

Public Bethpage still in hunt for 2002 U.S. Open

BETHPAGE, N.Y. — The Black course at Bethpage State Park in Long Island is still in the running to host the 2002 U.S. Open, which would make it the first public, non-resort course to ever host a U.S. Open.

A U.S. Golf Association (USGA) committee led by Judy Bell was expected to visit the course sometime in late June for another site inspection. A group visited Bethpage's Black course earlier in the spring.

During last month's U.S. Open at Oakland Hills, the USGA formally announced Southern Hills in Tulsa, Okla., will host the 2001 Open.

But it did not announce the host site for 2002. Bethpage's Black course — designed by A. W. Tillinghast in 1935 and perennially ranked as one of the best public courses in the country — had been under consideration for 2001, but a New York state parks official said he is hopeful 2002 will be Bethpage's year.

The sites for the upcoming U.S. Opens include Congressional Golf Club in Bethesda, Md., for 1997, Olympic Golf Club in San Francisco for 1998, Pinehurst No. 2 in Pinehurst, N.C., for 1999 and Pebble Beach (Calif.) Golf Links for 2000.

TPC course underway in N.J.

PRINCETON, N.J. — The transformation of the lush, sprawling Jasna Polana estate into a Tournament Players Club golf course is underway.

Construction of the \$15 million, 18-hole tournament-caliber course designed by Gary Player started in April. The club is expected to open in fall 1997, although the facility won't be in tournament condition until 1998, according to Wayne Millar, project manager and coordinator of planning for the Tournament Players

Club, the developer.

Work has started on the excavation of a 12-foot deep, three-acre irrigation lake that involved removing 50,000 cubic yards of earth. Millar said that 20 specialized golf course builders, contracted by Country Golf of Traverse City, Mich., are working on the project.

A recent groundbreaking invitation-only ceremony had a guest list that included Player and Prince Albert of Monaco, a friend of Barbara Piasecka Johnson, the pharmaceutical heiress who owns the estate.

Starting in September, workers will begin converting the existing \$28 million mansion into a clubhouse. The main building of the mansion will remain largely intact, but two wings will be renovated. One will be turned into a locker room and the other into a dining room. An outdoor rose garden atrium will become a golf shop.

Smith to design new 18-hole Oneida Indian layout in N.Y.

VERONA, N.Y. — With its multi-million-dollar hotel under construction, the Oneida Indian Nation has turned the next phase of making the Turning Stone Casino into a full-family entertainment facility with the addition of a 27-hole golf course that is expected to be ready for play by June 1998.

The contract to design The Center for Golf at Turning Stone has been awarded to Rick Smith of Gaylord, Mich., who has designed three 18-hole courses at the Treetops Resort in Gaylord. Smith has also been contracted to design a nine-hole, par-3 course along with a practice facility.

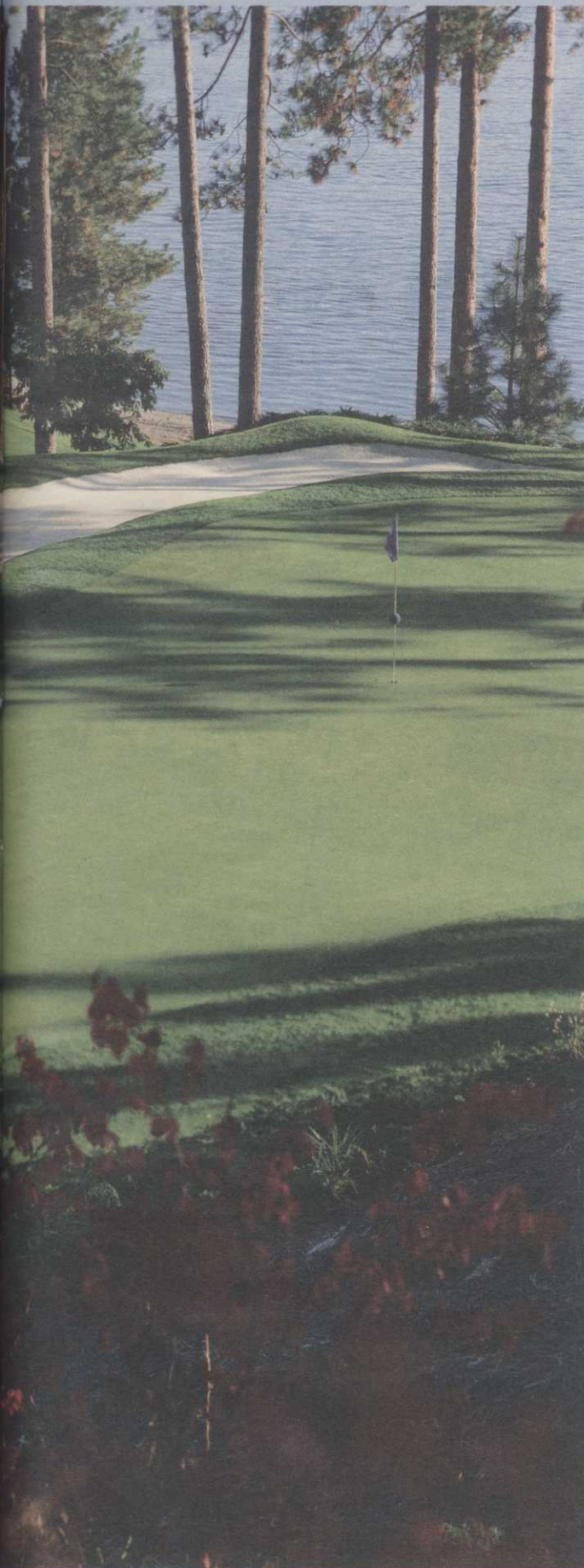
The Center for Golf will be built on 240 acres adjacent to Turning Stone, the only legal gambling casino in New York. A hotel is being built next to the casino, which is just off Route 365 near Exit 33 of the New York State Thruway.

The 18-hole championship-level course will be approximately 7,000 yards from the championship tees and designed to accommodate tournament play.

Smith has said one of his goals in designing the course was to cut the average playing time from five hours to four.

The course will be semi-private, catering to the guests of the casino and hotel. Future plans are to develop clubhouse cottages along the course for guests.

Construction is scheduled to begin in September and be completed in 12 months.



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