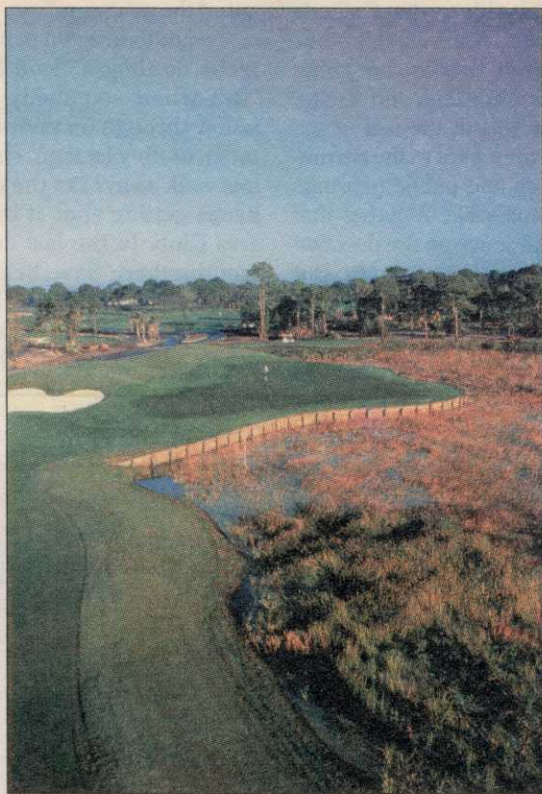


THE WORLD OF DEVELOPMENT IN '98

Much of the world has always revolved around children. Now the golf course industry has joined the rest of society — full-bore and with dedication. The overriding story of development in the past 12 months has been the full-tilt dive into building “beginners’ courses” to reach inner-city youths and others who have not had the opportunity to play the game. The new thrust is exemplified by The First Tee program, an effort spearheaded by literally the entire hierarchy of golf, from the PGA Tour and World Golf Village to the U.S. Golf Association, PGA of America and even Augusta National.

In the meantime, course construction in general continues at a 400-course-per-year pace. According to Judy Thompson at the National Golf Foundation, 396 courses had opened this year as of Nov. 4. This will be the fourth consecutive year that figure has topped 400. In October alone, construction began on 57 new courses and plans were announced for 48 others.

The boom continues all around.



The Indian River Club: an environmental winner.

Audubon cracks down on broken promises

By MARK LESLIE

SELKIRK, N.Y. — Probation. Excommunication. These terms that embody enmity are now part of the lexicon at Audubon International (AI), long a bastion of teamwork and cooperation.

While the majority of the 66 golf courses in the 4-year-old Audubon Signature Program are committed to it and swear by its effectiveness, others have fallen off the bandwagon, or perhaps were never aboard, according to AI President Ron Dodson.

Lamenting the fact that he had to, first, “place on probation,” then “excommunicate” one of the eight fully certified Audubon Signature facilities, Dodson said: “Our strongest program is only as strong as our weakest one, and we can’t allow people to make our name look weak. We already are being accused by

GCN MAY

other environmental groups of kowtowing to the golf course industry and giving away the Audubon name. But we don’t. People work for it and are proud of it.”

However, when The Champions Club at Summerfield in Stuart, Fla., did not correct some problems targeted in AI’s biannual audit, the club and the organization parted ways.

“We wrote and told them they are no longer to use Audubon International’s name or logo,” Dodson said. “They are to take their signs down and the Audubon print off the wall, and take all references to the Signature Program and Audubon International off their advertising materials and so on. More than that, we can not do.”

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Child’s Play in Kentucky

By MARK LESLIE

GCN JULY

LAWRENCEBURG, Ky. — A “kid’s course” built within the existing layout may prove a key option for golf facilities around the country, now that Bob-O-Link Golf Course has made the concept a reality.

On Father’s Day, Bob-O-Link opened its Kids Course within the 22-year-old track, thanks to owner Jack Ridge, who is also a golf course architect and president of a children’s golf-product company, Club Pro Products in Louisville.

“Golf has missed the boat,” Ridge declared. “Everybody’s mindset has been junior golf — teenagers — but no one has thought of kids up to 10 years old. That’s what separates this course.”

The idea for the Kids Course, he said, stemmed from parents who bought Club Pro clubs and bags, then asked

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Bob-O-Link Golf Course member Buddy Flora tends the 5-foot-tall flagstick for son Buddy Jr. as he puts into a Kids Course cup.

Notable Quotables

How much credit should land or design get in the top five courses in the world?



• ‘Very little is the design. Pebble Beach? Very little of the design. Pine Valley? Cypress Point? I have said a thousand times, Cypress

Point is the best piece of ground I’ve ever seen for a golf course. Take Cypress Point off that property and put it somewhere else, it’s just another golf course.’

— Jack Nicklaus, golf course designer and Tour pro

• ‘The bottom line is, this technology saves money, virtually eliminating change orders in renovations of existing courses.’

— Larry Rodgers of Larry Rodgers Design in Lakewood, Colo., concerning Global Positioning Satellites.

• ‘Donald Ross was no fool. He used all the good land back in 1917.’

— Brian Silva, golf course architect



• ‘I honestly don’t think anything unique has happened in course design in the last 20 years.’

— J. Michael Poellot, golf course architect



Certainly not your average backyard: the 2nd hole at Rich Harvest.

The back 40: Not your typical backyard

‘Seven or eight years ago, when the madness was at its height, many so-called courses were laid out over private grounds.’

— Van Tassel Sutphen in The Outing Magazine, 1906

By MARK LESLIE

The current rage of building putting greens, and entire golf holes, on a person’s property is not new, but rather a second coming of sorts. Two decades after Sutphen wrote those words in The Outing Magazine, Donald Ross laid out Overhills Golf

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Estate courses on the rebound

By MARK LESLIE

SUGAR GROVE, Ill. — Disappointed in Augusta National’s famous par-3 12th hole at Amen Corner, Jerry Rich came home to his 2,000-acre estate and

GCN MAY

built what he calls a better one. Disappointed in Augusta’s 200-yard-long Magnolia Lane, he built a Magnolia Lane of his own. It meanders across two miles.

This is Rich Harvest Links. This is Jerry Rich’s dream — a dream that grew from the idea of a modest couple of practice holes to a stunning facility that will open 18 championship-length holes this summer. Eighteen holes kept in tournament condition by a professional staff. Eighteen holes that, because of the positioning of multiple tees, can be played as five different nine-hole rotations. Eighteen holes that this 4-handicap golfer designed to display what he calls “purposefully eclectic to show the Scottish, Pine Valley and Traditional looks.”

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Estate courses

Continued from page 15

And it's 18 holes that will not only be open to Rich and his guests, but to youths involved in the local Hook a Kid on Golf program.

"It's more than I ever expected," said Rich, 59, a physicist and mathematician who made a fortune by developing the first integrated terminal for

Wall Street in the mid-1970s. "I originally thought it would be just a couple of holes where I could go out and enjoy myself. And we have created a real championship course here. It's one of the most exciting things I've ever done. I tackled it the same way I did my business."

"You feel like you're in Neverneverland," said golf course architect Greg Martin of Martin Design Partnership in St.

Charles, whom Rich hired to help with the intricacies of the design-and-construction process. "It's a wonderful sense of place. Deer prance across the fairways, etc."

"He [Rich] knows quality and wants it to be the Augusta National of the North. I don't think, at this point, that he has compromised that position at all."

Indeed, Rich decided to build some practice holes after a visit

to Augusta National 11 years ago. Since then he has returned to that famous Georgian property eight or nine times.

"Everyone talks about their [Augusta's] 12th being such a famous par-3," he said. "I thought I could do better than that. So I built my 12th hole, which I think turned out better than theirs." Rich's hole, the 4th on the white course, ranges from 166 to 185 yards. Its very small, narrow

green is fronted by a lake and an 8-foot wall made from "holy boulders," huge slabs of limestone transported from Wisconsin Dells.

Saying his one disappointment at Augusta National was the shortness of Magnolia Lane, Rich felt, "If you have a Magnolia Lane, make it worthwhile."

The result: Guests at Rich Harvest Links park on the main farm at the entrance to the property and are driven to the plantation where the golf course is situated — a two-mile trek through the course and woods and "the beauty of the whole estate," Rich said. "By the time they get to the other end, they're drooling and raring to play golf."

Active in the Illinois PGA Foundation and a member of several country clubs, Rich has been interested in golf course design for 30 years, studying Donald Ross, Pete Dye and Alister Mackenzie and being particularly enamored with Dick Wilson. Although he majored in math and physics in college, he minored in earth sciences and enjoys the outdoors, wildlife and photography.

It was a short leap from the thought of hiring a professional golf course architect, to actually designing his golf course himself (with an assist from Martin).

"I said to the last architect I interviewed, 'Why pay you a high fee and watch you have all the fun?' " Rich recalled.

Martin, who came aboard to help with the final seven holes and in April was designing a full-fledged practice center, agreed it was a joy.

"The facility was remarkable to begin with," he said. "The property is wonderful. Two branches of Welch's Creek run through it — one branch with a great golf name: Duffin's Drain. It contains hardwood forest, some low areas, some rolling terrain."

Rich did "a nice job integrating it all," Martin said. "And it's one of the best-kept courses in the Chicago area."

Its three styles run against Martin's design philosophy, but they accomplish Rich's goal.

"Most golfers," Rich said, "don't ever have the opportunity to play a Pine Valley, or an Augusta National, or even a traditional course like Medinah. Here they have the ability to get that feel on 45 great holes on one golf course."

Does Rich Harvest Links give Augusta a good run?

"Yes," Rich responded. "They have a different situation. Their history is magnificent and they have kept it going. I think I have taken the next step, created the same feeling, yet incorporated all the greatness that golf is all about: its origins, the Scottish atmosphere, the Pine Valley look, and the old traditional look."



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