

# Spin doctoring course design philosophy

By PETER BLAIS

As marketing unfriendly as it is to say your course is "hard" or, worse yet "easy," the kiss of death may be to label it "average"—the implication being that anybody could play it and have a reasonably good time doing so. Yawn...

But that's exactly what course

owners want. To pay off the massive investments they've made in building these properties, they must attract every kind of golfer — good, bad and the great majority flailing away somewhere in the middle.

So, in an attempt to spice up their rhetoric and earn their paychecks, architects and public

relations firms have come up with a number of semantic variations that basically say a course can be hard for the good golfer, easy for the bad, and a good time for just about anybody.

While we appreciate their literary efforts, as word-pinching editors we sorely want to boil these majestic, 50-word descrip-

tions down to "Everybody will like this course."

Someday.

In the meantime, here are some of the more imaginative course-for-one-and-all write-ups we've picked up along the way:

- A press release on Bealsville, Md.'s Four Streams National Golf Club, a Nick Price/Steve Smyers design scheduled to open in spring 1998: "The Price/Smyers Design Group plans the

golf course to challenge the shot-making strategy of the single-digit handicapper, and to be non-intimidating to the mid- and high-handicapper."

- Another release on Chantilly, Va.'s Fred Couples/Gene Bates-designed Westfield Golf Club scheduled to open in early summer 1998: "It will be fun and accessible for new golfers, yet provide terrific challenging options for the more-experienced golfer."

- Architect Jack Swayze on partner Steve Elkington's first complete golf course design, Mt. Arayat Golf Course, an 18-hole private country club in Arayat, The Philippines: "It will tax the strong player and be friendly to the novice."

- From a newspaper clipping describing Jack Nicklaus-designed Vermont National outside Burlington, scheduled to open in 1998: "The course is expected to appeal to both serious golfers and more casual weekend strollers."

- According to the developer, an Arnold Palmer-designed course to be built in India, "will be designed to provide a challenge to good golfers, without being intimidating as well as fun for beginners."

- This from British architect Jonathan Gaunt regarding his new Redlibbets course in Sevenoaks, Kent, England: "It is a private course 6,700 yards long which poses a challenge to experienced golfers but accommodates those of lesser ability — if they are fast learners!"

- "It is our goal," said J. David Everett, a principal in the Belfair development near Hilton Head Island, S.C., where a Tom Fazio course opened last year and another 18 is under construction, "and it's certainly Fazio's goal, to make the East Course equal to, if not better than, the first course. From the championship tees, it will be a difficult course. We believe that, for good players, a great course needs to present a certain degree of difficulty. But, like the West Course, this course will be very playable from the middle and forward tees. Creating that balance between difficulty and playability is not easy."

Certainly not.

## Tomlinson

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and hired Will Holroyd, who has been head superintendent since the course opened.

Steve Long was superintendent at a course Tomlinson belonged to in Columbia. Long was one of Tomlinson's first hires when construction began at Tidewater, where Long has been head superintendent for eight years.

"Superintendents are the main guys," Tomlinson said. "I've always had the greatest respect for them."

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