

Par-3s

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and other features, like wetlands. And it serves a purpose in the golf education pyramid. A new golfer goes to a practice range to learn the basics and then advances through par-3, executive and regulation layouts."

The Mississippi state park system anticipated that many beginning golfers would be attracted to the new courses it had planned for Percy Quin and John Kile state parks, according to Steve Forrest of Art Hills and Associates. So, along with the regulation-length layouts, Hills was commissioned to develop a par-3 track at Percy Quin and Bob Cupp to do the same at John Kile.

Hills also has a three-hole, par-3 teach-

ing loop under construction around the perimeter of the practice area at the Family Park Golf Course near Milwaukee. A similar three-hole teaching loop is planned as part of a Hills golf facility under construction in Newark, Ohio.

"I don't know if I'd define it as a trend, but we are seeing more and more par-3s included in new projects," Forrest said. "You're more likely to see it if the developer has some extra land. And you'll likely see even more as they become more economically feasible."

"Developers didn't request this type of facility 10 years ago. We're seeing it more and more with daily-fee and municipal layouts that want to attract junior and beginning players."

Par-3 layouts are hot items in the Waterloo, Iowa area. The city Parks Department is planning a new nine-hole, par-3

track adjacent to its South Hills regulation-length layout. Nearby Cedar Falls hopes to do the same at Pheasant Ridge.

"Our courses are full and some groups are starting to feel uptight about getting on them," said Waterloo Golf Course Coordinator Dean Fagerland. "We realize such a facility could be a major benefit for our beginner, junior and senior golf outings."

Waterloo Park Planner Bill Bachman, a professionally trained landscape architect, will likely design South Hills' new holes. The Parks Board has expressed interest in the project and Fagerland hopes it will approve the proposal this fall allowing construction to begin next spring.

"There are other par-3s around," Fagerland said. "But most just head out from the clubhouse, turn around and come back. Not much thought was given to their design. This will be a first-class,

par-3 with well-designed holes."

Overcoming the pitch-and-putt mentality many people have regarding par-3s is one of the biggest obstacles to their development, agreed Fagerland and others. They point to the many high-quality, par-3 layouts at some of the most prestigious golf venues.

The top-ranked course in the world, Pine Valley in Clementon, N.J., has a new Tom Fazio-designed, par-3 track, noted designer Lester George of Richmond, Va. Augusta National's par-3 hosts a major shoot-out every year just before the Master's Tournament. Developers of Alabama's Robert Trent Jones Trail included "some of the greatest par-3 courses I've ever seen" at many of their locations, Frank added.

"Golfers sometimes look down their noses at par-3s," said the NGF executive, a single-digit handicap player. "But they are a great place to sharpen your game. Joe Lee recently redid the greens here at Palm Beach Par-3 Golf Club. It's a beautiful course located between the ocean and Intercoastal Waterway. It gets constant play at \$18 to \$20 a round."

That largely untapped market for beginners, juniors, seniors and expert golfers looking to hone their skills is attractive to developers, George said. George is currently involved with four, what he terms "alternative" facilities, including a par-3 track at Richmond's veterans hospital and an executive course in New Braunfels, Texas, near San Antonio.

"Many of our clients look at par-3s as an additional profit center," George said. "But golfers want something more than a pitch and putt with round greens."

What they want is often U.S. Golf Association-spec putting surfaces, water features and bunkers, Frank noted. Those cost money, usually at least \$750,000 for an 18-hole layout. Because of the longer payback for that kind of investment, the developer is committing the property to golf course use for an extended period. That's different from a driving range, which many developers consider an alternative land use until real-estate values make their property more attractive for residential or commercial use.

"You can open a range for \$300,000, run it for three to five years and then use it for something else," Frank said. "Developers aren't building par-3s with the intent of doing something else with the land in a few years. It's too expensive."

Coore, Crenshaw on board in Georgia

CUSCOWILLA, Ga. — Bill Coore and Ben Crenshaw have been selected to design an 18-hole championship course on Lake Oconee here— their first significant design work in the Southeast.

The newest golf community in the Lake Oconee area, Cuscowilla is the vision of entrepreneurs William M. Harrington, Peter Bailey and German businessmen Heinz Wilhelm-Nathe and Michael Huber.

Crenshaw and Coore plan to create a golf course based on the principle that strategic golf is the most rewarding and enjoyable style of play. It will ramble naturally over 600 acres of rolling countryside blessed with stands of hybrid pines, fertile meadow lands and 6-1/2 miles of Lake Oconee shoreline. According to Coore, the Cuscowilla site lends itself to the construction of a variety of wonderful holes.

Cuscowilla's master plan provides for a limited number of home sites and cottages, most of which are lake-oriented.

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