



Golf ass'n course plans stir debate in Minn.

MINNEAPOLIS — The Minnesota Golf Association (MGA) is proposing an ambitious 700-acre golf complex near Rosemount that would combine instruction and turf research by the University of Minnesota and two new upscale, 18-hole golf courses.

The not-for-profit joint venture with the university's College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences would be built with private money on part of an 8,000-acre tract owned by the university. The group is also seeking to involve the United States Golf Association in the as-yet unnamed enterprise.

Several golf course owners around the state have expressed concerns about the plan. They question whether the state's golf association should be collecting dues and reservations from member clubs and courses and then building new courses that would compete with them.

Project manager Richard Howell has said the new courses would relieve other championship-caliber courses in the state from heavy tournament obligations. Howell said the proposed MGA courses at the complex would also be higher-priced than most public courses and would attract a different following.

Mike Martin, the dean of the university's College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Science, said the venture would create a world-class education and research center for the study of turfgrass and grounds. The plan calls for three to six "research holes" for turfgrass and landscaping experimentation. The holes could simultaneously be used for research and played for practice or used for lessons.

According to plans, the first phase of construction would cost \$7 to \$9 million and include an 18-hole championship course designed by Rees Jones, club-

house/conference center, maintenance facility with classroom, and a golf practice and teaching facility to include dormitory rooms for summer camps. Howell said there would be a heavy emphasis on teaching golf to financially disadvantaged children.

The proposed second phase would include 10,000 square feet of office space for the MGA and allied groups and a second 18-hole golf course.

The university also said it

hopes to someday attract private businesses to the periphery of the complex. Lawn care companies, for example, could lease land for experimentation.

The proposed site is near the southern tip of an 8,000-acre tract that was deeded to the university more than 40 years ago by the U.S. Department of Defense. About 3,200 acres within the tract are already used for experimentation. Project officials said the complex wouldn't be open until at least mid-1998 or 1999.

Matthews to design Mich. resort links

HARBOR SPRINGS, Mich. — Birchwood Farms Golf and Country Club near Michigan's Upper Peninsula is hoping to add a \$3 million, 18-hole golf course at its upscale facility.

The golf course architecture firm of Matthews and Associates of Lansing, which designed Birchwood Farms current 18-hole layout, will design the course. The club has tentatively reached a purchase agreement with

Birchwood Development Co. to purchase 190 acres of land for the course, according to Linden Mills, the club's general manager.

Mills said the club would like to begin this year on the first nine holes. The next nine holes would be built at a later date. When Birchwood Farms is completely built, it could potentially have 1,054 home sites, condominiums and single family residences.

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ALL IN THE FAMILY
Robert Trent Jones Sr. (left) has teamed with elder son Bobby to form a new architectural entity, RTJ Golf Ventures. For story, see page 37.

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COURSE DEVELOPMENT

PLAYERS SURVEYED ON SUPERS' ROLE

Image enhanced but golfers insist on 'green' look

BY PETER BLAIS

ORLANDO, Fla. — Most golfers see superintendents as trained professionals and the person most responsible for course conditions — news course superintendents should find encouraging course conditions to elevate their image. Disturbingly, however, few golfers recognized the Golf Course Superintendents' Association of America (GCSAA) as the superintendents' national organization. Also troubling was the unwillingness of most golfers to accept poorer playing conditions in exchange for reduced maintenance and water use on their courses. According to a recent survey conducted by the National Golf Foundation, ...

STUDY SHOWS:

Name designers pull higher dues and green fees

BY PETER BLAIS
HARRISBURG, Pa. — Private courses designed by signature architects command higher initiation fees. ...

MAKE THE CALL!

Mich. golf pro enters course design field

MUSKEGON, Mich. — Muskegon Country Club golf professional Mile Sruba has turned his hand to the drafting board.

Sruba designed Muskegon County's newest golf course, the nine-hole Eagle Island Golf Club. The par-34 course, which is expected to open in August, will be near a driving range called First Tee which Sruba owns. Sruba also plans to build an 18-hole natural bentgrass putting course as part of the multi-use golfing facility.

The course will have one par-5 and three par-3s with three sets of tees on each hole and play from 2,800 to 3,000 yards. The average size of the greens will be 6,500 square feet.