

TPC network takes off

By PETER BLAIS

The network of PGA Tour Tournament Player Club facilities will reach the quarter-century mark by the year 2000 with seven courses currently under construction or in planning and others being discussed, according to Chris Smith, director of special

The Tournament Players Club (TPC) at Scottsdale (Ariz.) is among the growing stable of TPC courses operated by the PGA Tour.

projects for the PGA Tour.

The latest course to come aboard is the TPC at Wakefield Plantation in Raleigh, N.C. The Hale Irwin design broke ground Sept. 16 and is the first TPC course to be announced as the future home of a Nike Tour event, Smith said.

"It [the number of TPC facilities] is expanding because of the overall success of the TPC network," said Smith, adding that TPC clubs have garnered a number of operational and design awards.

The TPC network runs the gamut from private to public to resort facilities. With the exception of the TPC at Eagle Trace, which yielded the Honda Classic to the recently opened (1996) TPC at Heron Bay, all the PGA Tour Golf Course Properties owned and/or operated by the PGA Tour host Tour events.

The design arm of the PGA Tour — PGA Tour Design Services — works with the architect that the developer hires at each facility to make sure the Tour's needs are addressed. A PGA Tour player is usually also involved as a consultant or designer on the project. "Player involvement is important in the design of all TPC courses," Smith said. "All are built with the capability of hosting a major tournament, whether immediately or down the road."

Of the six courses currently under construction or in planning, three already have tournaments planned: The Energizer Senior Tour Championship at the Lanny Wadkins-designed TPC of Myrtle Beach (S.C.) scheduled to open in 1998; the John Deere Classic at the D.A. Weibring-designed TPC at Deere Run in Moline, Ill., opening in 1999; and the Burnet Senior Classic at the TPC of The Twin Cities opening in the year 2000 in Minneapolis.

In addition to the Myrtle Beach facility, three other TPC courses will come on line next year: TPC at Jasna Polana in Princeton, N.J.; TPC at Virginia Beach; and TPC at Snoqualmie in Seattle.

There's a huge benefit to tournament sponsors who use a TPC venue to host their tournament, Smith said. It gives them rent-free access to a tournament site as opposed to having to find a spot and paying rent. That translates into a bigger charitable donation.

Myrtle Beach is a good example of a community that worked with the PGA Tour on a new facility, Smith said. The announcement for the new TPC of Myrtle Beach facility was held at The Dunes Club, which had hosted the Senior Tour Championship, Smith said. Myrtle Beach Golf Holiday, the major golf marketing organization for the Grand Strand, is a partner in the building of the course.

What does the PGA Tour look for in deciding on a new TPC site?

"Our mission," said Keith Tomlinson, vice president of TPC

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TPC network takes off

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Development, "is to be in locations that allow us to improve existing tournaments, provide a location that is designed for spectators from the outset, challenge the Tour pro and entertain the average golfer. We also provide a site where the tournament sponsor doesn't have to pay a rental fee. Charities are generally the sponsor. If we provide a rent-free facility, that leaves more for prize money and charitable donations. So our primary focus for development is in areas where the tournament

has outgrown its present facility and needs a new spot to reach its potential."

Much of the growth in the TPC network started during the mid-1980s was tied to the need for sites to hold PGA Senior Tour events.

The PGA Tour has traditionally opened two to three new TPC facilities annually, Tomlinson said. The Tour hopes to increase that to four to five a year, doubling the number of facilities within the next five to seven years.

The PGA Tour wants to be at least a part owner and operator of all the new TPC operations it opens, Tomlinson said.

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Like father, like son

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spec sandbox."

Bruce Matthews likens the heir apperency of course architecture to that of old-fashioned apprenticeship.

"It's like a watchmaker, tinker and silversmith," said Matthews. "Look at what the Jones boys are doing: just what dad did. I'm doing just what granddad [W. Bruce Matthews] and Uncle Jerry [Matthews] did. The same with Dan Maples [son of Ellis]. All of us, doing what dad did, with our own twists."

Many sons of architects have gone into other fields altogether, only to return to their "roots" — outdoor work with their fathers. And others know from an early age they want to work in golf — in some way, or in whatever way they can — and never stray.

"Before joining me, Tim got a degree in engineering and construction management and was building high-rise office buildings," said Dick Nugent, whose firm is based in Long Grove, Ill. "I told him, 'You know all the skill of the construction industry, but you need to know about the money.' He went back to school and got an MBA, then came here; he has added a lot to our business."

Bruce Matthews and Grant Puddicombe were superintendents before jumping aboard their family design firms.

"I thought I'd always work on a golf course — in what role I wasn't sure," said Grant Puddicombe, who worked as a superintendent for two years before he and Mark confronted dad Sid, also a superintendent, at Christmas time 1980. They immediately set about opening their firm, headquartered in Nisku, Alberta, Canada.

"I've been around it [golf course design] my whole life," said Carter Morrish, "golfing out to Shoal Creek [in Birmingham, Ala.], traveling with Dad in the summers. It's always been in my head. It's just a natural thing."

A natural thing — in the genes, perhaps?

"I think it's a combination of genetics and/or background," said Jay Morrish.

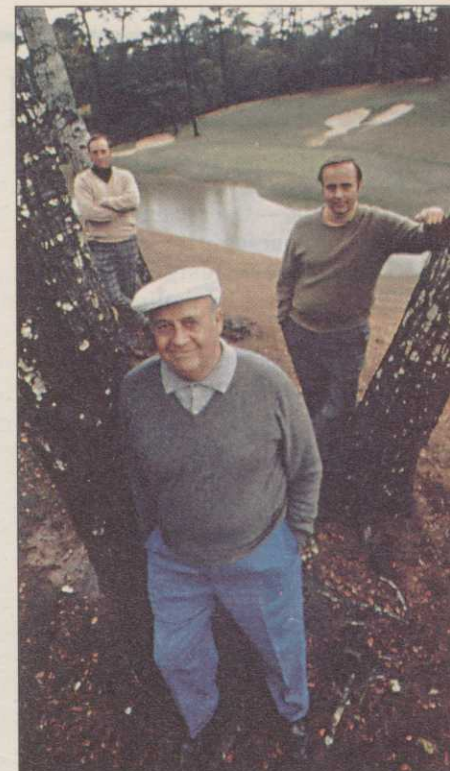
Sid Puddicombe agreed about the influence of experience. "I think it's just what children are exposed to," he said. "Growing up on a golf course and being involved in it, you get attached to it. They've tried other work and the love of golf has brought them back."

"He knows the business inside out, by osmosis, growing up in it," Dick Nugent said of Tim. "He knows all the fundamentals of drafting and drawing and presentations — how to shake the ideas off your fingertips onto the paper."

"In my teen years I was drawing golf courses," said Bruce Matthews. "I think it comes inherent in a love of the land. We were an outdoor family. While hunting and fishing, you look at land forms and how and why they happen."

In the various father-son businesses, there is give-and-take — both ways.

"There are a lot of things we've kept in perspective that our father taught us," said Grant Puddicombe. "Do it right. Do it once. For us the biggest way to keep quality control is not to do



The Jones Boys — sons Rees (back left) and Bobby flanking dad Trent at Spyglass Hill Golf Course in the 1960s — are perhaps the best-known examples of design legacies. While the Jones Clan has been honored as the NGF's 1997 Family of the Year, course architecture is filled with father-son teams.

too much work, to limit what we can control and handle."

"I've got my own style," Bruce Matthews said, "but if you superimpose one of my greens over one of granddad's, an architect could say, 'I know where that came from.'"

The children have added various dimensions to their fathers' businesses and design projects as well.

"When we added Tim, we expanded our abilities greatly, in everyday business, helping clients with their pro formas," said Dick Nugent. "When you do a golf course, you do a business plan, a *pro forma*, to come up with how you're going to pay for it. It helps if you're on the same page as your client... Tim also has a lot of ability in the design area. He has a good eye for things."

"I added maintenance and operations [know-how]," said Bruce Matthews, who has now opened his own company, Design 3, based in East Lansing, where Uncle Jerry also has a practice. "I had a turfgrass degree. Jerry has a landscape architecture degree and a master's in urban planning."

Carter "has taken a lot of pressure off me in taking field trips," said Jay Morrish. "We alternate trips and every third time we go together."

Yes, but who is the boss?

"I have the final say. I'm the boss," Dad Morrish said.

But Carter put his own spin on the situation: "He's the boss, but we're more partners than me working for him."

"I try to be," Sid Puddicombe said. "In most instances we sit down and go over the project. We have a great relationship and we use [third son and superintendent] Todd as a consultant. Until we're all totally satisfied we don't go ahead with anything."

Nugent put the question in perspective: "You don't teach your son anything," he laughed. "All you can do is listen. They just become more courteous about listening to you."