

The kids are alright

Come on, don't tell me you didn't get massive chills up your spine when you saw that kid Justin Rose chip in for birdie at 18 at the British Open. A fairy-tale week with a fairy-tale ending for the 17 year-old — and, I predict, the beginning of a youth golf-boom in the U.K.

There has never, ever been a better time to be in this business.

The great play and great smiles of these blushing "new pros" have energized the game on every level. Last year we had that shot of the legions of kids following Tiger down the fairway at Augusta. This year we had the shot of the kids running behind Rose's cart as it made its way to the first tee of his final round. At every turn the kid was bombed with applause, behind each gallery rope young faces beamed as he strolled by, every eye taking in his uncomfortable, teenage awkwardness.

Yet Rose never folded.

The golf industry is turning a corner and we're gonna have these kids — the ones on the fairways and the ones in the gallery — to thank.

Last year we were bewildered at how an industry that wasn't gaining any new customers could continue to add facilities at record numbers. When the new National Golf Foundation (NGF) numbers hit the streets we finally saw some positive movement — the industry let out a collective sigh. We can breathe a little easier when we think of the fate of those more than 900 courses that are going to open in the next two years.

Go on, that's OK. You can think I'm just adding fuel to yet another media bonfire. But I'm not going to let this issue go. These kids are inspiring kids. Golf has been waiting a decade for this spark and we're going to hammer away at it in news and editorials.

As a matter of fact, our newest section, Reaching Out, will be covering the breaking news of The First Tee, Hook-a-Kid On Golf and other nationwide and worldwide initiatives designed to aid the development of affordable, accessible public golf for kids and everyone who wants to participate.

I'm stepping on a plane for England in four days. I can't wait to see the media circus surrounding Rose, his turning pro and his debut at the Dutch Open.

The industry should be letting out a collective smile.

By the way, cut out the little box to the left and add it to your Rolodex. Any time you have news with an international slant, forward it to Trevor Ledger, *Golf Course News*' international bureau chief.



Michael Levans,
editor

How green are these greens?!

OK, class, here's the question: Does producing *Audubon Magazine* cause more impact on the environment than Augusta National Golf Club?

Now, don't all answer at once and don't leap to a conclusion. You could be wrong. Scrutinize the facts, get an indication, and then venture an answer.

Of course, you've done your reading and you all know that *Audubon Magazine's* July-August edition contained a feature story, "The Greening of America," about golf courses and the environment. And you know it states on the front page of the story: "More than 700 new golf courses will open this year, paving this country with manicured grasses. The question is: How green are these greens?"

(Aside No. 1: If you can get by the use of "paving" and the glaring mistake forecasting 700 courses, please tell me what they mean by "How green are these greens?")

(Aside No. 2: I must say that despite a number of factual errors, this article sheds a far fairer light on golf than one might expect from such a nemesis of past distortions.)

To the point of my original question, the article does pick on Augusta National Golf Club. A sidebar categorizes courses as The Good, The Bad and The Formerly Ugly. Collier's Reserve in Naples, Fla., Old Westbury (N.Y.) Golf and Country Club and Widow's Walk Golf Course (GC) in Scituate, Mass., are numbered as The Good because they are so friendly to the wildlife and environment.

Bay Harbor (Mich.) GC, Coyote Hills GC in Fullerton, Calif., and Old Works GC in Anaconda, Mont., are named the Formerly Ugly because they reclaimed ugly land.

The Bad? The author selected the spectacularly manicured and much-maligned Augusta National; Shadow Creek Golf Club in North Las Vegas, which uses 1 million gallons of water a day; and Golf Club of Miami, which suffered a major fish kill a few years ago when an unexpected heavy rainfall followed a Nemicur application.

So, I ask again: Does producing *Audubon Magazine* cause more impact on the environment than Augusta National Golf Club?

Before answering, let's consider the environmental impact of producing *Audubon Magazine*, which in March-April contains 122 pages produced on high-gloss paper and sent to 453,750 paid subscribers in North America.

• Paper source. Paper, of course, comes from trees. Gasoline and oil, among other things, were consumed to cut the trees and transport them to the paper mill. At the paper mill, various chemicals and water were used to transform the pulp into paper, and electrical power was used to operate the machinery. Was that power generated by a nuclear or coal-generated facility, or from the more environmentally friendly hydro plant?

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Mark Leslie,
managing editor

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GOLF COURSE NEWS

GUEST COMMENTARY: PUBLIC GOLF AROUND THE WORLD

Public golf in Germany: Time for the doors to open

By THOMAS ADKISSON

As more and more Germans are getting a taste for this great game of golf, either on holiday or through watching a certain Mr. Woods blast a 360-yard drive, their desire to play continues to grow.

To many "would be" golfer, the opportunity to experience golf here in Germany is limited due to an underdeveloped public golf infrastructure and the traditional club-membership mentality. A crucial link is missing for the continued growth of the industry.

Of the 580 or so golf facilities in Germany today, only 30 are public with a further 120 being partially open to all. Unlike the United States or the United Kingdom, where municipal courses are woven into common society, golf in Germany evolved as an exclusive sport and, for the most part, remains reserved for members of private clubs.

Holiday destinations such as Spain and Portugal have embraced open-access courses in promoting tourism and increased revenues whereas German tourist towns have been slow to appreciate the value of offering golf to their visitors.

Golf in Germany can not expand with the confines of the private golf club.

There is a distinct need for better access to golf facilities which are both convenient and financially viable for the prospective player. Furthermore the golf industry in Germany must be viewed from a business standpoint: creating investment opportunities at the same time as opening the sport to a wider public.

Today public golf is forcing fundamental changes to how golf in Germany is perceived. Many private golf clubs are now experiencing a slowdown in new members. As a result of the insufficient number of public facilities, potential new members do not have the opportunity to hone their skill and confirm their interest in golf before making the substantial financial commitment of joining a golf club.

Many new golf developments, along with redesigns at existing courses, are now incorporating public facilities and/or access to the driving range and practice greens. A good many of the public courses are integrated with an 18-hole private course. One good example of this arrangement is the Golf Course Schönbuch near Stuttgart, which recently expanded from 18 to 27 holes, 9 of which are public. This dual function generates increased income while providing the structure for seeding future club members.

Time required to play golf is another burden inherent in encouraging new golfers, especially in our "time is money" society. Execu-

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Thomas Adkisson has been involved in German golf architecture as a freelance landscape architect since 1995 developing public golf facilities. Before Germany, he worked in San Francisco for Guzzardo & Associates designing communities in co-operation with Robert Trent Jones II. Since moving to Germany, Adkisson has worked with Harradine Golf GmbH and Weishaupt Golf Design creating courses.