

GOLF COURSE NEWS

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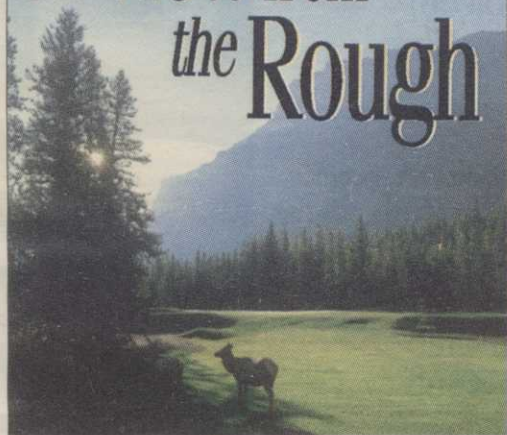
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Ken May/Rolling Greens Photography

Courses, supers withered by drought

By MARK LESLIE

There are 100-year floods and 100-year droughts. For some, this was a 100-year summer. It was drenching wet in Florida and Ohio. There was record-crunching heat and humidity in Pennsylvania. Dew points went through the roof in Minnesota. Everywhere from Delaware to the Midwest, golf courses got scorched.

"The only guys happy are west of the Rockies," said Golf Course Su-

perintendents Association of America President Gary Grigg after a meeting of chapter representatives in Lawrence, Kan. "It's been drought in the Northeast, heat in the Midwest, rain in the South. [Director] Paul McGinnis said Arizona had a stretch of 47 days when the temperature was over 110 degrees."

"This was the worst summer I've ever seen for growing grass," said Terry Buchen of Double Eagle Club in Galena, Ohio. "We had so much

rain, and the heat and humidity was the worst I've ever seen. The grass just cooked."

Cooked so badly that many golf courses closed down so crews could aerate and reseed. People were hitting balls off bare soil at some facilities.

"If you had new greens with sand-based construction, generally you were fine," said Stan Zontek, director of the U.S. Golf Association Green Section (USGA) Mid-Atlantic Region.

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Alumni key university development strategy

By MARK LESLIE

COLUMBIA, S.C. — In the Southeastern Conference (SEC), 75,000 to 100,000 fans pack football stadiums every Saturday in the fall. Now a unique concept in golf development, The University Club, aims to pack them in at new golf courses located at those same SEC schools.

Indeed, The University Club at University of South Carolina (USC) boasted a whopping 12,000-plus members when it opened its first 18 holes here on Sept. 15. A second University Club — this one at Louisiana State University — could register similar numbers when it opens in a year or so.

Targeting universities with "a fervent athletic supporter base," this new company, called The University Club, decided to concentrate first on the Southeastern Conference which leads the nation in attendance at football

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PUBLIC PLAY, OUTSIDE THE BELTWAY

Augustine Golf Club, the Washington, D.C. area's newest golf facility, is open for public play. This 18-hole Rick Jacobson design is the centerpiece of a residential community now under construction in Stafford, Va. For an update on this and other Jacobson projects, see page 30.

Audubon targets public-access at Golf Course Expo

By MARK LESLIE

ORLANDO, Fla. — Sensing that the vast number of public-access golf course officials are not joining the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary System because they believe it is cost-prohibitive, the Audubon Society of New York (ASNY) will address them in a special session during Golf Course Expo here, Nov. 9-10.

"Our program is not geared towards finding interesting ways for golf courses to spend even more money from an already dwindling budget," said ASNY President Ron Dodson. "But we want superintendents to consider conservation as a mechanism to save money. Generally, our program should be thought of not only as environmental but as cost-efficient as well."

The ASNY is one of several major associations



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Banc One goes sour on muni financing deals

By PETER BLAIS

Banc One Leasing Corp., a major lending institution that helped finance approximately a dozen municipal golf facilities using municipal lease arrangements, has taken over or is negotiating with municipalities on four of those projects, according to a bank attorney.

The courses are located in Minnesota, Colorado, Iowa and California, said Jeffrey Ayres, senior attorney for Banc One Corp., the holding company for Banc One Leasing.

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First University Club opens

Continued from page 1

games, said partner Carl Espy. "Our premise was that, if we built an athletic facility in a community for the fans to use, they would use it."

"We consider it a resort destination. For example, people come to Columbia as an end destination. And if you can capitalize on that influx of people, that's great."

A partnership of Espy, The Robinson Co. President Ed Robinson and Central Florida

Turf (CFT) principals Jeff Harstine and Rodney Davis, the firm's mission is to involve the various university athletic booster organizations in developing a string of University Clubs.

The affiliation is mutually advantageous. Alumni and others can join the athletic support group at a university and pay a monthly dues to belong to the private University Club. Meanwhile, the club gives a percentage of its proceeds to the university athletic program

and makes the golf course available free to the golf teams.

"It's got to be a plus for both The University Club and the university," said Davis. "There is nothing that brings the university people together for functions and get-togethers. This brings them together on a golf course. They can wheel and deal on business and university matters, or they can just reminisce."

Here, the company approached the alumni-laden Gamecock Club, which has more than 12,000 members paying a yearly minimum contribution of \$150 — and some

pay many thousands — to support the athletic program. The result is a private club on 500 acres of land that will ultimately include 27 holes of championship-caliber golf, a nine-hole short course, 30-acre practice area, swimming and tennis facilities and resort-style housing.

"We will probably have one of the few golf teams [USC] in the country that is operating in a profit mode because of our financial obligations to the athletic department," Espy said. "Plus, we've generated 600 new members for the Gamecock Club."

He said The University Club

at USC has "created a dues scenario that puts us 40 to 50 percent below the market in terms of monthly dues."

Memberships are set up in geographic categories, with quotas established for four-county Metro Memberships and the statewide Regional Memberships, but no limit on memberships from outside South Carolina. "The chance of everyone from California coming in at the same time is remote," Espy reasoned.

As partners in The University Club, Davis and Harstine have first option to hire Central Florida Turf to building each course, as it did South Carolina's. The design work will vary. CFT designed the course here, but architect and LSU alumni Jim Lipe will design that track.

The University Club's agreement at LSU is with Tiger Athletic Foundation, and Espy has contacted several other organizations supporting universities in the Southeastern Conference. While not yet pursuing projects at schools outside the conference, the company will speak with other interested parties that approach it.

"Once one course gets in the ground, it makes all the difference in the world," Davis said. "We'll have something for [prospective clients] to look at."

That will also influence financing, Espy said. Funding has come with difficulty — from a bank and a few limited partners, he said.

Reluctant bankers, he said "are anxious now because they understand the concept better and see this as a real benefit since it reaches so many families."

"In future projects, we'll have a bank who will be the main underwriter and they will solicit local institutions based on the experience we've had here [at USC]."

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View from the Rough

Continued from page 3

people with some positive information about golf and accurate quotes they can use at cocktail parties, for instance," Klemme said. "We'd like to see superintendents make it available to the members at their club or have developers give it to city councils when they begin discussing plans for new golf developments."

Klemme said his favorite among the 200 photographs is the one that graces the cover. It is a shot of an elk standing in the middle of a fairway as the sun rises at Banff Springs in Alberta, Canada.

"It just seems to sum up the whole deal," Klemme said. "It has wildlife, trees, mountains and golf."

A *View from the Rough* will be available in late October for \$39.95 from Sleeping Bear Press, 121 South Main Street, PO Box 20, Chelsea, MI 48118, telephone 800-487-2323 or from the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America, Technical Information Services Department, 1421 Research Park Drive, Lawrence, KS 66049, telephone 800-472-7878.