

BRIEFS



STIRLING JOINS KAVANAUGH

TUCSON, Ariz. — Kenneth Kavanaugh Golf Course Design has hired Blake Stirling as senior designer. Stirling has worked in golf course design and construction for nine years, including seven years as a senior designer with Dye Designs, Inc. of Denver. Leaving Dye, he briefly operated Stirling Design Group. He has been involved in more than 80 golf projects worldwide. Before joining Dye, he was a high-ranking collegiate and amateur golfer in the West and apprenticed with Killian Design Group.



Blake Stirling

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FREAM GETS CALIF. PROJECT

BAKERSFIELD, Calif. — Golfplan-Ron Fream Design Group is designing an 18-hole public golf course in this town in agriculturally endowed San Joaquin Valley. River Ranch will be a par-72, ranging from 4,650 to 6,650 yards, winding through a residential subdivision. Extensive earth-moving will contour the golf holes and raise adjacent building sites to enhance homesite views.

COORE-CRENSHAW IN ARIZONA

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — Bill Coore and Ben Crenshaw broke ground in July on a 36-hole daily-fee facility here for the Pima Maricopa Indian tribe. Called Talking Stick Golf Club, it will be operated by Troon North Golf Management. Coore said the north course will be low-profile with crowned-off greens and holes of "great latitude where you can pick angles off the tee." Walking will be encouraged on the south course, which will feature the "club look," he said, "greener, more elevation change, more trees and a couple of streams and lakes."



Ben Crenshaw

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PELICAN BAY ENLARGING GREENS

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla. — Golfers will experience larger greens and more consistent putting surfaces now that a \$260,000 greens improvement project has been completed at Pelican Bay Country Club's Members Course here is completed later this year. All greens at the 18-hole course were reconfigured and enlarged, and most bunkers and sandtraps changed, according to Jerry Broome, regional manager for International Golf Management, which oversaw the project.

Maine busting out of slumber

By MARK LESLIE

BANGOR, Maine — Maine golf course construction, in hibernation for six years, has emerged with a bang, counting 17 new projects or expansions in the last year and another eight in planning.

Not since suburban Portland's Falmouth Country Club and The Woodlands opened in 1988 and nearby Sable Oaks Golf Club opened in 1989 has anyone built an 18-hole golf course in Maine. But this summer, construction began on The Meadows in Litchfield, Belgrade Lakes Golf Club, Felts Brook Country Club in Holden and Dunegrass Country Club in Old Orchard Beach which is ex-

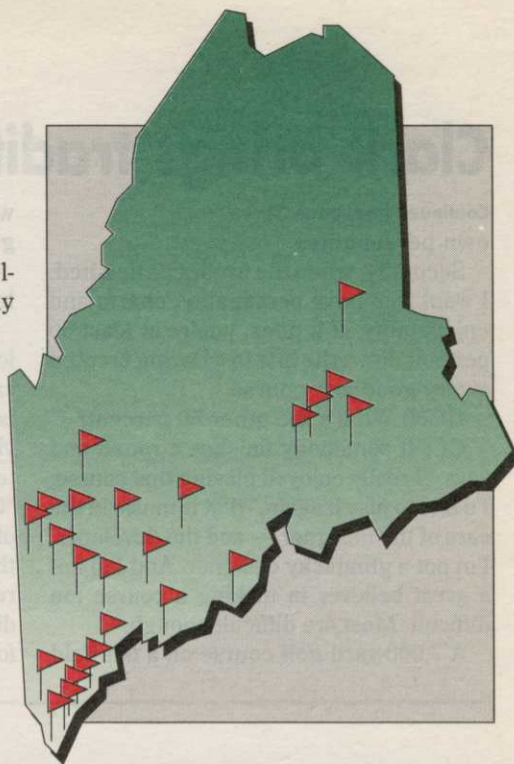
panding from nine to 27 holes.

"This is like the shopping center developments back in the '80s. Everybody seems to want to build a golf course," said Chuck Kellogg, a project director for the Maine Department of Environmental Protection.

The surge has carried over from 1995 when construction began on several new nine-hole facilities and additions from nine to 18 holes. In this short time second nines have been added at:

- Bridgton Highlands late last year.
- Point Sebago in Naples this summer.
- Bath Country Club last year.

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Belgrade Lakes is Clark's first American canvas

By MARK LESLIE

BELGRADE LAKES, Maine — Two score and two hundred years ago, Maine — as part of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts — declared independence from England. This summer it reopened relations, welcoming British golf architect Clive Clark to build his first course in America.

The property is marvelous. The stakes are high.

"We hope this will be a catalyst [for economic growth]," said co-managing partner John Alford, grandson of Belgrade Lakes Golf Club, Inc. (BLGC) partner Harold Alford. "Central Maine needs a boost and this is it."

"This will mark the resurgence of Belgrade Lakes as a resort," agreed co-managing partner Kyle Evans. Evans, former superintendent of Waterville Country Club and now president of BLGC, was referring to the position the Belgrade Lakes Region held among wealthy vacationers until a 1958 fire destroyed the area's cornerstone hotel, The Belgrade, and its nine-hole golf course.

The 240-acre golf course property sits on very high, wooded ground overlooking Belgrade and Messalonskee lakes and Long and Great ponds. Seven holes, a putting

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Architect Clive Clark, left, and Belgrade Lakes Golf Club President Kyle Evans look over routing plans at the site.

Brit Clive Clark brings design career to U.S.

Clive Clark. It's not a household name in the United States, but the Brit hopes to change that, starting with Belgrade Lakes Golf Club in Maine (see accompanying story). After copping four National Amateur Championships, Clark was a touring professional for 12 years, representing both the Walker and Ryder Cup Teams, winning the Danish Open Championship and five European titles. For 10 years he was the playing pro at Sunningdale Golf Club and was head pro there for another nine years. He has either played in or broadcast the British Open Championship for 31 straight years, the last 18 from the BBC-TV



booth. He studied architecture at London University. He moved to La Quinta, Calif., 18 months ago.

Golf Course News: Your first course design in America is Belgrade Lakes Golf Course in Maine. You're bringing golf back to an resort area that had it 90 years ago. What is your philosophy of golf course design — the traditional or modern?

Clive Clark: I wouldn't say I'm extreme at either end of the spectrum. My philosophy is simple. I like to design a course with different holes, for a

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Dave Axland, left, and Bunker Hill partner Dan Proctor.

Colleagues hail Bunker Hill

By MARK LESLIE

PHOENIX, Ariz. — Bill Coore of Coore & Crenshaw calls Dan Proctor and Dave Axland "fantastic." Golf course architect Ron Forse says they are "great to work with, and care intensely about the quality and authenticity of their work."

Sand Hills Golf Club owner Dick Youngscap was so impressed by their work that he cited them in his brochure on the Mullen, Neb., track which was voted *Golf Digest's* Best New Private Golf Course in 1995.

Coore, Forse, Youngscap... Even with these endorsements, who in the world are Dan Proctor and Dave Axland? Is the Dave and Dan Show

— officially called Bunker Hill Golf Course Design and Construction Co. — the best-kept secret in the golf industry?

"I'm probably shooting myself in the foot telling how great these guys are," said Coore, "because if they start getting their own [design and construction] work, we won't be able to get them."

Proctor and Axland's work should speak for itself, said Coore, the consummate "minimalist" designer. He cited Delaware Springs Golf Course, a municipal course they designed and built for the city of Burnet, Texas. "It is so good — low-key, strategic, an incredible

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Proctor & Axland: One in two

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design," Coore said. "They are the perfect guys to do design/build... You wonder why they haven't gotten all kinds of work."

"We were naive enough to think that if we put a good product out there for people to see that we would have plenty of work," said Proctor. "But it hasn't worked out that way, even at the small-town level. We have projected ourselves as shapers who can also design and build. But even at the small-town level, they want a 'name' architect. Perhaps, one of us should have stayed aside as an architect, so they [clients] could say, 'There's our architect.'"

Instead, Proctor and Axland have gained a reputation for their shaping on such high-profile courses as Sand Hills, where they worked with Coore and Crenshaw, and at Riviera Country Club in Pacific Palisades, Calif., where they helped Forse in bunker restoration.

"They were a natural for this project," Forse said. "What I really enjoyed was their uncanny emulation of the [architect] George Thomas style of bunker (the sand-flash variety, very gnarly and natural, with a dunes-like edge, a controlled raggedness). It was masterful."

Proctor, strong on design, and Axland, mechanically minded, like to say that together, the two of them make "one whole man."

"Dave," Proctor said, "is one of the premier bulldozer operators in the world and he knows the game, the strategy, and every angle of construction. You give him a spark of an idea and he goes with it and makes something very good."

"Dan," said Axland, "is an excellent golfer. His strength, as it relates to our partnership, is in conceptualizing golf holes and routing, where I gravitate more toward actual construction and earthwork. It's a good partnership. There's a lot of overlap."

Excellent golfers, Proctor and Axland had both decided they were not good enough to play professionally, but they wanted to find a niche in golf — somehow, somewhere. Their paths merged in 1987 at Kings Crossing Golf and Country Club, which Coore designed in Corpus Christi, Texas.

Proctor had worked on the maintenance crew under Coore when Coore was superintendent at Waterwood National Resort and Country Club in Huntsville, Texas. "Bill always wanted to get into design," Proctor recalled. "I've worked for him on and off ever since."

Meanwhile, Axland had earned a turfgrass management degree from Kansas State University and had moved to Corpus Christi as an assistant superintendent. When construction of Kings Crossing began two miles down the road, he decided to get building experi-

ence. Axland stayed on as assistant superintendent and the Proctor-Axland team was born basically at the same time Coore and PGA Tour great Ben Crenshaw began their design partnership.

Since then, the Dave and Dan Show has been closely tied to the skyward climb of Coore and Crenshaw.

"Working for Coore and Crenshaw, you have the best of both worlds — design and construction," Axland said. "They allow so much freedom with the people on site. It's a consensus

of opinions carefully edited by Bill and Ben.

"Doing our own work is more rewarding. But working with them is the next best thing."

"We're all drawn to design because of the artistic side," Proctor said. "Plus we love golf. It's a great combination. The bottom line, especially with Coore and Crenshaw, is the product: building good golf holes.

"Most important is how a course plays and if it's fun. We want it to be fun for the 15-, 20-, 25-handicapper. We want to make those people think and still challenge the good player. That's

the dream of every golf course designer, but it doesn't happen often enough."

However, the elusive dream — a Bunker Hill turnkey contract — remains. Axland and Proctor would do the routing on paper, first spending a lot of time on site, and gaining a basic conception of variety and balance — short, long, dogleg left, dogleg right, uphill, downhill. Then they would build it through to the end.

"We still see the need for people like us in the small-town market," said Axland.

"And there's a joy working with small-town people. They ap-

preciate what you do," Proctor added.

In the meantime, as Proctor and Axland wait for that next design/build opportunity, they have started a 36-hole project on the Salt River Indian Reservation here for ... that's right, Coore and Crenshaw.

THE DAVE AND DAN SHOW

How do you reach Dan Proctor and Dave Axland? Bunker Hill Golf Course Design and Construction Co., 211 Rawson, Kerrville, Tex. 78028; telephone 800-942-9304, Box 21930#.

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