

# GOLF COURSE NEWS

THE NEWSPAPER FOR THE GOLF COURSE INDUSTRY

A UNITED PUBLICATION  
VOLUME 10, NUMBER 1  
JANUARY 1998 • \$5.50

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A protégé of Wadsworth, Nicklaus and Nugent, Rick Jacobson is stamping his own trademark on the world of course design. See Q&A, page 47.

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CONFERENCE AND SHOW PREVIEW  
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## Accessible, sustainable golf gets its due



The newly renovated 6th hole at East Lake Golf Club will play host to one of Atlanta's most ambitious junior golf initiatives to date.

### • The First Tee takes giant step forward

By M. LEVANS

ST. AUGUSTINE, Fla. — The First Tee, launched in November in a national publicity wave headlined by George Bush and Earl Woods, has managed to pull together the golf industry's heaviest hitters in what is being called the most significant concerted initiative to create acces-

sible golf facilities for minority and junior golfers.

According to The World Golf Foundation, The First Tee's founding organization, the initial focus will be on developing financial support to acquire locations for the facilities. To supplement these acquisitions, The First Tee plans

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### • East Lake: Atlanta's inner-city gem

By PETER BLAIS

ATLANTA — It's too early to say exactly what the effects will be of the \$100 million East Lake Meadows project here. But the private/public partnership that resulted in the renovation of the historic East Lake Golf Club, construction of a new executive length golf course and

building of a 500-unit residential community looks like a boon for the Georgia capital's inner city.

The initial focus was the famous East Lake Golf Club, where golfing legend Bobby Jones learned to play the game. The club had deteriorated badly since the late 1960s when

Continued on page 60

## Reaction to ADA gauged

By BOB SPIWAK

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) appears to have consequences in the world of golf which go well beyond disabled golfers. Courses may be forced to change facilities as well as policies, such as the "Cart Path Rule."

To get a superintendent's take on ADA, *Golf Course News* spoke with Jerry Coldiron, superintendent of Lassing Pointe Golf Club in Boone County, Ky.

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#### TALKING STICK SPEAKS VOLUMES

Coore & Crenshaw's Talking Stick, two 18-hole courses built on Salt River-Pima-Maricopa Indian Community land, promises to bring a little Scotland to Scottsdale, Ariz. See story page 54.

#### MAINTENANCE

## Genetic engineering could drive seed costs up

By MARK LESLIE

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Remarkable advances in genetic engineering of turfgrass will bring new cultivars to the marketplace more quickly. But seed costs could go up markedly, particularly because different companies own patents on the various techniques and genes that drive the discoveries.

Future release of new turfgrass varieties will be punctuated by negotiations "to see who gets what out in the marketplace," said Dr. Virgil Meier, a plant breeder responsible for turfgrass development at O.M. Scott.

Meier explained that to  
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# ADA decision from the super's view

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Coldiron, 41, also oversees the county's other course, Boone Links, 11 miles away.

Lassing Pointe was recently involved in a situation involving a golfer, Don Duckworth, who requested, but was denied permission to deviate from the path in his golf car because of a heart

condition which precluded walking on hilly terrain. (GCN-Nov. 1997.) His complaint with the Justice Department, under ADA, led to the course allowing him off the path in 1998. Lassing Pointe, which opened in 1994, had refused because the turf was not yet seasoned.

Coldiron feels that when the

ADA was passed in 1991, golf cars were probably not a consideration. "The law," he says, "was never meant to allow a golfer to drive to his ball."

Obviously, the Justice Department, through the National Park Service of the Department of Interior, disagreed when it pressured Lassing Pointe on behalf

of the golfer last fall.

Interpretation of the law is the bugaboo which bothers Coldiron. "Just what is a disability?" he asks. "We asked three federal agencies and got three different answers. I have had two surgeries on my knees, and I know my doctor would [proclaim] I had a disability if I asked."

"My livelihood depends on

## RELATED STORY, PAGE 38

the condition of the course," he states emphatically. "With Mr. Duckworth going off the path, I am going to have to deal with more golfers off the paths next year. Will they all be disabled?"

Lassing Pointe's insistence on no deviation from the paths is based on the threat to its new turf. According to Coldiron, a study by Dr. Robert Carrow of the University of Georgia proves that golf cars indeed injure turf, especially in its early years. Asked if occasional deviation by a golf car was any more injurious than daily traffic of mowers and utility vehicles, Coldiron replied that the latter are operated by trained operators and that the vehicles have flotation tires. "Driving a golf car on wet turf can be disastrous," he said, "and he [Duckworth] would not be the only golfer who would deviate."

Greg Jones, president of the Association of Disabled American Golfers concurs. He says, "The big problem [of allowing deviation] is going to be that a lot of able-bodied golfers will take advantage of a handicapped person's special access."

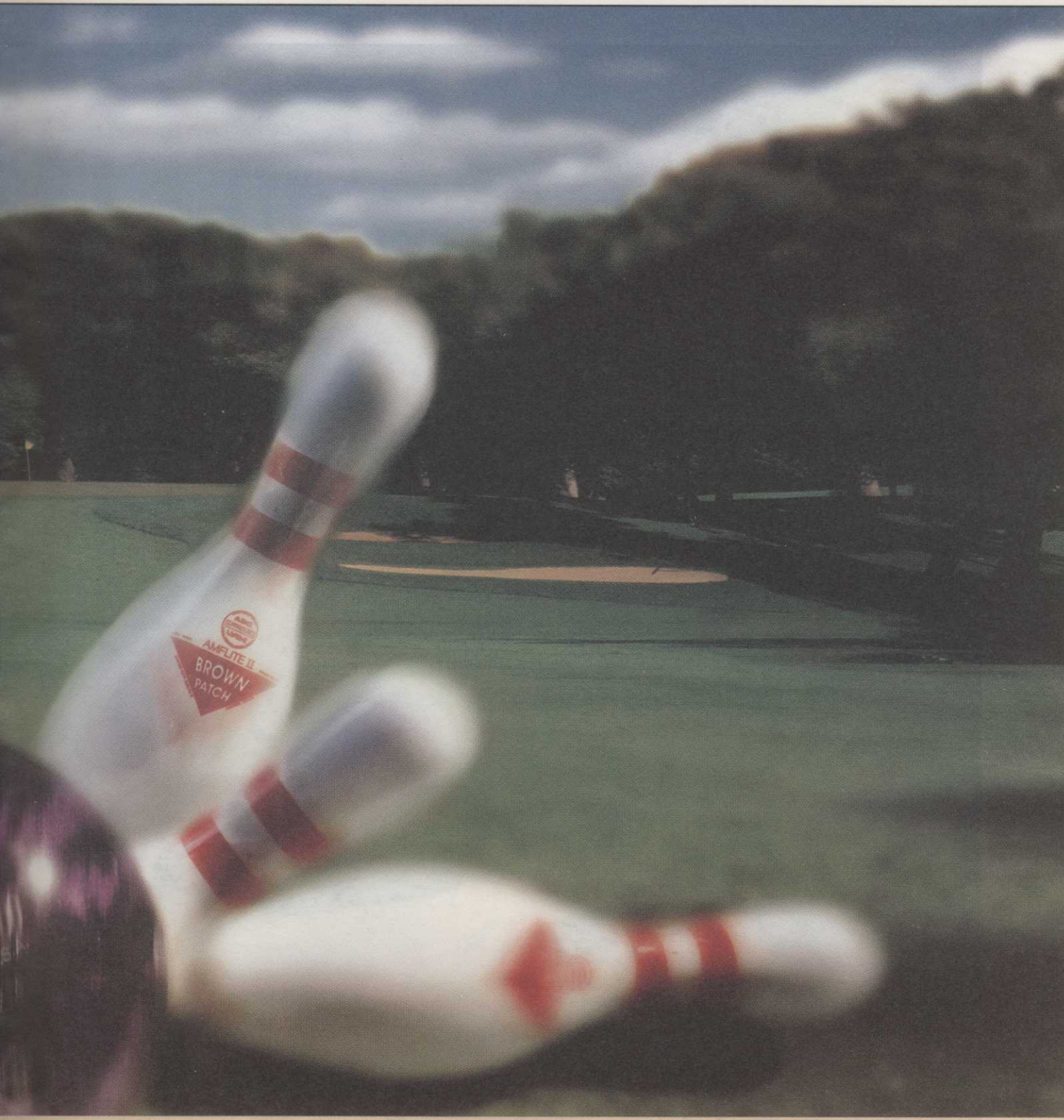
"We're all for the disabled being allowed to play," states Coldiron, "and looking at the big picture, this is not a Duckworth issue. One cart is not going to make that much difference, but the precedent it will set certainly does ... The ADA laws were not adopted by Congress as they pertain to golf. And this places an undue burden on me and others [superintendents] to provide a top-quality course." (Lassing Pointe was named the top public facility in Kentucky.)

The effects of weather and safety conditions for the disabled is another concern. What happens on a wet course where able-bodied golfers' stances cannot safely be duplicated by the handicapped? "What happens," asks Coldiron, "if the disabled make waves about this."

Coldiron noted another burden placed on golfing venues: The disabled have the might and power of the government behind them at no cost, and even if the complaint might be frivolous, the courses may have to hire legal counsel to prove their cases.

As the amount of litigation based upon golfers' disabilities is sure to increase, pressure on courses and superintendents will likewise grow. There appear to be no easy answers, and, as each disability is unique, rulings and accommodations will likely be arbitrated on a case-by-case basis.

For all concerned, it is not going to be a walk in the park.



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