

BRIEFS



GRAHAM, PANKS HIRE COLCERI

PHOENIX, Ariz. — Golf course architects David Graham and Gary Panks have hired Tom Colceri as director of business development. Colceri has worked in sales and marketing with Marriott Corp. and as a PGA golf professional.

REES JONES RESTORING DAD'S CREATION

WILLIAMSBURG, Va. — Rees Jones is directing restoration of the Golden Horseshoe Gold Course here, a track designed by his father, Robert Trent Jones Sr., in 1963. The work will recreate and reconstruct Jones Sr.'s trademark runway teeing areas, subtle green undulations and strategic fairways. New substructures will be rebuilt for tees, greens and bunkers.



Rees Jones

GCBA RELEASES DIRECTORY

The Golf Course Builders Association of America (GCBA) has released its updated Membership Directory and construction reference guide. The 128-page booklet contains contacts and detailed information on all member companies of the GCBA, as well as a description of its Builder Certification Program, and a 10-page golf course construction reference section that contains measurement conversions and a bibliography of other reference sources. Copies are \$15 each, and can be obtained by contacting GCBA headquarters, 920 Airport Road, Ste. 210, Chapel Hill, N.C. 27514; 919-942-8922; fax 919-942-6955.

COLORADO TOWN APPROVES RESORT

BROOMFIELD, Colo. — The Broomfield City Council has approved Interlocken Ltd.'s plans to build a 302-room hotel and a 27-hole championship golf course along the Boulder Turnpike. The complex will also include convention facilities, a clubhouse for the golf course, a health club with indoor and outdoor swimming and two restaurants. The golf course was designed by Richard von Lührte of RNL Associates in Denver. The resort project will cover some 304 acres and is scheduled for completion in 1998.

GRIFFITHS DESIGNS MUNI IN TENNESSEE

KINGSPORT, Tenn. — Construction on Kingsport's first municipal 18-hole golf course, designed by golf course architect Denis Griffiths, is set to start by the end of this month. The course will be called The Cattails at MeadowView and is expected to take 15 to 18 months to build. The golf course will adjoin the MeadowView Conference Resort and Convention Center.

Preserve golf course designs, Whitten urges

By MARK LESLIE

PINEHURST, N.C. — Calling himself their No. 1 fan, Ron Whitten urged golf course architects to become "a Self-Preservation Society," preserving their work or facing the possibility of losing any record of it.

Accepting the Donald Ross Award from the American Society of Golf Course Architects, the Golf Digest and Golf World golf course architecture editor said: "Ten, 15, 25, 50 years from now — unless you leave a record behind — there will be no record of your architecture." He said that while plans on paper are subject to interpretation and deterioration and while computer disks can become obsolete and unreadable, black-and-white photographs keep the best record.

Take photos, he said, not of "calendar shots" but "from every angle, every bunker, every tee."

Pointing to great changes that have been made over the years to Cypress Point and Augusta National, Whitten said architects need to give clubs clues to their designs, "especially when 50 years down the road some club decides to undo 50 years worth of green committee damage. Maybe you don't care what clubs do to your designs after you leave the premises. But if you do, leave them a clue. In black and white."



Ron Whitten shows one of his design "shows" describing modern golf course design work.

He also urged the architects to never lose sight of the real purpose of golf course architecture. "It's more than just an art, more than just a science," Whitten said. "It's part of the huge global entertainment business. Golf course architecture is show biz."

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Ron Fream checks his blueprints at one of his golf courses.

Q & A Fream's world unhindered by distance or cultures

Ron Fream was in the midst of a master's degree program in turfgrass management at Washington State University in the United States in 1966 when he was lured away from his studies to join the golf course design team at Robert Trent Jones Inc. He worked with Jones for four years, then spent three years as a construction supervisor for Robert F. Lawrence and as a design associate with Robert Muir Graves. In 1972 he and Terry Storm established their own firm — now known as Golfplan and headquartered in Santa Rosa, Calif. Celebrating his 30th year in the design field, Fream is still devoting most of his efforts to the Asia-Pacific region but is also eyeing his homeland.

Golf Course News: You hold a college degree in ornamental horticulture from California Polytechnic Institute and have a background in soil science, botanical science and ecology. From where does your expertise in design come?

Ron Fream: My "technical" education complemented the more pure design or golfing backgrounds of other designers on the Jones staff. In my four years with Jones Inc. I believe I earned a PhD in golf course architecture. Those years were expansive and truly educational.

Later, when Terry and I formed our company, we collaborated with Peter

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Palmer & 8 title winners to design track

ORLANDO, Fla. — Arnold Palmer and eight other major tournament winners each will design two holes of a golf course to be built in Manila, Philippines.

The project was announced during the Bay Hill Invitational here on March 16 when Palmer Course Design Co. (PCDC) signed a single-day record of five new agreements for golf course architectural services. The record-setting day capped

a record-setting month that saw nine new agreements.

PCDC officials said they reached an agreement with Pagbabago Development Corp., which was acting on behalf of a consortium of developers for the Manila project. PCDC is acting as overall project architect and designing two golf holes. The developers have opened negotiations

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BOOK REVIEW

Ross' insights are plentiful, varied

By MARK LESLIE

His fans are legion, yet they never met — never even saw the man.

His golf courses — numbering more than any other architect has ever designed — exude exuberance and fond recollections from aficionados who have played them.

There is even a fan club in his memory: The Donald Ross Society.

Yet, what do we really know about Donald Ross? Until now, very little. He is the least-published among the great golf course architects. But with the publication of the lost commentaries of Donald Ross, the man and the designer is unveiled.

Golf Has Never Failed Me, compiled by Ron Whitten and published by Sleeping Bear Press for the American Society of Golf Course Architects, is due out May 25. Don't miss it!

This is an utterly fascinating book, loaded with many old photos never before made public — but, more importantly, seeping with insight into the all-time favorite golf course architect, a Brit who made America his home and transformed its land in the meantime.



Donald Ross

Readers interested in Ross's ideas on golf course design and construction won't be disappointed (although they may find they were completely wrong about his ideas on earthmoving, blind shots, water hazards and other facets of design).

But my favorite parts of the book are Ross's thoughts on other aspects of the game and those involved in it. To wit:

• "Greenkeeping is destined to

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Q&A: Fream

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Thomson, five-time British Open champion, and his partner, Michael Wolveridge of Australia. Peter was one of the first pro golfers to recognize the opportunities golf design could provide to the accomplished and recognized player. This collaboration brought exposure and experience in many Asian countries, the Caribbean and Europe.

GCN: Was that the first and last of your work with "name" golfers?

RF: We have not worked with

any "name pro" on a regular basis since 1978. Without a "name" of our own, we do not receive wide recognition. However, we seem to achieve acceptable results under difficult conditions, for fees and construction budgets "name" architects would not accept. Many of our courses are quite well known in their own markets. Generally, our clients do not need extravagant marketing or promotion to attract ample players.

Given small budgets and/or difficult conditions, Golfplan performs well. We perform well otherwise, too. It is always easier to obtain spectacular results, regard-

less of where the site is, with unlimited or open-ended budgets.

GCN: In these last 30 years your work must have taken you into major challenges of all sorts.

RF: Pioneering new golf in what were non-golfing, and in some cases only recently industrialized countries, provided many challenges, many lessons, tremendous experience and (with hindsight) a fantastic vocabulary of experiences to draw from and relate to. Since 1972 I have been involved in various aspects of golf course architecture — from site evaluation to conceptual and land use, master

planning, golf and landscape design, earthworks and erosion-control engineering, desert and mangrove swamp reclamation, dredging from the sea, effluent water use... And I've worked in all sorts of areas: the Arctic, Sahara desert, rain forests, rock mountains, peat bogs, sand dunes, prairies, rice paddies, cobra country... I went to many locations before air conditioning, or malarial mosquito control. Golf may be 18 holes, but the experience is immense and difficult to fully describe when viewed over 30 years with the diversity of more than 50 coun-

tries and their climatic, social, religious, cultural, culinary, economic and philosophical factors.

GCN: Is more expected from golf course builders and architects today?

RF: Yes. Golf across Asia has become very much more sophisticated than during the 1970s and '80s. For instance, Golfplan will soon begin to prepare construction working drawings for upgrading and modernizing the Pantai Mentiri Golf Club in Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei. When I first went to Brunei in 1980 to discuss designing this course with the Public Works Department, oil wealth had not transformed the sleepy tropical water village into the dynamic oil metropolis of today. The original draft of objectives from the PWD requested a modestly priced members club (government employees) on a waterlogged seaside site. Over the years, as Brunei prospered, so did the members. Now the objective is a "waterproof" course, even with 175 to more than 200 inches of rain annually and a water table six inches below original soil level.

GCN: We understand you are interested in working more in the United States. Is that true?

RF: I hope to spend a little more time working on domestic projects. It has been mentioned that Golfplan is not interested in U.S. sites. That surely is not the case. I would like to fly a little less, and a little less often. During 1995, I flew 140 times!

GCN: Do you have any U.S. projects on the boards?

RF: We have three under way in California; one in collaboration with Johnny Miller. We are also preparing design plans for the total rebuilding and repositioning of the Thunderbird Golf Club course at South Mountain in Phoenix

GCN: I want to ask you about design — specifically the apparent drive, especially in Asia, to have tremendously long golf courses. Can and should that change?

RF: Resort golf courses do not automatically have to be championship 7,000-yard, 18-hole "monster tracks" on 180 to 210 acres of land. "Championship" is an over-used term. The course should be designed for user-friendliness and average golfer's play. Ego-driven courses that are too demanding may test the pros, but few pros ever pay for greens fees. Holiday golfers do not seek to be humiliated due to the severity of the golf course design. Depending on the scope of the resort, the land available, location and terrain, alternatives to the championship course are available. Compact "boutique" courses can be created on 25, 65, or 100 acres, or whatever size site is offered.

A proper 18-hole course, or even 36 holes, can be the correct long-term market-supported end product. A very fine course of 18 holes can be 6,500 or 6,800 yards

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GOLF COURSE NEWS

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9 winners, 2 holes apiece

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with the eight other tournament winners.

Announcement of the other designers will be made when negotiations are finalized.

When it is complete, Ft. McKinley Golf & Country Club will become an amenity in the largest commercial and residential development in Metro Manila history. Construction is expected to start late this year, with tentative opening expected in early 1998.

Meanwhile, PCDC reached an agreement with J.T.H. Development Corp. for an upscale daily-fee 18-hole course in Palm Bay. The Palm Bay Golf Club will have a championship layout, clubhouse, golf shop, practice range, and separate 12-acre site for a state-of-the-art golf teaching center.

Construction is scheduled to start in May, with tentative opening expected next spring.

PCDC reached an agreement with Northeast Phoenix Residential Limited Partnership for an 18-hole track in Phoenix, Ariz. The course will be built at Desert Ridge, a master-planned community being developed in northeast Phoenix.

Construction is scheduled to start this summer, with the course opening expected early next year.

Indonesia-PCDC reached an agreement with Pt. Putra Alvita Pratama for an 18-hole course near Jakarta, Indonesia. It will serve as an amenity for an upscale, master-planned community — Kota Legenda (Legend City).

Kota Legenda will become the standard-bearer for golf and residential communities in the area.

Q&A: Fream

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long when total land area is somewhat limited. Par should be 70, 71 or 72 for the proper course. A site of 125 to 175 acres would be suitable for this 18-hole course. There is a place for true championship courses in the tourist resort context, when market conditions and land availability permit. Keep in mind, however, that the majority of your golfers are at best "average" players.

GCN: Once the golf course is complete, how important is course maintenance?

RF: Turfgrass maintenance is vital. A poorly maintained course will discourage repeat play and present a very unfavorable public-relations problem. Golfers are sophisticated. They have freedom of choice. They do not travel to mediocre or poorly maintained courses. Growing numbers of national and regional golf resorts offer options and alternatives. A successful golf destination resort must provide distinctive, challenging, memorable, golfer-pleasing and user-friendly golf. The quality of the turfgrass is the most visible feature the golfer will notice.

GOLF COURSE NEWS

PCDC said. Construction will begin this summer and opening is expected in early 1998.

PCDC also reached an agreement with Pierce Financial & Investments for an 18-hole facility in Hanford, Calif. Built on "a splendid tract of land," the course will be a cornerstone of an upscale, master-planned community — Sierra Madre.

Construction will begin this summer, and an early-1997 opening is projected.

Architects Society going on-line by summer

By PETER BLAIS

PINEHURST, N.C. — The American Society of Golf Course Architects (ASGCA) plans to go on line with its own web site by early summer, the society announced during its recent annual meeting here.

ASGCA spokesman Chad Ritterbusch said that among the information likely to appear on computer screens will be:

- Background on the ASGCA.
- Biographies of ASGCA members.
- Information on how to develop a golf course.
- Procedures for selecting a qualified golf course architect.

• Environmental discussions, including case studies and information regarding environmental principles.

• Specific advice on developing municipal layouts.

• Links to other Allied Association of Golf members with web sites.

"This should be good news for architects and developers," Ritterbusch said. "The general public should find the information on golf's effect on the environment very interesting. We want to get some good solid information out there. Eventually, we might be able to do some fun stuff like a design-your-own-course contest on line."

GOLF COURSE NEWS

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