

Florida gator attacks golfer in Cocoa Beach

COCOA BEACH, Fla. — And you thought the hazards at your local course were nasty.

An 18-year-old golfer was hospitalized recently after being bit by an 8-foot-long 300-pound alligator named Stubby that prowled a pond at the Cocoa Beach Country Club's River Course.

Michael Gordon Watson of Cocoa Beach was apparently combing the pond on the River Course's sixth hole for extra golf balls with a friend when Stubby attacked. It's thought that Watson was searching an area that may have been in the alligator's feeding den. The alliga-

tor, who was well known at the course, tried to drag Watson under 4 feet of water. Watson was pulled to safety by his friend, Jason Balazs, who helped fight off the gator. Watson received bites on his left arm and both legs.

The attack on Watson is the second in Brevard County in 1995 and a frightening reminder that alligators, who are often regulars at Florida golf courses, cannot be taken for granted. Officials estimate there are one or two alligators in each of the 17 ponds on the Cocoa Beach course alone.

Alabama course could be classroom

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. — PGA Senior Tour star Chi Chi Rodriguez and his Youth Foundation are looking at Birmingham as a possible site for an unusual school for disadvantaged children.

The school combines typical classroom subjects with hands-on learning experiences on a working golf course that would be built as part of the school.

Students at the school would learn biology and chemistry using the golf course as a classroom and laboratory.

Math concepts would be taught using a golf scorecard. The idea is to build an elementary school, a middle school and a high school on a golf course for children who are abused, disadvantaged, underachieving and underprivileged.

The Youth Foundation is a non-profit organization founded in 1979 by Rodriguez, Bill Hayes and Bob James in Florida. The foundation tries to help kids improve their academic progress, self-esteem, appearance, work effort and social adjustment in a safe, protected and nurturing environment.

The game of golf usually plays a significant role in the education program.

The foundation has already built the Modesta Robbins Partnership School in Florida, where 36 fifth-grade students get a full academic curriculum along with vocational, hands-on learning in an operating golf course environment.

The school's curriculum was developed by county school officials and the foundation. The science curriculum revolves around the various eco-systems at the course and how different plants and animals in nature interact and how that relationship is affected by man.

Hayes said a Birmingham program would serve up to 800 students. He also said the local economy would benefit from the golf course and local youth agencies could use the course for kid's golf programs. Construction of the school and golf course would cost \$6 million to \$8 million.

Fla. city treated kindly in treated water settlement

OCALA, Fla. — The city of Ocala will get nearly \$2.2 million in a legal settlement from consultants who helped design a faulty system to spray treated sewage on the city-owned Pine Oaks Golf Course.

The out-of-court settlement caps eight years of litigation between the city and its main engineering consultant, Boyle Engineering Corp. of Irvine, Calif.

Hired by the city in 1982, Boyle designed a system to irrigate the courses with treated wastewater. Boyle determined the golf course could handle 2.46 million gallons of treated sewage a day. Instead, tests determined the 27-hole facility could handle only 600,000 to 700,000 gallons daily. As a result the city had to create a 40-acre spray field near the course to handle the overflow.

Boyle will pay \$1.7 million of the \$2.17 million settlement. The remainder will be paid by different engineering firms and architects.

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