

BRIEFS



GRAHAM, PANKS SPLIT

Player consultant David Graham and architect Gary Panks are terminating their 10-year association in golf course design. Graham is concentrating on a full PGA Senior Tour schedule, while Panks will continue to focus on course design and share more of the credit with his staff, including senior designers Gary Stephenson and Michael Rhoads. The firm will continue to operate its Phoenix and Dallas offices under the name of Gary Panks Associates.

DOAK HIRES PLACEK

TRAVERSE CITY, Mich. — Renaissance Golf Design has named Don Placek as a design associate. With a degree in environmental design from the University of Colorado at Boulder, Placek has joined the firm to assist primarily to develop concept drawings, construction documents and other graphic-related areas. He has been in the golf course design and construction field for nearly eight years, spending six years at Dye Designs in Denver. His responsibilities will include various levels of involvement with new construction, restoration and consulting.

PUTTING CHALLENGES GO FORWARD

ORLANDO, Fla. — Classic Golf Group, Inc. has been hired by Golf Challenge Corp. to design a "putting challenge course" along International Drive here. Len deBoer, president of Classic Golf, said the course will feature challenging Tifdwarf greens and will give golfers an opportunity to win prize packages, including a \$25,000 cash grand prize. Construction is underway. A spokesman for Golf Challenge Corp. said the Orlando Putting Challenge Course could be the first of many such projects to be located in high-traffic, resort destination areas.

OSU HONORS ALUMNUS HURDZAN

COLUMBUS, OHIO — Golf course architect Dr. Michael Hurdzan was recognized with the Distinguished Alumni



Mike Hurdzan

Award by the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences Alumni Society in November at Ohio State University. This award recognizes alumni who have

brought distinction to themselves, their college and OSU through participation, commitment, and leadership in their profession and community.

GOLF COURSE NEWS



Rolling Rock Club's new 15th hole, with the new nine-hole addition designed by Brian Silva.

One of nation's best 9, Rolling Rock Club, goes 18

LEGONIER, Pa. — After 76 years as perhaps the best nine-hole course in America, Rolling Rock Club has expanded to 18 holes.

The original Donald Ross-designed loop was joined last year by nine new holes from the hand of architect Brian Silva.

A partner with Uxbridge, Mass.-based Cornish, Silva and Mungeam, Silva worked to match the unique architectural style embodied in the original

nine. While Silva is an experienced interpreter of vintage design — he just finished the restoration of 185 bunkers at Ross' Seminole Golf Club in North Palm Beach, Fla. — the original holes at Rolling Rock Club (RRC) proved a tough act to follow.

"Donald Ross was no fool. He used all the good land back in 1917," Silva explained. "The site we worked with was very difficult; it was essentially the side of a mountain. It took us close to a dozen

route plans to make it work. While Ross was able to gently lay his golf holes onto design-friendly terrain, we were forced to stair-step the holes up and down the side of this mountain. In doing that, we knew right from the start there would be hard edges to the new holes, unlike the comfortable edges of the original nine.

"Our greatest efforts in matching design styles can be found in the green and bunker designs. We consciously set out

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Augustine Golf Club's 1st hole, a 417-yard par-4. The high-end daily-fee facility designed by Rick Jacobson in Stafford, Va., opened in 1996, to rave reviews, earning 5th place in Golf Digest's Best New Upscale Public Golf Course rating.

Jacobson, a Chicago guy, goes global

An internship with the Madison (Wis.) Park Planning Department, under Art Johnson, who dabbled in golf course design, plus a chance reception at the golf course architectural offices of Ken Killian and Dick Nugent, led to Rick Jacobson entering the field of course design. Now, after years of working with Wadsworth Golf Construction Co. and then alongside Jack Nicklaus, Jacobson is making inroads of his own in the golf world. In 1991 the University of Wisconsin landscape architecture graduate started Jacobson Golf Course Design, and later earned acceptance into the American Society of Golf Course Architects. Nowadays, he is working on projects from East to West Coast and as far away as Japan, including renovating Des Moines (Iowa) Golf and Country Club in preparation for the 1999 U.S. Senior Open, and designing Michael Jordan Family Golf Centers in Chicago and elsewhere. We caught up with him in his Libertyville, Ill., offices.



Golf Course News: You worked briefly with architect Roger Packard but, beforehand, you worked for Wadsworth Golf Construction Co. How did that experience help you?

Rick Jacobson: Wadsworth made arrangements with Roger for me to work for them on one project, Riverside Club in Dallas. That evolved into a full-time job and was an exceptional introduction to the golf course architecture field. I was exposed to one of best contractors in the world and their construction materials and techniques, then got the technical background and plan production in Packard's office.

Spending time on site with a contractor is literally a prerequisite for anybody pursuing a career in golf course architecture. You've got to be cognizant of the processes involved during construction of a project, so that when you're making

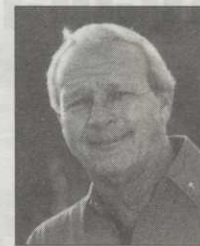
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Palmer to get Rossi Award

ANAHEIM, Calif. — Golfing legend Arnold Palmer will receive the 1998 Don A. Rossi Humanitarian Award here during the annual Golf Course Builders Association of America (GCBA) banquet, Feb. 6.

"The award honors individuals who have made significant contributions to the game of golf and its growth, and who have inspired others by their example," said GCBA President Paul Eldredge. "I don't know who we could possibly give the award to who fits that description any better than Arnold Palmer."

The award is named for Don Rossi, who served as executive director of the National Golf Foundation from 1970 to 1983 and of the GCBA from 1984 until his death in 1990.



Arnold Palmer

"I am very pleased to receive this award," said the 68-year-old Palmer. "I knew Don Rossi and appreciate the role he played in building the industry around our game. To receive an award named for him from the golf course builders — who are the backbone of our industry — is indeed an honor."

Palmer will, however, be unable to attend the GCBA banquet. Ed Seay, his partner in Palmer Course Design, will accept the award on his behalf.

The son of a golf course superintendent in Latrobe, Pa., Palmer

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Q&A: Jacobson on Nicklaus, design

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design decisions on site you know what the impact will be — both on the site and the budget. You also learn a lot about the individuals with the contractor. Implementing design in the field is the epitome of teamwork. I have a tremendous amount of respect for shapers and project

superintendents, who can turn a vision into reality. I don't think a lot of people have that level of appreciation unless you see them working day by day, and the artistic ability they have to maximize the potential a site has to offer.

GCN: After a couple years with Packard, Jack Nicklaus Golf Services offered you a job in 1985.

You worked on some great properties with Nicklaus, no doubt.

RJ: Yes. It was the opportunity of a lifetime. I started in the Scottsdale office during development of Desert Mountain, and worked on plan production and documentation for proposals for government agencies for the Renegade Course.

Coming from the Midwest, I hadn't had a lot of exposure to the desert-type setting. It was interesting and certainly had an impact on the design character of the golf courses, as far as layout and handling of transition areas, working with the desert. There are fantastic contrasts and beauty in those desert courses. They are unsurpassed, in my estimation.

A year later they transferred

me to the corporate offices in North Palm Beach, Fla. That year a significant occurrence catapulted the office into design and business opportunities: Jack won the Masters.

The office staff started to grow. I was working as a design associate and on-site coordinator at Bear Lakes Links Course in West Palm Beach and coordinating plan production and specifications for other projects. We had PGA West going at the time, as well as English Turn, Pawley's Plantation, Long Bay Club, Governor's Club, Wynstone, Sycamore Hills. ...

GCN: Was it exciting working with Jack?

RJ: Yes. When I was 10 years old and teeing it up with buddies and coming down the 18th fairway, you'd pretend you were Jack Nicklaus. And then I found myself working with him. It was a special honor.

That's where I got my master's degree in golf course architecture. Seeing a golf course through the eyes of the greatest player in the history of the game, I did a lot of listening and learning, and asking a lot of questions.

Jack takes a vested interest in a project — as much as humanly possible with the number of projects he has going. It's truly amazing how he can recall finite details of each project.

GCN: What was your impetus for starting your own design firm in 1991?

RJ: We were going through a lot of changes. It seemed like the appropriate time. I think that's the natural evolution in this field, to work under an architect in an apprenticeship to get the background and knowledge required to execute a project from start to finish. Some people have the entrepreneurial inner makings to start out on their own. I don't regret it. Every day's a new day with new challenges and its exciting and rewarding.

GCN: Who has had the greatest impact on your design philosophy?

RJ: I think every golf course architect studies some of the great architects of the past. That's golf course architecture in its purist form — when you look at [Alister] MacKenzie, [Donald] Ross and [A.W.] Tillinghast and C.B. Macdonald. They all had qualities architects try to emulate. Maybe they like different qualities that were presented through each of those architect's styles. A lot of people try to emulate the bunkers of MacKenzie, or the greens of Ross, but I think you have to learn both the positives and negatives from those forefathers. Trying to build a Ross convex green on a public golf course that does 40,000 to 50,000 rounds a year is probably not the right application for that design style, but maybe you

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Q&A: Jacobson

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do use his strategic bunkering philosophy. You might take the Tillinghast greens that were more concave and his fairways that were more receptive and apply them, or the strategic school of design from Macdonald. So I think it's a matter of schooling yourself in those designs and picking out the features that apply to the type of facility you've been hired to do for your client.

As I walk through a site, I formulate what the developer is looking for in design to accommodate the player profile they are targeting and their operational costs as far as maintenance. Studying the old classic designs gives you a knowledge basis to tap into when you're formulating a design approach for different projects in different parts of the country.

And I've combined those old-school architects along with a guy like Jack Nicklaus. Certainly he gave me the knowledge of being able to design for lower-handicap golfers as far as setting up holes, pin placement and landing areas that challenge better golfers as well as designing for higher-handicappers like myself.

That's what everybody attempts to do today. To what degree they succeed, the public golfers tell you through the success of the project.

From a business standpoint you have to respond to your developer's mission statement. Define their goals and objectives and then modify the design to accommodate the budget, the level of difficulty they want, or the lack of difficulty. We're doing some work now on a golf academy, a shorter 9-hole course geared toward beginner golfers. We don't want 60 bunkers 8 feet deep.

GCN: Did Michael Jordan have any input into your design of the Michael Jordan Family Golf Centers?

RJ: Not from a design standpoint. He was very involved from the promotional standpoint and with developing programs for inner-city kids and people who don't have access to golf. That is a key in today's golf environment. We have to cultivate the youth in golf. They're our future — the next wave of golfers once you look past the Baby Boom generation.

GCN: How many Jordan Golf Centers are planned?

RJ: Beyond the first one that is open in Chicago, another is in planning in Charlotte. AMF bought them, but we're still working with them and have looked at other sites around the country. I don't know if they are going to pursue them.

GCN: You are designing quite a mix of daily-fee, resort and private courses. Have you seen a trend in any direction?

RJ: We're seeing a thrust toward providing facilities for practice — in private facilities as well as public. Even at some of the old classic golf courses that have unused parcels of land, they're putting in a short-game practice area, or even a nine-hole pitch-and-putt course. Facilities which were built on the fringe of a metropolitan area 10 to 15 years ago, but which are now in high-growth areas, are going from 18

to 27 holes, or from 27 to 36. There are a lot of expansions and many are incorporating expanded practice facilities.

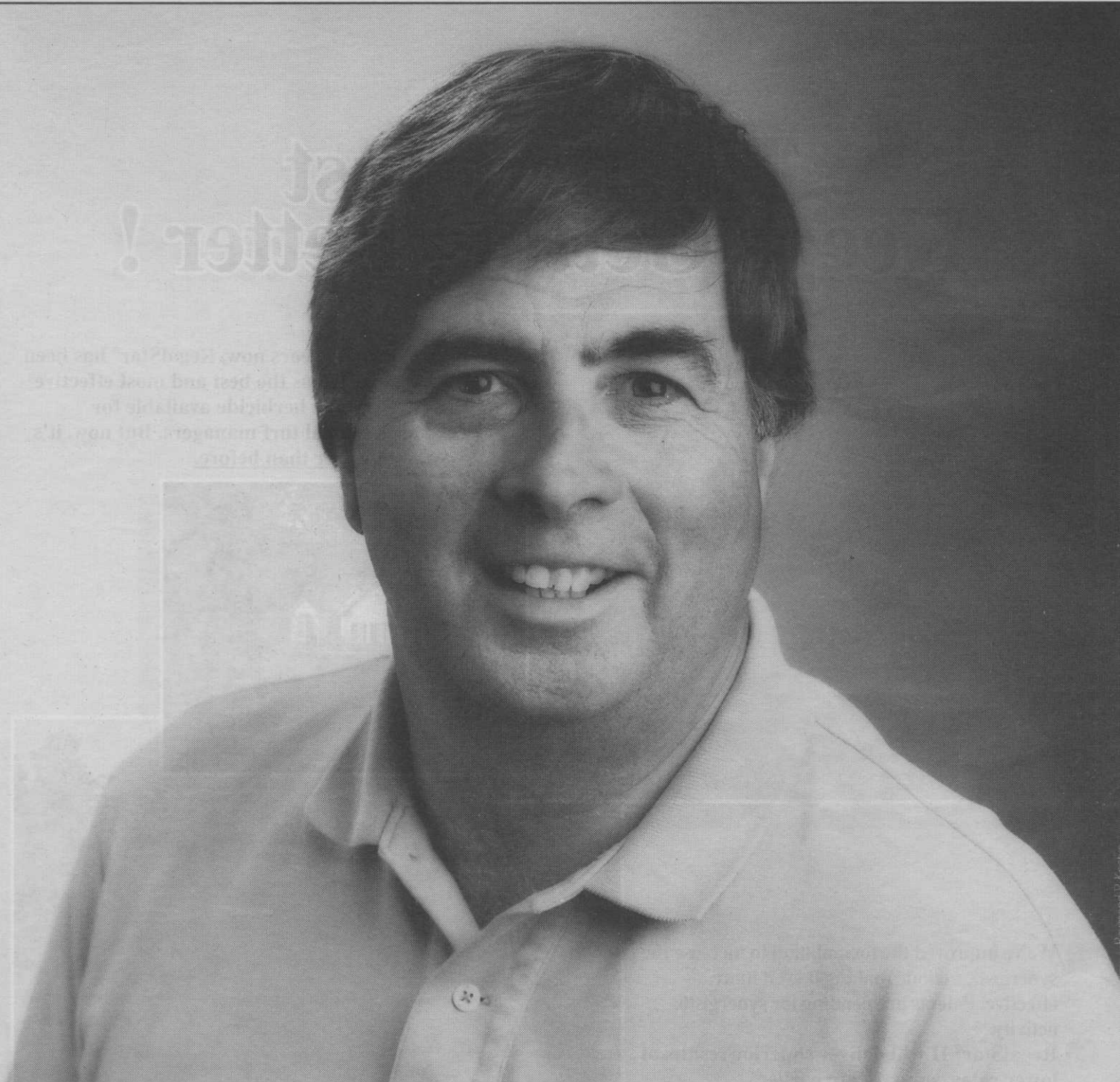
GCN: What sort of staff do you have?

RJ: We have two part-timers as support staff and two full-time designers — me and Doug Myslinski, another Wadsworth alum who was a project supervisor and, more recently, senior estimator.

JACOBSON PREPPING DES MOINES G&CC FOR SENIOR OPEN

DES MOINES, Iowa — In preparation for the 1999 U.S. Senior Open, Des Moines Golf and Country Club is undergoing a major renovation of 18 of its 36 Pete Dye-designed holes. Rick Jacobson is in charge of the project, which includes combining 9 holes from each of the two 18-hole courses to create the 18 holes for the Open.

The second phase of the renovation should be completed this spring. In phase one, nine holes were worked on. "All the greens were been regrassed with A4 [bentgrass]," said Jacobson. "We reconstructed the 18th green and expanded a couple others to recapture pin placements. We've reconstructed all the bunkers and added several in strategic places."



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