

GOLF COURSE NEWS

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INSIDE

Golf and the Environment

New Audubon International column debuts: Biological diversity comes into focus 13

Spotlight on Asia

Anti-golf activists are taking bold strides to halt development in the Asian market. 9



Photo by Kevin Frisch

WEISKOPF SURVEYS HIS FIRST TRACK IN MICH.

"You are only limited by your imagination," said PGA Tour great and golf course architect Tom Weiskopf, center, shown looking over the site for his design at Shanty Creek Resort in Bellaire, Mich. Weiskopf is flanked by his shaper Bob McClure, left, and Don Richards of golf course builder H&D, Inc. It is Weiskopf's first design in the Wolverine State. See story, page 26.

COURSE MAINTENANCE

Study finds little impact from dicamba, 2-4-D 13
Joe Ondo, a working superintendent 17
Focus on non-traditional employee relations 21

COURSE DEVELOPMENT

Old Head sparkles on Emerald Isle 23
Skill Golf Links — a brand new approach 29
Sanford busy around the globe 30

COURSE MANAGEMENT

Graham Cooke on the ball in Maritimes 35
NGP snags 50% of Pumpkin Ridge 36
Granite agrees with two more courses 37

SUPPLIER BUSINESS

DowElanco to change name 39
RohMid's Mach 2 granted state registrations 39
Ransomes lands exclusive deal in China 40

Stormwater runoff battle rages on in Fla.

By J. BARRY MOTHE

SARASOTA, Fla. — A group of 27 Sarasota golf courses continues to battle the Sarasota County government over stormwater runoff assessment bills that have cost some courses as much as \$46,000 per year and in some cases seriously threatened their survival.

The courses, organized as the Suncoast Golf Course Association, say the rates are far too high and unfair when compared to lower rates assessed to other agricultural-related operations in the counties like farms, nurseries and pastures. The group has filed two lawsuits over the stormwater assessment issue which are still pending. One challenges the level of the assessment rate. The other seeks a re-

bate for what the golf courses contend is excess money they have paid in assessment rates for the past two years.

Stormwater runoff assessments became a hot issue for the Sarasota-area courses starting in 1995 when turf areas became subject to assessments. Prior to that, the courses paid assessments that related only to parking lots and other non-turf areas. The new rates, approved by the county's Board of

Continued on page 44

TPC ON THE RISE



Photo by Stan Badz

The Tournament Players Club (TPC) at Scottsdale (Ariz.) above is among the growing stable of Tournament Players Club courses operated by the PGA Tour. See story on new TPC, pg.23

Toro looks toward '99

By M. LEVANS

BLOOMINGTON, Minn. — The Toro Co. and Pinehurst Resort and Country Club, in cooperation with Pinehurst Championship Management, have inked a multi-year agreement that makes Toro the preferred golf course maintenance equipment and irrigation supplier for the Resorts for Pinehurst in North Carolina.

Under the new agreement, Toro will provide

Continued on page 40

Cart-path rule gets its day in court

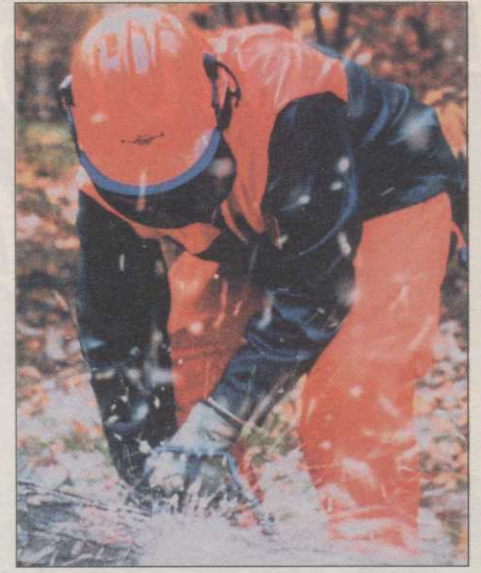
By BOB SPIWAK

An incident at Lassing Pointe Golf Course in northern Kentucky may have far reaching implications for the future of "The Cart-Path Rule" around the country. Involving a handicapped golfer, the situation was resolved in October after a year and a half of controversy.

Don Duckworth of Covington, Ky., had a heart attack in 1993. He was not expected to live. Two years later, he had open-heart surgery twice and survived. His doctor told him

Continued on page 38

SAFETY BY DESIGN



Safety programs too often overlooked in planning

By MARK LESLIE

NEW YORK — A backhoe cracks into a natural gas line and — boom — the town of North Blenheim virtually blows up. A piece of heavy equipment cuts an underground electrical main, shutting down New Jersey's Newark Airport for a day. In cases around the country, laborers are struck by heavy equipment, caught in trench cave-ins, bedridden by lyme disease contracted from a deer tick on a forested job site.

The "heavy-highway" industry, where these

Continued on page 32



Greg Jones, founder of the ADMG, takes one out of the sand.

FROM THE COVER

Cart-path rule

Continued from page 1

to minimize exertion and not to walk up and down hills.

Lassing Pointe is one of two courses operated by Boone County. It was completed in 1993, says Duckworth, and opened for play in 1994. Because the turf was still relatively new, the course's cart-path rule was strictly enforced. When Duckworth returned to play in early 1996

he asked for an exemption from the rule. A once-a-week player with a 16 handicap, he explained that his disability would not allow him to leave the cart and walk up to 60 yards on sometimes hilly terrain. The course refused his request because of what it considered tender turf and suggested he play at the other municipal course 11 miles away.

Duckworth went before the Boone County authorities, who likewise refused his request. Golfer and golf course dug in their heels.

Duckworth contacted Greg Jones,

founder and president of The Association of Disabled American Golfers. A polio victim at age three, Jones became an avid golfer despite being limited to crutches and in 1992 formed the organization. Today it has more than 700 members, including most major golf industry organizations.

"I told him," said Jones, "Don't just sit there. Seek advice and you don't need to pay an attorney." Jones told him he had protection under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA.) He suggested Duckworth file a grievance with the De-

partment of Justice.

After his request was refused in an exchange of letters to county authorities. Duckworth went before them personally and got no satisfaction, so he filed a complaint with the U.S. Department of Justice in April 1996. Justice referred the matter to the Department of the Interior, which is the designated investigating agency under Title 2 of (ADA.)

The matter was handled by Jack Andre, equal opportunity specialist for the National Park Service.

"The act requires that all state and local programs be available to people with disabilities," reported Andre, "unless providing access would cause an undue burden, like financial, or alter the nature of the program, in this case the game of golf."

Andre communicated with the county, which held that based upon advice from the USGA and the course architect, the tender turf (three years after completion) could be damaged by carts deviating from the path. Andre went to the course for an on-site inspection. As Duckworth only golfed once a week, Andre argued, how much damage could his cart do, especially in light of daily tractor, mower and utility cart traffic. The county responded that its other course would allow Duckworth to deviate from the path.

"We found," said Andre, "that each course is unique. That's why people play golf. Along with this, Mr. Duckworth was playing in a league at Lassing Pointe." He ruled that the course would "...have to allow this reasonable modification [driving off the path] to allow the man to play golf."

According to Andre, the county wrote to him advising that it would comply on April 1, 1999. "It [the date] was just too

Continued on page 46



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Capitol Golf

Continued from page 35

bring a unique combination." Allen said, "of golf experience and experience in other businesses — hospitality, service, real estate, management and acquisitions.

"The golf industry is changing dramatically. If you have only golf experience and don't know how the golf industry mixes into general business management, you could lose out.

"The Mom-and-Pop operations are starting to reach the point where they are consolidating, just like the local department stores started to become parts of large chains. We don't want to take away the atmosphere of the small operation. We just want to add the resources that are available through consolidation."

Pro shop and clubhouse changes were set to begin in early September, Allen said.

"When we're done it will be considered one of the best values in the Southeast," Allen added. "There will be some wonderful opportunities at Jones Creek."

Capitol Golf purchased the course Aug. 1 for \$5.15 million, the Capitol executive said. Work should be done by January or February. Reconditioning costs have run about \$100,000, he added.

Cart-path rule

Continued from page 38
far away," said Andre, who advised the county that his agency was "taking steps" to refer the matter back to the Department of Justice for action.

Jim Collins, Boone County administrator, said: "They [National Park Service] did not want to hear any of our arguments. No appeals were allowed. The course is at the end of its fourth year and we have reports from the dean of the University [Kentucky] ag school and from the University of Georgia that cart traffic could damage the course. We were looking at

five to seven years [to allow the turf to mature].

"We have two courses in the county," he continued, "The older course allows golfers to go off the cart paths. Both the ADA Resource Center and the Department of Justice said that this accommodation was under the letter and spirit of the law."

In a mid-October conversation with Boone County attorney Larry Crigler, he advised that, "The matter is probably going to be settled. The course will close for the year in two weeks and the course will be made accessible to Mr. Duckworth when it re-

opens in April 1998." He went on to explain that the date of compliance, 1999, originally stated by the county, was a "typographical error."

Duckworth feels his cause has finally been vindicated. "I went to the papers with all the correspondence," he said, "and I think that, and the fact that it is an election year coming up, along with the threat of action by the Justice Department is what got the county to agree." He is skeptical about the typographical error.

Jones is happy with the outcome as well. "We are not in business to promote the handicapped," he noted. "We promote the game, and are advocates for full inclusion of everyone who wants to play golf."

SPOTLIGHT ON ASIA

Activists

Continued from page 9
reclamation of land has uprooted farming families and caused them to leave their lands in search of new economic viability. In addition, they argue that in the long term, golf course developments result in negative job growth.



They insist that the tourism industry is an unsustainable form of economic development, since the cyclical nature of the industry results in an unstable local employment market. The list of objections could continue for pages—from labeling tourism promoters neocolonialists to alleging that female caddies suffer degradation and abuse on the golf course.

As you might have guessed, GAG'M and GNAGA are declaring victory in the recent lapse of the golf course industry in much of Asia, including Japan and Thailand. However, the activists admit that the recent economic downturn in Asia has had more

However, the activists admit that the recent economic downturn in Asia has had more to do with the lack of development than with their ability to convince the public that golf course development is not viable.

to do with the lack of development than with their ability to convince the public that golf course development is not viable.

While this may mean bad news for perspective developers and the existing golf courses, it also means that the anti-golf activists have for the most part ceased operations since they sense no impending crisis. It is their belief that Asian economies have no more room left for golf development.

Certainly, the issues surrounding golf course development in Asia are already extremely complex, and GAG'M and GNAGA seek to add to this complexity.

While there may be certain elements of truth in their arguments, their rigid ideology does not allow for compromise—so their arguments get lost amongst their rhetoric of hysteria and misinformation. Following these discussions, I began to have nightmares that the courses I was planning to visit were being taken over by pitchfork wielding farmers seeking to reverse economic injustice.

Fortunately, after a mind-cleansing visit to a local Bangkok driving range, I was once again able to dream of lush Asian courses in natural surroundings.

Canadian participation

Continued from page 8

1990] their participation rate has remained flat at 15% and is heavily skewed toward higher income families.

The survey reveals, however, that Western Canada, which has long established junior programs, enjoys extremely strong participation among 12 - 17 year olds, with the Prairie provinces showing a 28% participation rate and British Columbia 21%.

"The game and the overall [Canadian] industry has enjoyed a solid participation rate over the past seven years," says MacDonald. "Our challenge now is to increase the [current] 19% rate to 20% or 25% by creating national junior golf development programs that are accessible and affordable like the RCGA's Future Links. Without programs to introduce and keep people in the game, the industry will have trouble maintaining or increasing what it has right now."

Among other findings in the 1996 *Golf Participation in Canada Survey* report:

- Annual rounds played in Canada increased between 1990 and 1996 about 26% from 53 million to 67.3 million. *In the U.S. over the same period, they've remained level at about 480 million a year.*
- Canadian golfers average 14 rounds per year ... *as compared to 19.3 for U.S. golfers.*
- 347,000 Canadians started playing golf in 1996 ... *vs. 2 million in the U.S.*

The RCGA, the governing body of men's amateur golf in Canada, determines national policies and standards relating to the game on behalf of its more than 235,000 members.

Copies of the report can be purchased through the RCGA's membership development department at 905-849-9700.

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