

GOLF COURSE NEWS

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INSIDE

On Top of Two Worlds

Sugarloaf's Ed Michaud maintains Maine's top golf layout and nation's best snowboarding park 16

Less Fire, More Science

Oregon grass seed growers relying more on chemicals and less on burning 53



IN DEMAND ON THE GRAND STRAND
Golf course architect Mike Strantz has followed one Best New Upscale Course selection in 1996 — Stonehouse — with a second Best New pick, Royal New Kent, in 1997. Now he is in such high demand that he is turning down developers each week. See Q&A, page 35.

COURSE MAINTENANCE

- Cal State Poly eyes living lab 15
- Vet sheds light on pesticides, animals 18
- Controlling moss: Turf's nemesis 22
- Safety: Save employees and money 28-29

COURSE DEVELOPMENT

- Els, Kemper join forces in Md. 6
- Squire, Slammer, Weed collaboration complete 35
- Atlantic Canada enjoying golf rebirth 41

COURSE MANAGEMENT

- Garl to head Fla. golf industry alliance 3
- Workplace harassment an industry problem 47
- Former Jones Trail exec opens new firm 48

SUPPLIER BUSINESS

- Mowers among new products 54
- Toro, Grizzle suit settled 54

El Niño'd: West Coast gets hammered, with rains, floods

By DAVID WILBER
The winter's intense El Niño-driven storms have hammered California golf courses, highlighted in early February when a series of weather-related records were broken. Several areas of the state recorded the lowest barometer readings ever in February.



Access to the 15th tee at Pebble Beach Golf Links is destroyed as a result of the El Niño-driven storms in early February.

California courses found that no amount of installed drainage could handle the rains since they began on already wet ground. El Niño was not choosy about the golf courses it attacked as rivers, streams, drainage and retaining walls

recorded in Stillwater Cove," said Mark Michaud, superintendent at Pebble Beach Golf Links. "If we hadn't put in the new seawall on the 18th hole, I'm sure we would have had some ma-

SEE EL NIÑO
COVERAGE, PP.30-33

statewide reached their limits.
The Monterey Peninsula received no mercy.
"We had the highest tide and the biggest swell ever

Continued on page 31

A First Tee 'first' looms

By MARK LESLIE
RICHMOND, Va. — Neighboring Chesterfield County is "fast-tracking" the Richmond First Tee Foundation (RFTF) proposal through an approval process that could lead to earthmoving in May and put it on target to be the nation's initial project built from the ground up as a First Tee facility.

"We are thrilled with the county's support," said Fred Tattersall, a financial adviser and the moving force behind RFTF. "They have put us on a fast-track program they reserve mostly for large businesses moving to the area."
If all goes smoothly, an April 6 informational meeting with the general public and representatives from the County Board of Supervisors and Planning Commission will be fol-



Employees come first at Gotham

California Golf Club was one of the early purchases that propelled Gotham Golf Partners into the world of course operations.

By PETER BLAIS
Building a course operations firm that is both financially successful and provides a first-rate quality of life for its owners and managers are the dual goals of Gotham Golf Partners, according to company President R. Danny Mays.
"Family and quality of life are very important to all my managers," said Mays, who along with many of GGP's upper-level executives are former employees of KSL Fairways, a Vir-

ginia-based multi-course operator.
"In the golf business, it's always been a given that you work seven days a week. But to properly manage entities you have to put people in place who can perform and do their jobs. We have sophisticated management so that there is time for other things in our lives.
"We push our managers to make sure they get their days off. If a manager can't take his days off then he

Continued on page 49

Mower manufacturers see 'ease' to please

By JOHN FARRELL
Hoping to make life a little easier for golf course operators, major mower manufacturers are addressing real-life concerns — everything from ease of operation and maintenance to noise pollution — as they bring the next wave of products to market.

uct roll-out in the company's history, Jacobsen is introducing its new HR-9016 Turbo (TM) Wide-Area Rotary Mower.
First unveiled at the GCSAA show in Anaheim, the HR-9016 is a 16-foot-wide rotary mower with a 90-hp turbo-charged diesel engine and 4-wheel drive.
"One of our goals in designing the HR-

Continued on page 56

First Tee's 'first' goes to Va. county

Continued from page 1

followed on April 21 by a Planning Commission vote on land use and permitting and on April 22 by a Board of Supervisors session to approve a lease that has been drawn up between the county and RFTF.

RFTF's move to work with Chesterfield County followed

closely on the heels of a proposal to the city of Richmond. But Richmond officials wanted to delay any decision beyond the timeline desired by RFTF. Tattersall and his board were adamant that the Richmond First Tee be the first in the country to be built. Other existing golf facilities have added First Tee pro-

grams, but Richmond's would be the first from the ground up.

"It's a terrific project and quite inspirational," said Tod Leiweke, who took over in late February as administrator of the national First Tee program. "What we saw there was a very committed group of people who had come together and donated time and

money. But, more than anything, they had a passion to see something happen — to make a difference in the lives of kids through this great game of golf.

"Chesterfield County stepped up and provided an excellent piece of land and are in a real fast-track to get this thing done."

The First Tee, Leiweke said, "is not a lay-down concept. It takes some imagination and a leap of faith... There is some-

thing unique about being the first one. We're creating a project that will be the model for many of the agreements we get into."

The First Tee's vision, he said, "isn't 10 facilities. Our vision is hundreds across America."

Hundreds of inquiries have already been fielded by Leiweke's office at PGA Tour headquarters in Ponte Vedra Beach, Fla. They have ranged from people saying they would love to see a First Tee facility in their community to people, like Tattersall, saying they will do whatever it takes to make it happen, Leiweke said.

For his part, Tattersall is excited about the Chesterfield County property. It is a 125-acre parcel of land in Iron Bridge Park within 10 miles of 11 elementary schools, four middle schools and three high schools.

"Draw a five-mile circle around it," said Chesterfield County Director of Public Affairs Don Kappell, "and the demographics are such that it would very well serve the stated needs of The First Tee organization: underprivileged youths, seniors and women. You have Petersburg, Richmond and other areas that have a lot of immigrants and others who meet that criteria."

"All the discussion has been very, very positive," Kappell said. "It's a tremendous site. The relationship has been very good among all the different parties. The caveat is that we're still discussing it and nothing has been signed — yet."

While Tattersall said RFTF still hopes to do a First Tee facility in Richmond, he said the county property is twice the size of the city's. That will allow an 18-hole course instead of nine holes.

"It will have a full driving range that will probably be lighted," he said. "And we are planning a three-hole peewee course for 60- to 100-yard shots, for the kids to practice on after graduating from the range, but before they're ready for the full course."

Golf course architect Lester George, who is donating his services to design the course, said, "This is a beautiful property — rolling with creeks meandering through it." He even plans a waterfall between the 9th and 18th greens.

"It is really important not only for the First Tee to be developed here but that it is the first," said PGA Tour golfer Robert Wrenn, a Richmond native who is donating his services. "Being first creates phenomenal exposure for this area and the greatest opportunity for greater expansion of the program locally... More importantly, it would quickly create the opportunity for underprivileged inner-city kids to enjoy

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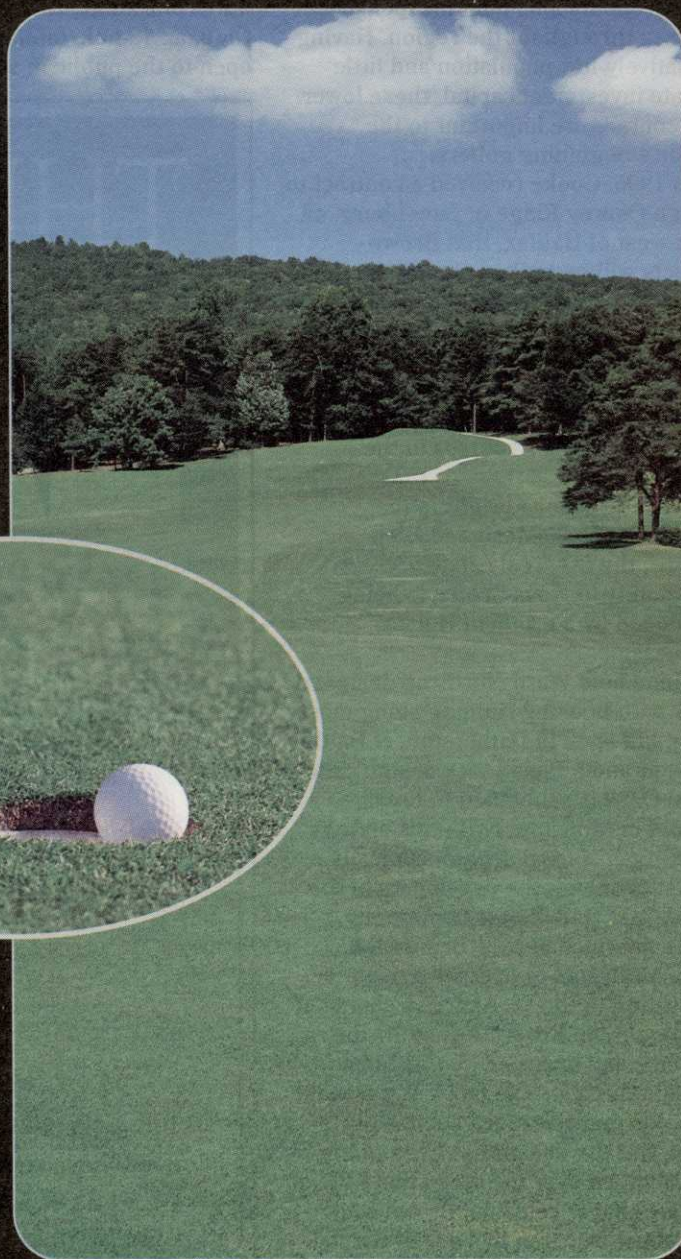
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WALNUT CREEK, Calif. — The Northern California office of Graves and Pascuzzo Golf Course Design and Development have announced two new Southern California projects.

With its Glen Annie project for Environmental Golf nearly complete in Santa Barbara County, the design firm is expanding its Southern California portfolio with the addition

First Tee project

Continued from previous page

a game that we all love. And, it will create this benefit without cost to [taxpayers].”

Indeed, Tattersall's group has raised all the money necessary to build the facility and operate it for five years. By then, it should be self-sustaining, he said.

The list of those who are stepping forward to help is growing. Virginia Turf and Irrigation has offered to help install the irrigation system at its cost. Free legal services are being given by the local law firm Williams, Mullen Christian and Dobbins. Ernst & Young will do accounting work *pro bono*.

The local engineering firm Timmons & Associates has agreed to do the engineering work for one-third the normal cost. And, nationally, Arnold Palmer has given The First Tee 3,000 sets of clubs to be disbursed to various First Tee chapters.

“What we will have here,” said Tattersall, “is a \$4-million facility we hope will cost about \$2.2 million. That's \$1.25 million in land and \$2.8 million worth of construction. We may get as much as \$600,000 in free services.”

Leiweke promised: “We will provide the same amount of passion for the 100th project as for the first.”

“We have a number of other facilities not far behind Richmond,” he added. “Every day we're collaborating and giving life to First Tee projects. Our goal is to have 100 in development by the year 2000, and I think that's a very realistic target.”

The PGA of America, PGA Tour, LPGA, U.S. Golf Association and Augusta National Golf Club are all directly supporting this initiative.

While Wrenn is lending his time to what will be called the Richmond Metropolitan First Tee Chapter, Leiweke said: “There are lots of icons in the world of golf: all the tour players, local heroes, etc. In their respective communities The First Tee will be a big deal. The enthusiasm is out there because there is such an extraordinary need. Not just the need to play golf, but a need for the values inherent in the game of golf.”

Graves, Pascuzzo ink Southern Cal projects

of two 18-hole projects.

The first is The Knightsbridge Golf Club in Camarillo. A project of R.W. Hertel and Sons, Inc., it is a 243-acre golf community with single-family residential units and clustered golf villas.

The course will be an 18-hole, semi-upscale daily-fee course with practice range.

The golf architect will be Damian Pascuzzo.

Design development is underway, with construction documents immediately following. Ground-breaking is scheduled for November.

Meanwhile, Sunroad Enterprises has contracted with Graves and Pascuzzo to design

an 18-hole course on the “Old Coach Site” in Poway, in northern San Diego.

This is Sunroad's first venture into golf development following a history of commercial office building development.

The 7,100-yard, par-72 course has been named Sunroad Country Club. The

parcel has a history as a former stage coach stop. Rock outcrops will punctuate the design and a streambed will wind through the course and play into the strategy of the design.

The project will also feature an 18-hole putting course and a practice range.

Robert Muir Graves and senior golf course architect and Neal Meagher will collaborate on the design.

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