

IN BRIEF

ATLANTA, Ga. — Boys & Girls Clubs of America (B&GCA) honored course architect Tom Fazio and two other supporters Dec. 17 with the Champion of Youth Award for outstanding service, support and accomplishments on behalf of the national youth organization. A B&GCA national trustee since 1991, Fazio was instrumental in starting a club in his hometown of Hendersonville, N.C., providing financing for both the club's construction and first year of operations. He is the club's board president and works several days a week with the young people at the facility.

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MYRTLE BEACH, S.C. — Architect Tom Fazio and PGA Tour player Lanny Wadkins will team up to design and build Myrtle Beach's 100th golf course, the Tournament Players Club at Myrtle Beach. The course, to be located on Highway 707 one mile west of Highway 17 South, will replace The Dunes Golf and Beach Club as the future site of the Senior PGA Tour Championship. Wadkins will act as player consultant on the course. Construction is set to begin this spring.

Fla. courses gouged by stormwater assessments?

By PETER BLAIS

SARASOTA, Fla. — Twenty-three Sarasota County courses have filed a lawsuit to block a tenfold increase in their stormwater assessments.

"The new assessments treat golf courses as if they are homes," said Linda Talbot, vice president and managing director of Foxfire Golf Club. "There's no scientific basis for it. But the county com-

missioners look at golf courses as a deep-pocketed source of revenue. Our rates have jumped 850 percent since 1993."

Foxfire's assessment went from \$5,400 three years ago to \$46,605 in 1996, Talbot explained. Sarasota Golf Club's assessment escalated from \$5,400 to \$38,000, while Meadows Golf Course leapt from \$5,400 to \$72,000. Foxfire and Sarasota GC are 18-hole layouts while Meadows is

a 27-hole track.

The new assessments resulted, Talbot said, from a 1989 federal mandate requiring counties to clean up their water and air. Sarasota County spent millions of dollars updating its stormwater systems and has increased assessments to pay off the bonds that financed the upgrade, she said.

The problem is that the increases were passed by county ordinance rather than by voter approval. An Orlando engineering firm developed the rate structure for the county. The county enacted the new structure after conducting hearings in which certain groups, particularly agricultural organizations, lobbied for and received lower rates.

The per-acre rate for groves and orchards, Talbot said, is approximately one-eighth that of golf courses. Tilled agricultural land is assessed at approximately one-fifth the rate of golf courses, she added. Courses were assessed at the same rate as single-family homes, where it is estimated that 14.8 percent of all rainfall runs off and is handled by public sewer systems.

"We know that runoff from golf courses is much less than from homes and much closer to agriculture," Talbot said. "The agricultural industry is well organized in Florida and had representatives sit in on all the county board meetings when they

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KUDOS FOR KERN'S EAGLE KNOLL

Gary Kern-designed Eagle Knoll Golf Club in Jefferson City, Mo., topped off its first year of operations with a kudo from Golf Digest, which named the course one of its "best new affordable courses for 1996." Tim Cox built the course and superintendent Rodney Distler maintains it.

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Pebble Beach to redesign its 5th

MONTEREY, Calif. — The Pebble Beach Golf Links will undergo a major change this year when a new 5th hole is built. The existing 5th hole plays uphill through a chute of trees away from the water. The new 160-yard hole will be perched on a cliff above Stillwater Cove, adding another dramatic hole to an already dazzling layout.

The original 5th hole was the only one in a stretch from the 4th to the 10th that didn't bring the cove or Carmel Bay into play. That's because, when Samuel Morse built the course, a private landowner demanded \$20,000 for the parcel of waterfront property. Morse decided against buying the land and routed the course inward at the 5th. The Pebble Beach Co. recently purchased the chunk of land for \$8.9 million, clearing the way for the new routing.

Construction will start after the 1997 AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am in early to mid-February. The new 5th hole is expected to be ready in time for the 1998 AT&T.

Texas expansion delayed one year

BASTROP, Texas — A nine-hole expansion of the golf course here at Bastrop State Park, initially set to open last fall, won't be completed for at least another year.

Heavy clearing and earthmoving work is done, according to Dwight Williford, a project manager with the state's parks and wildlife department. Williford attributed the delay to two factors: a \$500,000 federal grant arrived late and periodic shortages of workers, some of whom are volunteers and prison workers.

The \$1 million project includes a new clubhouse and cart paths. Bastrop State Park's original nine-hole course was built in 1938. The expansion fulfills a promise made in 1966 to the city of Bastrop, which donated 1,145 acres to expand the popular park. The nine new holes were designed by Craig Metz.

Stormwater costs

Continued from page 3
were setting the rates.

"But golf course owners never seem to be able to band together on any issue. It was the same here. I saw this coming two years ago and we filed the lawsuit to protect our right to object to our assessment. If we didn't file it within a certain time period, we would have been stuck with these rates with no right to appeal."

Talbot is one of seven members of a golf course steering committee that was scheduled to meet with county officials in mid-December. Talbot warned that golf course owners elsewhere should be aware of the situation. "Sarasota County is planning to sell its assessment plan to other counties," she said.

Joneses named 1996 Nicklaus Golf Family of the Year

JUPITER, Fla. — The Robert Trent Jones family, a driving force in golf course architecture for nearly 80 years, will receive the NGF Jack Nicklaus Golf Family of the Year Award for 1996.

The family award is an outgrowth of an NGF golf promotion campaign that was created in 1986, with the help of Jack Nicklaus, to increase public awareness of golf as a game that can be enjoyed by the entire family. The award last month was presented during the nationally televised Office Depot Father/Son Challenge.

Between them, Trent Jones and sons Bobby and Rees — both of whom have earned their own reputations as first-class course architects — have participated in the design and redesign of more than 700 golf courses, all around the world.

As one observer put it: "The three Jones design firms have altered the landscape of every continent but Antarctica; they have shaped dunes on the shores of every ocean and most minor seas; and they have introduced golf to several archipelagoes."

In addition their design work, Trent

and his sons have been instrumental in helping set the standards for their profession and, in so doing, advancing the role architects play in golf course development and operations today. Most of this has been accomplished through the American Society of Golf Course Architects which Trent helped found in 1946. Trent later served as its president, as have both Bobby and Rees.

They've also been at the forefront of the industry's ongoing efforts to ensure that courses continue to emerge and operate in harmony with their natural environments.

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