

IN BRIEF

CULLMAN, Texas — The Cullman Municipal Golf Course has reopened after a three-month shutdown caused by harsh winter kill. The 18-hole course was forced to close July 1 in order to repair the fairways and greens. New tee markers and other landscaping improvements were also part of the renovations.

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AUGUSTA, Ga. — The Augusta National Golf Club has rebuilt three more of its greens to U.S. Golf Association specifications. The greens were dug up and applied with a layer of sand, clay and rocks to improve drainage and then restored to their original condition. In other modifications, a mound behind the No. 2 green was leveled to increase seating.

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CLEARWATER, Fla. — The West Florida Distribution Center for the E-Z-GO Div. of Textron has moved its offices here. E-Z-GO distribution can now be reached at 5325 140th Ave. North, Clearwater, Fla. 34620. Phone: 800-896-0601. Fax: 800-896-0601.

Hurdzan to receive GCSAA President's Award

LAS VEGAS — Golf course architect Michael Hurdzan has been selected to receive the 1997 Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA) most prestigious environmental honor, the President's Award for Environmental Leadership.

The award was established in 1991 to recognize "an exceptional environmental contribution to the game of golf: a contri-

bution that further exemplifies the golf course superintendent's image as a steward of the land."

GCSAA President Bruce R. Williams will present the award to Hurdzan during the Government and Environmental General Session, Feb. 9, during the 68th International Golf Course Conference and Show in Las Vegas. Hurdzan is only the second individual to receive the award,

joining superintendent Tim Hiers of Collier's Reserve Country Club in Naples, Fla. Both Hiers and Hurdzan are members of the *Golf Course News* Editorial Advisory Board.

One of Hurdzan's most celebrated course designs is Widow's Walk Golf Course in Scituate, Mass., a facility planned in cooperation with environmental advocates. The course promotes water conservation, wetlands preservation, wildlife habitat and integrated pest management practices. Numerous other Hurdzan courses have received environmental recognition, including Eagle's Landing in Ocean City, Md.; Naples National in Naples, Fla.; Cook's Creek in Circleville, Ohio; and Westwood Plateau in Coquitlam, B.C., Canada.

"GCSAA is truly pleased to recognize Michael's achievements," Williams said. "His commitment to designing environmentally sensitive golf courses and his contributions to the golf course superintendent profession are exemplary."

"This award validates the whole nature of collective stewardship, and that all of us in the golf industry can make as great a contribution as golf course superintendents do on a daily basis," Hurdzan said.



Dr. Michael Hurdzan has gotten in touch with his thrill-seeking side on the Sports Car Club of America racing circuit. For story on how the good doctor has fared, see page 35.

Study indicates growth, predicts more

By PETER BLAIS

JUPITER, Fla. — A recently released National Golf Foundation study details a generally healthy golf business over the past 10 years, especially for the public golf market, and predicts continued good health well into the next century.

Three major national trends emerged over the past decade, thanks in large part to the effect of aging Baby Boomers on the golf market, according to *Trends in the Golf Industry: 1986-1995*.

- Growth in golfers and rounds played was concentrated during the period 1986 to 1991. Since 1991, participation and rounds played have been stable.

- Growth in the rate of overall spending on fees and equipment has exceeded the rate of inflation over the period.

- Growth in golf course development activity lagged behind growth in golf participation in the 1980s. Since 1991, this trend has reversed and growth rates in participation now lag behind growth rates in development activity.

The last is particularly interesting. While golf participation increased significantly between 1986 and 1991, golf course development expanded relatively slowly. Tough lending practices, brought on by the failure of many residential communities in the 1980s, made it difficult for golf developers to obtain financing. Consequently, courses were delayed and projects stuck in planning reached an all-time high in 1990.

After 1990, lending practices loosened somewhat and more specialized golf lenders entered the business. Spurred on by the participation increases of the late 1980s, the growth of public golf and easier money, new course openings accelerated through the 1990s, hitting a record 468 in 1995.

Public golf (especially daily-fee) led the upsurge, according to NGF. From

Report: 'Golf markets tend to correct themselves over time, moving toward a balance between demand and supply. However, in the short-term, over-saturation may already be a reality or may be a legitimate possibility.'

1986 on, 80 percent of new course openings were either daily-fee or municipal, reaching 86 percent in 1995. Four out of five of those new public layouts were privately-owned, daily-fee operations with just one in five of the municipal variety. Since 1986, the proportion of public courses nationwide has grown from 61 percent to 69 percent of the total U.S. course supply.

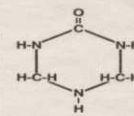
Overall, golf course supply has grown more slowly than the number of golfers during the past 10 years. The 2,037 new courses built from 1986 to 1995 represented a 1.6-percent annual growth rate. Golfers grew 2.6 percent during the same period. However, from 1991 to 1995 the trend reversed itself with the pace of new course development outstripping the growth in golfers.

"These trends seem to support the notion that golf markets tend to correct themselves over time, moving toward a balance between demand and supply," the NGF report advises. "However, in the short-term, over-saturation may already be a reality or may be a legitimate possibility. Over the next several years, development success will come to those who find the appropriate market niches by building golf courses to well-identified segments of the market."

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CIRCLE #102

Weiskopf designing Forest Highlands' second 18-hole track

FLAGSTAFF, Ariz. — A new 18-hole championship golf course designed by Tom Weiskopf will serve as the focal point for the expansion of the Forest Highlands golf community just south of Flagstaff.

"The new course promises to be every bit as spectacular as the existing one," said Jim Hoselton, project director and vice president of Phoenix-based DMB.

Weiskopf teamed with Jay Morrish in 1985 to design the existing Forest Highlands course.

"This is a spectacular piece of property," said Weiskopf. "It has magnificent views and a very unique terrain, which gives us the chance to design a traditional golf course that is walkable, challenging and dramatic for golfers at all levels of play."

Weiskopf said the second 18 holes will have a similar feeling to the existing course in its playability and challenges.

"At build-out, Forest Highlands will encompass 36 holes of private golf at 7,000 feet. I think that's pretty special considering its scenic beauty, national ranking and location," said Hoselton. Construction of the course is expected to begin in early 1997.

NGF study upbeat

Continued from page 3

"Developers need to get accurate information on prospective markets before they decide to build. The NGF's field experience indicates that too many developers make construction decisions with their hearts and not with quantitative information on supply and demand."

Regionally, the South Atlantic (SA) states (Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia, Maryland, Delaware) enjoyed the largest increase (up 693 courses to a total of 3,026, a 30-percent jump) in course supply over the last decade. However, it still trailed the East North Central (ENC) region (Wisconsin, Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio) in total number of courses (3,200). The ENC also had the largest percentage of public tracks (78 percent) relative to total courses and 24 percent of the nation's public course supply.

While the South Atlantic has led the way in new development, there are signs the region is slowing. According to NGF figures, 25 percent of 1995 course openings occurred in the ENC compared to just 20 percent in the SA. Further, 25 percent of courses under construction nationwide were in the ENC, compared to 19 percent in the SA.

As for the future, Baby Boomers are expected to continue as the major demographic group affecting new course development. Senior golfers (age 50 and above) represent 25 percent of U.S. golfers, but account for 50 percent of rounds played. The first wave of the nation's 78 million Baby Boomers are just reaching their 50s. "If these golfers behave toward golf like their predecessors, we believe the U.S. will see another surge in rounds played and spending," the report reads.

Most of the 72 million Baby Boomer children, referred to as Echo Boomers, will be into their late 20s and early 30s by the year 2015. This is the age when most people take up golf, meaning this group could also have a major impact on golf development 20 years from now.

The NGF predicts in the near term that U.S. course openings will continue in the 300 to 400 courses-per-year range, 80 to 90 percent of those being public.

"In light of the anticipated favorable demographic shifts impacting the U.S. population, the long-term growth potential for golf participation, rounds (activity levels) and spending are very encouraging," according to the report. "However, these favorable demographic shifts are not anticipated to significantly benefit the golf industry in terms of increased participation and rounds played until after the year 2000."

GOLF COURSE NEWS

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