

Following Alabama's example, Mississippi courts development

JACKSON, Miss. — Big-name golf course designers are setting up shop these days in the Magnolia State.

From the marshlands of Bay St. Louis to the hills shading Sardis Lake in north Mississippi, some of the world's top course architects are currently working on signature projects around the state. At least five big-name designers have courses under construction, two funded by tax dollars and three by casinos.

In 1994, the Mississippi Legislature designated \$10 million to build public courses at John Kyle State Park in Sardis and Percy Quin State Park in McComb. The state hired architects Bob Cupp in Sardis and Arthur Hills in McComb. Both courses are expected to open in October.

Meanwhile, in Bay St. Louis, Arnold Palmer's company designed the Bridges Golf Resort at Casino Magic [see photos page 47]. An Arnold Palmer Golf Academy is already open and the \$9 million course is scheduled to open in October.

PGA Senior Tour star Hale Irwin has designed a public course at the Grand Casino in Tunica. And, in Philadelphia, the Mississippi band of Choctaw Indians, which owns Silver Star Resort and Casino, is building

Choctaw Trails Golf Club as part of a \$100 million project that includes an addition to the casino and its adjoining hotel. The Choctaw course was co-designed by Tom Fazio and Jerry Pate.

Jeff Morton, executive director of the Mississippi Golf Association, said the new courses are needed because of increased play in the state and will boost the state's reputation as a golfing locale, which will hopefully lure more golfing tourists.

Another goose dilemma solved by four-legged strategy

ST. CLOUD, Minn. — Members of St. Cloud Country Club raised \$2,600 to pay for the newest member of the golf course maintenance crew.

And Fran, an 18-month-old, smooth-coated border collie, has been a minor hero in the club's fight against invading flocks of geese that were leaving piles of surprises all over the course and munching on greens aprons. St. Cloud course superintendent Rob Barr estimates that there were 700 geese on the course last season. Chemical treatment was too costly. The birds couldn't be shot. A snow fence had been tried but didn't work very well once the birds were old enough to fly.

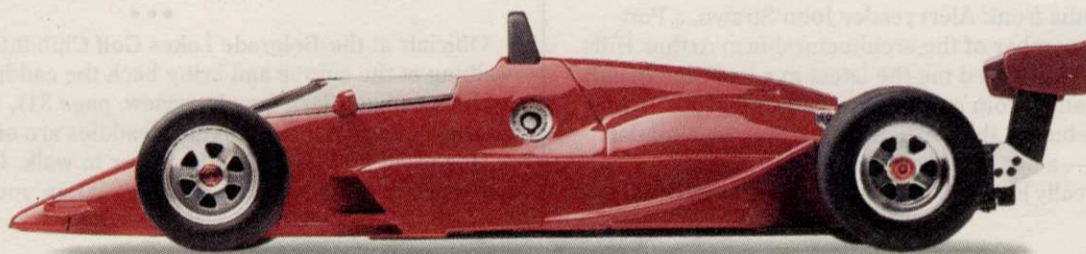
St. Cloud club member Paul Sullivan first heard about the idea of using a dog to combat geese in

a magazine article. About 45 members voluntarily contributed money that would be used to buy Fran. No dogs were available in Minnesota, but Sullivan found a farm in Virginia that trained dogs for such work. Barb Ligon, who trained Fran at Seclusival Farms in Shipman, Va., said she has sold 100 dogs to golf courses — mostly in the Northeast — to battle the geese.

Fran takes several trips around the course each morning alongside Barr in a cart. Fran quietly runs around the course looking for geese. Using her instinctual herding ability, she'll chase the geese into the water until called off by Barr or Sullivan, who also works with Fran. They generally don't allow Fran to go into the Mississippi River, where the current is strong.



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Watson develops KC youth facility

KANSAS CITY — Tom Watson and the Kansas City Golf Foundation are providing a model for cities and towns looking to promote junior golf.

Watson, a vocal supporter of golf as a character-building game for children, is designing the second small-scale junior golf facility in the city at the Blue River Golf Course. Watson's design — budgeted at \$316,000 — calls for three, par-3 holes and a total of five greens. There will also be a pitch-and-chip area and a practice putting green. The Blue River facility is scheduled to open next June. It will be open to all ages, but the goal is to get juniors to play.

Kansas City's other junior-oriented facility is the Learning Center at Ironhorse Golf Club, which has a three-hole practice course, practice tee and short-game center [see story page 36].

KILLIAN COURSE OPENS IN MICH.

NEW BUFFALO, Mich. — Whittaker Woods, the new upscale, 18-hole daily-fee layout just southeast of New Buffalo, has opened. The course was designed by Ken Killian, who designed Kemper Lakes near Chicago. The clubhouse will not be completed until next year and the official grand opening will be in May 1997, according to developer Peter O'Brien of Chicago.