

BRIEFS



ASGCA OFFICERS ASSUME SEATS

ST. ANDREWS, Scotland — Jeff Brauer of Arlington, Texas, was elected president of the American Society of Golf Course Architects (ASGCA) here at the society's annual meeting in early May. Other officers are Denis Griffiths, Braselton, Ga., vice president; Alice O'Neal Dye, Delray Beach, Fla., secretary; and Bob Lohmann, Marengo, Ill., treasurer. Immediate past president Don Knott of Palo Alto, Calif., will serve as an ex-officio member of the ASGCA board of governors.

GOLF & YACHTS IN FLORIDA

FT. MYERS, Fla. — Florida Design Communities opened Gulf Harbour Yacht & Country Club on March 11-12, unveiling a 190-slip state-of-the-art marina homes, bi-level swimming pool and Jacuzzi, and half-redesigned 18-hole golf course. Gulf Harbour, formerly known as River's Edge Yacht & Country Club, was purchased by Florida Design Communities in July 1993. Since that time, FDC has redesigned nine of the golf course's 18 holes to form a more challenging layout.

NORMAN OPENS U.S. OFFICE

TEQUESTA, Fla. — The Sydney, Australia-based Greg Norman Design Co. has opened its first United States



Greg Norman

operation here, and the popular golfer-designer has assembled an experienced executive staff. Running the business are Vice President of Australia and Southeast Asia

Bart Collins, Chief of Design Bob Harrison, Design and Construction Manager Jason McCoy and General Manager David Barnes.

SAND CREEK OPENS MARSH COURSE

CHESTERTON, Ind. — The nine-hole Marsh Course at Sand Creek Country Club is open for play. The course was designed by the Desert Springs Companies partners Jerry Mobley and Charles Howard. Together with Sand Creek's current 18 holes — the Creek and Lake courses — the Marsh Course brings the private country club to a total of 27 holes.

JACK II BUSY IN ITALY

NORTH PALM BEACH, Fla. — Working on the Italian countryside site close to Lake Garda and featuring the historic Drugolo castle, Jack Nicklaus II has begun designing the first 27 holes of a 72-hole resort project outside Milan — the largest of its kind in Italy.

Benz pioneers surface-to-surface missives

6,000 miles a mere map/Fax away

By MARK LESLIE

LOS GATOS, Calif. — Pushing computerized terrain modeling to a new level that encompasses the technical elements of construction, golf course architect Brad Benz said he is speeding up the construction process by 30 to 35 percent.

"This is light-years ahead [of other programs]," said Benz from his headquarters here. "It is phenomenal. We keep upgrading and advancing it. With each project, we learn something new."

Benz and his computer-expert sidekick, senior golf course architect David Snead, essentially designed and built two computers for the process. Taking elements of 52 software programs relevant to their needs, they merged them so they communicate with one another.

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Duke's Dene, above in reality and below through computer modeling, greens up for its opening south of London.



An American in England

By MARK LESLIE

LONDON — Call it multicultural. Call it an invasion from abroad. But don't call Duke's Dene golf course an Americanization of a British game.

This golf course — although developed by Mizno-Gumi Co. of Tokyo and designed by American Brad Benz — will be "every bit British" when it opens in July or August, said Benz.

Yes, it will sport bentgrass greens and tees. But that is the only thing about Duke's Dene (meaning valley) that will not scream out: "I'm British!"

"People were concerned how an American could do anything in England that would be remotely close to English golf," Benz said. "I said, 'That's the easy part.' The technical side of solving problems in golf is far

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Builders crossing the Pacific in opposite directions

Kajima exports Japanese savvy while...

... Pacific Golf getting it done abroad

By MARK LESLIE

PASADENA, Calif. — When a company's main diet is building floating airports, tunnels and dams... when it hails from a country where many sites are "engineering and construction nightmares" ... when it even designs and builds its own construction equipment, a mere golf facility should present no challenge too big. That is the feeling of global engineering and construction giant Kajima Corp. and its Golf Division manager in America, Tom Buzbee.

"We think the golf business is heading towards centralized management," said Buzbee from his headquarters here. "It's getting complicated and expensive."

"We're on the ground floor of something I think will change the golf business a little. How much we are able to do depends on how we are able to circulate."

Since the construction firm is the "lead" company in projects in its native Japan, Kajima was "the logical one to take that position in America — to lead the team, administer all the contracts, pay everybody, take on the liability insurance on behalf of the group..." Buzbee said.

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By MARK LESLIE

SINGAPORE — Golf developers in Asia-Pacific are no longer all talk and no show, according to a major golf course builder in the region.

"Previously, a lot of people were 'talking' about projects [and it] never went beyond 'talk.' Now, those who are talking are serious," said M.D. Martin, managing director of Pacific Golf Course Construction Pte. Ltd., headquartered here.

Pacific Golf, which has two projects under construction — both in Indonesia — is seriously investigating 20 others throughout Asia. "They are mainly in China and Indonesia," Martin said, although "India and Vietnam show great promise."

A vast majority of the projects are getting their financial support from within each country, he said, and while "probably a little less" is being spent generally, "those spending more are getting more, maximizing use of their money."

He said more competition from contractors, materials and suppliers is helping push costs down.

Asked if golf will, in the foreseeable future, be affordable to average citizens in Asia-Pacific, Martin said: "I firmly

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IMPRESSIVE TEAM OPENS GREEN BAY CC

The Green Bay Country Club, five miles southeast of downtown at the intersection of Interstate 43 and U.S. Route 172, opened to members for play on May 5. The 18-hole Dick Nugent-designed, private course was constructed by Wadsworth Golf Course Construction Co. on rolling farmland, unobstructed by homesites. The natural setting, which features a winding creek, was enhanced by Nugent's addition of four manmade lakes and complemented by the all bentgrass playing surfaces. Water comes into play on 13 of the 18 holes. The par-5, 6th hole is the longest five-par in the state at 634 yards. Western Golf Properties served as consultants during construction. The management team includes club manager Alex Reichi; superintendent Marc Davison; professional Mark Hagenbach.



American Benz wins over Brits

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more challenging and difficult. If you build in England, it will be English inherently. We know the difficulties and how, from a technical perspective, to build those. We've done everything from riveting of bunkers to the subtle contouring that was a condition of project approval."

Duke's Dene was "a contentious project," drawing opposition from area residents when first proposed, Benz said.

"There was a natural resistance" among locals to Americans designing the course said the contractor, Brit Brian Pierson. "The perception of British people of American architects is of major muck shift, huge

recontouring. They didn't realize Brad and [senior architect] David [Snead] were more traditionally British in their attitude."

"But all of a sudden, golf balls started showing up all over the golf course," Benz said. "These characters were smacking golf balls around in the early morning or the evening, thinking this might, in fact, be very good. Now that they see what we're doing, it has been received favorably. In fact, the planning authorities are not happy they cut us back on what we wanted to do."

The developers had proposed building three lakes. Planners nixed that idea. Instead, three underground concrete tanks serve as the water reservoir.

Benz used the valley's "cleavage, its perfectly rounded swales" in creating the course, making it "a special place without spending a lot of money — significantly under \$2 million."

While the greens and tees are seeded in bentgrass, the rest of the course is fescues, with colorful wildflowers in the roughs.

Meanwhile, Benz is working with an Irish corporation, Alliston Ltd., on a 72-hole project in eastern Morocco, sitting on 2,000 acres right on the Mediterranean Sea.

"This site has the most beautiful dunes land I have ever seen," Benz said. "We will take a minimal approach. As you go from the water inland, it changes from beachfront to grassy dunes into sandy waste areas that have a smattering of snarly trees buffeted by the wind and beautiful tree-covered areas."

Construction is expected to begin in November. The initial phase will include 36 holes of golf and seven hotels. Many residential components and recreation are planned.

Two to three years from now, expect to see two Benz-designed 18-hole courses in

"It was 'hands across the sea.'"

— Brian Pierson
British golf course builder

the Sukabumi area outside Jakarta, Indonesia — one a private members' track and the other a resort facility. Sitting on the outflow

of a huge volcano and butting up against the national forest, the Crystal Springs development is being built by a consortium of four Indonesian businessmen based here.

"The objective is to get people out of the city and into this pristine environment ... that is one of the most beautiful landscapes I have seen," said Benz. "When the new freeway is constructed, the drive should be one hour to 1-1/2 hours from the city."

Construction of the members' course is expected to begin in late July, and the resort track will get underway in about two years, Benz said. Various types of housing accommodations are planned for the members' area on the huge tract of land.

The site has "some very, very steep topography," Benz said. "It is intersected in the drainage areas by beautiful streams and rivers. The north portion has been used as rice paddies and spring onion fields... On south side, where the members' course is built, you can see the sea."



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Computer modeling saving big-time

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"We can use them for all of our needs — from contour development of the playing surface to the technical side — irrigation design, hydraulics of the irrigation system so we can size pipe, drainage, etc.," said Benz. "But, most important, by using terrain modeling and getting it to the construction personnel, it speeds up the construction process by 30 to 35 percent."

An example: A bulldozer operator working for British contractor Brian Pierson calls Benz's office in the United States from the construction trailer outside London. "I'm 135 meters in front of the 5th green, 24 meters to its right and 7-1/2 meters high on my dozer. I need that view of the green complex." Benz pulls up that information on the computer, prints out

the image, and in two minutes the dozer operator has a fax in hand showing how the feature should look.

"It removes the charade of the prima donna architects who can't put down [on paper] what a hole will be like," Benz said. "Contractors love it."

"It's been a great help," agreed Pierson from his London office. "There is no doubt that what Brad Benz and David Snead were able to fax to us was of great assistance to our construction managers and shapers. It was 'hands across the sea.'"

Pierson said the technology saves in both administration and earth-moving, adding while "it will not ever supersede, on every occasion, the more traditional methods... In the future it is the way a lot of design work is moving."

In working with "a long-distance architect," as he did with Benz and Snead, he said: "Because of the distance and logistics, in between their monthly visits the CADD system was invaluable."

Regarding construction, when in doubt the shaper can get a faxed copy of what a specific site on the course should look like and therefore not move dirt twice, Pierson said.

Benz said it takes one week to input the design information into the computer, which then "serves as the basis for everything we do." "We can take it a step further and add color, shading and shadowing. Every time a client has come in to see these, their mouths drop," he said.

Whether computer-generated images or simulated "fly-throughs," the end product provides "a tremendous opportunity from construction to marketing," Benz added. "By using this in the way we're applying it, it benefits other aspects of the design and construction process, which is a savings to us. There will be some increase in cost to the client. But it really manifests itself in savings in the construction process."

Does Benz plan to make the creation available through mass production? "No," he said. "I just want to design golf courses."

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