrews.

**TD:** That was a better experience for me than being able to play the course for two months. I had to figure out where all the hazards were because when you're caddying for a 30-handicapper, everything out there is in play. The fascinating thing about the Old Course is that it changes every shot. Once you've topped a drive and it goes 80 yards, you have to know things about the course that the Tour pros don't.

**GCN:** You must have some insights about its design.

**TD:** The first thing is, it's nearly all random. There are a lot of holes there that if I designed them today, people would think I was crazy. Like the 12th: 320 yards; two sets of pot bunkers right in the middle of the fairway, 200 to 230 yards off the tee and you can't see them from the tee. Then a little shallow green.

**GCN:** In your book you quote Garden G. Smith, who said in an 1898 book that "had the ground on which ordinary inland golf is played today been the only available ground for the purpose,

the game would never have been invented." Do you agree?

**TD:** I don't know that it never would have been invented. But certainly a lot of the character of the game comes from having had this terrain to play over from the start. If we had originated golf in America it would have been more — as [Ben] Crenshaw says — like archery. You'd be playing across a flat field and there would be a regulation sight target. Instead, you've got every kind of random undulation in the world over there. The thing that impresses me most about

the links courses is that they are so different. The scale of the undulations is so different, even from one side of the golf course to the other side, that there is tremendous variety of golf holes — more than in America because, especially now, we tend to bulldoze the differences out.

**GCN:** Have Americans gotten too much away from the letting the land dictate the character of a course?

**TD:** I think so. I've been a critic of modern architecture the last 10 years, getting a chance to write about it in *Golf Magazine*. But you're starting with a much

different set of conditions now. And your clients and golfers have much different expectations now.

To give an example: The first two courses I did were dramatically opposite each other. High Pointe is what I felt was a phenomenal piece of terrain. We had to dig an irrigation lake out of the edge of a cedar swamp on the 18th hole. Other than that, I built the entire course with one D-4 bulldozer — just shaping greens, flattening tees, and building bunkers into the natural terrain. We moved 10,000 yards of dirt on the fairways — maybe. Then I went down to Myrtle Beach for Larry Young, who wanted me to build a "Scottish-style" course on a dead-flat piece of ground covered with tall pine trees. And we manufactured everything.

**GCN:** What did working with Pete Dye show you?

**TD:** A ton. It's hard to give him enough credit for what I learned from him. I knew nothing about construction and I needed to know that to be an architect. I found not only did I need to know it, but it was fun, and a lot of the better design ideas — the subtle things that make a course good — don't come off a drawing sitting in an office.

One thing I learned with Pete is, don't be afraid to experiment and play around a little, because it's not really costing any money — or not much — at that point. Of course, you don't do it once the greens mix or irrigation are in.

**GCN:** What do you think is wrong with modern architecture?

**TD:** Part of it is just that people have come to expect different things. Pete Dye used to say, "What all clients want now is 18 postcard holes." Pine Valley is about the only golf course in the world that every hole is a postcard hole. [Tom] Fazio says it used to be that a great course was like Pebble Beach, where there are six spectacular holes, six really good holes that were a little more subtle, and there were six that were just okay. And now everyone wants you to take those six holes that were just okay and go to town on them, and make them awesome. People are trying too hard. They jazz it up so much that you get tired of it, and there is never enough of a lull to be impressed by the spectacular hole. By the time you get to the end of, say, Sherwood in California (by Jack Nicklaus), you're exhausted — by the difficulty and all the features.

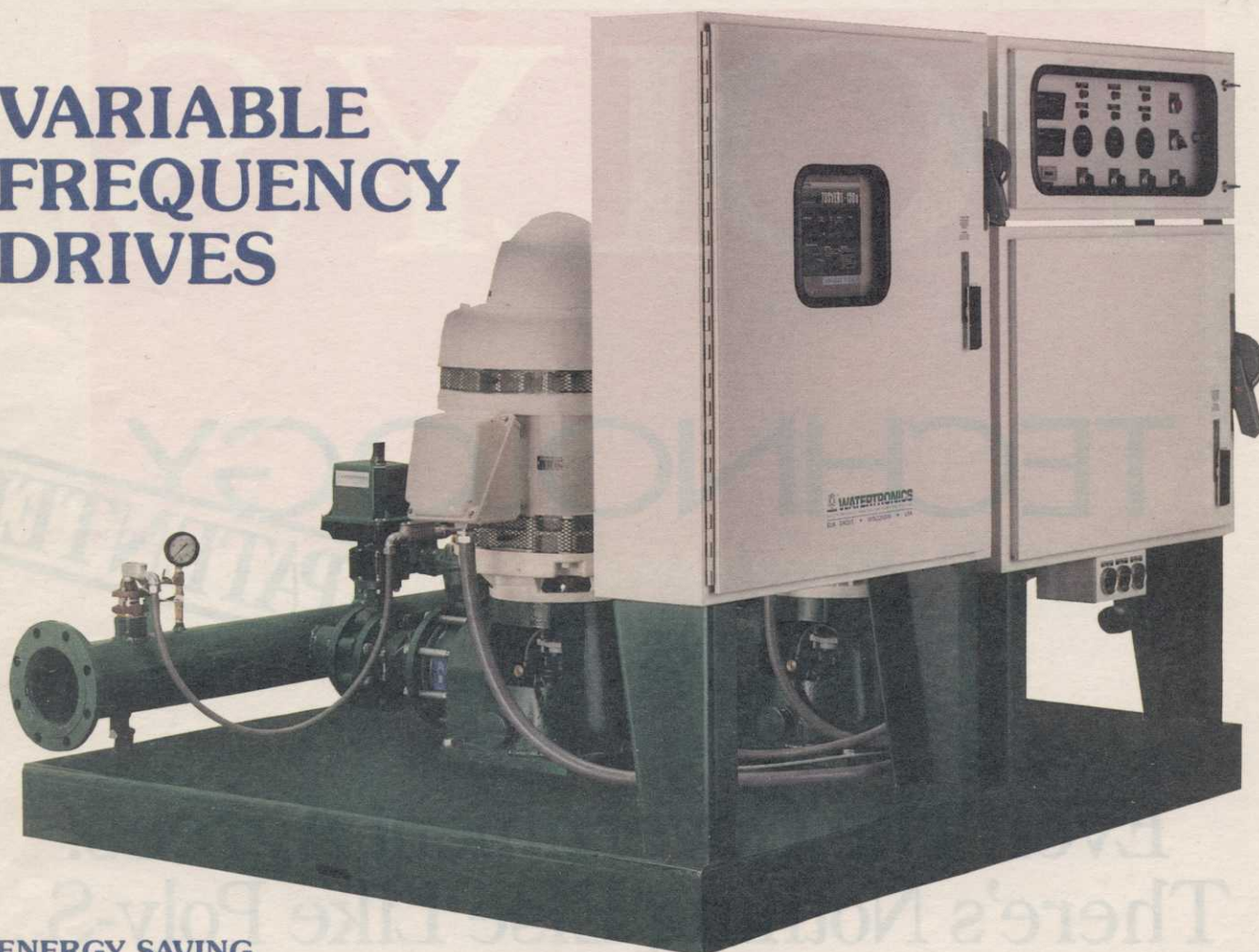
**GCN:** Has the golf industry gotten carried away with green speed, and how does it affect design?

**TD:** You used to put contour in greens, and make them tilt from one side to the other. That meant that if you drove it to the wrong side of the fairway you couldn't hold the green very well. Now nearly everybody who's up in architecture builds pretty flat greens, or at least flat pin

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## Q&A: Tom Doak

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positions, because they're afraid they'll get unplayable if they ever have a tournament and the greens are 12 on the Stimpmeter. I can't blame Pete Dye and Nicklaus for doing that because people have played tournaments on their courses that weren't designed for that, and they looked stupid. Pete would cringe to hear they played the Senior Amateur at Crooked Stick. He built it in 1964 and never thought about it for tournament play, and he certainly never thought about anybody having greens read 13 on the Stimpmeter.

**GCN:** You mention in your book that all of the best architects have sought to uphold golf's tradition in their work. Who do you classify in that group?

**TD:** Well, everyone has an idea of what that tradition is and what they should be doing. That's what is interesting about golf course architecture. Some people whose work I don't like very much believe they're doing good work. Those I think are doing the best job boils down to who I agree with the most.

Mackenzie is my short list. I have tremendous respect for a lot of architects' work.

**GCN:** Are any living?

**TD:** Yes. I still admire Pete Dye's work a great deal. I don't like every course he's built. But I think he has been one of the most innovative architects ever. His style has changed through the years. I tend to like some of his older stuff is better.

I admire Fazio's work. Shadow Creek is fabulous, and he's consistently turning out excellent golf courses. Yet, as he does more, they're starting to look more alike, and he's starting to get typecast a little bit—like Pete was. Everyone likes Wade Hampton. Everybody likes Shadow Creek. They keep asking Tom to do that over again, and it's starting to get a little repetitive to me.

Also, Bill Coore and Ben Crenshaw. And Jay Morrish and Tom Weiskopf.

**GCN:** What is your feeling about the stress on long golf courses?

**TD:** When architects in the '50s and '60s got hung up with getting the golf course to 7,000 yards, they basically eliminated one category of holes—good, short par-4s. If I'm narrowing it down to my real favorite golf courses in the world, the difference is, all my favorite ones, in addition to everything else, they have two or three or four good short par-4s, whereas the others may have one... I think you've got to have a couple or three holes like that on a golf course to give the average golfer some chance to make par. Thankfully, in the early- and mid-'80s some of the architects whose work I really admire started trying real hard to include short par-4s in their courses. Fazio, Weiskopf and Morrish were even

putting drivable par-4s in, just to have a different kind of hole.

**GCN:** Have you had any major disappointment thus far in your career?

**TD:** My biggest disappointments are having interviewed for a couple of really good jobs I didn't get where I thought I could have done something really good. I hate to get really involved with one, look at the land, know it will be a great golf course and have it laid out in my mind, and not get the job. I almost don't want to go back and see what the other guy did.

**GCN:** A lot of renovations are

being done on older courses. What's your handle on that?

**TD:** People need to be reminded that what they have is good, because they're always itching to improve what they have. They think that's part of their duty. Yet, a lot of times you can't improve it.

Every time I hear of an architect consulting on a Mackenzie course, I think, How can anybody do that? There's nobody designing golf courses today who is as good as he was, so how are they going to improve what he did?

**GCN:** What about restorations, where mowing patterns or other things have deteriorated

the design?

**TD:** I agree. But in a lot of cases, I even think restoration projects are done because golf architecture has a lot to do with sales. Instead of redesigning courses today, everybody is restoring them. Some are putting back what was there. But very rarely does the club actually want to do that. I say, If it ain't broke, don't fix it.

My number-one kick is not restoration but preservation. If there is anything left that those oldtime architects built, I'm in favor of preserving it. Just dust it off and leave it alone.

**GCN:** What are your objectives for your career?

**TD:** I'd like to stay small. What I'm finding is that it's very hard to stay small. I'm only doing one course a year and the guys I'm trying to get to the next level of are doing five or seven or eight, and you see their names way more than mine. I'm lucky to be where I am compared to a lot of other talented guys in this business who get virtually no recognition at all. But this is a business where it's very hard to get to that next level if you don't have a name that people already know.



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