

GOLF COURSE NEWS

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INSIDE

Public Golf Forum Preview

If you're on the fence about attending this year's Forum, take a look at who'll be on hand 39-41

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Crisis in Canada puts clamps on course spending

By PETER BLAIS

TORONTO — The cry of the Loony — as Canadians call their one-dollar, bird-imprinted coin — has been a mournful sound for superintendents and suppliers of U.S.-manufactured course equipment as the plummeting Canadian dollar has made those items increasingly expensive for Canadian course managers.

By early August, the Canadian dollar had fallen to a record low, an equivalent of approximately 65 cents in U.S. currency. That represented a 15-percent decline from a year earlier and was forcing some superintendents to consider cutting back, or at the very least

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Maybe a first: Gary Player, Tom Fazio, Pete Dye, Arnold Palmer and Jack Nicklaus all in one room at the same time for the project announcement in Palm Beach Gardens.

Developmental tidal wave hits Palm Beach Gardens, Fla.

By PETER BLAIS

PALM BEACH GARDENS, Fla. — Three major golf projects located within 15 minutes of one another are in the works in this southeast Florida community that is already home to many upscale private and public facilities.

A Catholic priest, who wants to pair a golf course with a treatment center for troubled teens, hopes to close on a 500-acre parcel for the facility here this fall; *Golf Digest* magazine plans to build a home for its golf schools and a venue to entertain corporate cli-

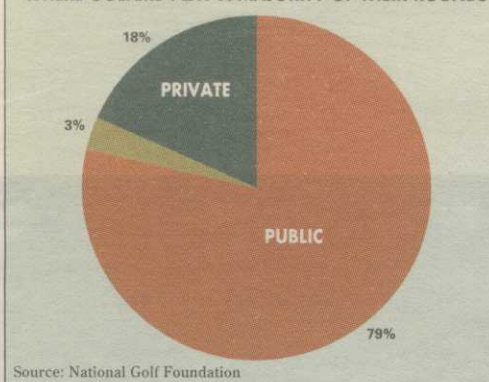
ents; and Jack Nicklaus is designing what many people are calling his legacy near his South Florida home.

Father Leo Armbrust, who is the team chaplain for the NFL's Miami Dolphins and the Big East Miami Hurricanes football teams, is negotiating with the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation to purchase the property, where he plans to build Renaissance Village.

Armbrust hopes to build a private course co-designed by Jack

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WHERE GOLFERS PLAY A MAJORITY OF THEIR ROUNDS



PUBLIC GOLF NUMBERS REMAIN STRONG

Twelve years ago, private golfers made up 20 percent of the golf population. By 1997, that percentage had dropped to just above 18 percent. Since 1986 public golfers grew by over 39 percent, from 15 million to 21 million in 1997.

COURSE MAINTENANCE

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The British are coming

By TREVOR LEDGER & MARK LESLIE

Over 100 years ago the "fathers" of golf course design boarded steam packets and headed west over the Atlantic Ocean to share the "gospel" according to St. Andrews.

Now, following 60 years of one-way eastbound traffic (with the odd exception bucking the trend), a trickle of British design evangelists is lighting the fires of revival. Saddle your horse,

Continued on page 36

Public Golf Forum Maintenance Track: Long-sought solutions unveiled

By MARK LESLIE

PALM SPRINGS, Calif. — From unveiling the long-sought solution to *poa annua* and the initial results of the country's first "environmental test course," to illustrating the best practices for everyday operations, the upcoming Public Golf Forum promises practical help in its conference Maintenance sessions.

To be held at Rancho Las Palmas Marriott Resort here, Oct. 26-27, the *Golf*

Course News-sponsored national conference and expo is geared toward superintendents, general managers, owners and developers of public-access golf facilities.

Following keynote addresses by Dr. Michael Hurdzan on Monday and PGA Tour star Greg Norman on Tuesday, each

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HURDZAN/FRY: LIKE A ROLLING STONE

Heavy machinery is dwarfed by the boulder work at Olde Stonewall Golf Club outside Pittsburgh. The clubhouse and maintenance building bring the British countryside to mind. See story page 27.

Topping the polls

Following are British and Scottish golf course architects and the ranking of their designs by *Golf Digest* in its latest list of America's 100 Greatest Golf Courses, released in 1997:

1. Pine Valley GC, Pine Valley, N.J. — George Crump (American) and H.S. Colt, Brit (1922)
2. Augusta National GC, Augusta, Ga. — Alister Mackenzie, Brit (1933)
3. Cypress Point, Pebble Beach, Calif. — Mackenzie (1928)
9. Pinehurst CC No. 2, Pinehurst, N.C. — Donald Ross, Scotsman (1935)
10. Oakland Hills CC South Course, Bloomfield Hills, Mich. — Ross (1918)
11. The Olympic Club (Lake), San Francisco — Willie Watson, Scotsman (1924)
12. Seminole GC, North Palm Beach, Fla. — Ross (1929)
13. The Country Club (Clyde/Squirrel), Brookline, Mass. — Willie Campbell, Scotsman (1895)
16. Medinah CC No. 3 — Tom Bendelow, Scotsman (1928)
18. Crystal Downs CC, Frankfort, Mich. — Mackenzie (1931)
22. Oak Hill CC East Course, Rochester, N.Y. — Ross (1925)
32. Scioto CC, Columbus, Ohio — Ross (1921)
33. Inverness Club, Toledo, Ohio — Ross (1919)
34. Maidstone Club, East Hampton, N.Y. — W.H. Tucker, Brit (1899)
39. Plainfield CC, Plainfield, N.J. — Ross (1921)
46. Interlachen CC, Edina, Minn. — Watson (1911)
52. Wannamoisett CC, Rumford, R.I. — Ross (1916)
62. Olympia Fields CC North Course, Olympia Fields, Ill. — Willie Park Jr., Scotsman (1922)
63. Canterbury GC, Shaker Heights, Ohio — Herbert Strong, Brit (1922)
73. Milwaukee CC, Milwaukee, Wis. — Colt and Alison (1929)
79. Salem CC, Peabody, Mass. — Ross (1926)
83. Pasatiempo GC, Santa Cruz, Calif. — Mackenzie (1929)
85. The Valley Club of Montecito, Santa Barbara, Calif. — Mackenzie and American Robert Hunter (1929)
88. Aronimink GC, Newtown Square, Pa. — Ross (1928)
94. East Lake GC, Atlanta — Ross (1915)



'I think you have to live over here. I don't think you can play ball from the other side of the Atlantic. It would be very difficult to be "in the know."

— Clive Clark



'If you're a good conductor of the orchestra, it doesn't matter your nationality — you can still play Carnegie Hall.'

— Donald Steel



'Wherever we lead, the others eventually follow ... Martin [Hawtree] would love to go back [to America].'

— Fred Hawtree

The Redcoats are coming!

Continued from page 1

Paul Revere, the Redcoats are, indeed, returning.

Traditional golf course design was forged in America by a small group still considered the "classical architects": Brits Alister Mackenzie, H.S. Colt, Herbert Fowler and Tom Simpson, and Scotsmen Donald Ross, Willie Park Jr. and Willie Watson. (Eight of today's top 15-ranked courses in the country were designed through the 1920s by their hands and those of their countrymen.)

Then, Americans turned the tables. Men like Robert Trent Jones Sr. — and more recently Arnold Palmer, Jack Nicklaus and others — took up the call and spread the design of golf courses around the globe. A few, like Nicklaus, Arthur Hills, Bob Cupp and Robert Trent Jones Jr., even had the balderdash to design layouts in the United Kingdom.

But the pendulum may be swinging back yet again — this time, initially, in the persons of British designers Clive Clark, Donald Steel and, as a vanguard 25 years ago, Fred and Martin Hawtree.

"Perhaps this is a new trend," acknowledged Clark, a former British Tour and Ryder Cup golfer and television color analyst who has designed 20 courses in Europe but, until this summer, had none in the United States. "There has been a long gap between British designers coming to America. So, yes, I suppose these things, like the Ryder Cup, go in movements,

don't they? For a long time we didn't win the Ryder Cup, then it turned around and the Brits started doing OK." [with the aid of Messrs. Ballesteros and Langer et al...]

Tom McKenzie, a lead architect for Donald Steel & Co. of West Sussex, England, put it this way: "There is certainly a move in American golf back toward traditional methods. Whether that will be done through American or European architects is hard to tell. But, that style is one the Brits have advocated for centuries, so we have a head start."

Steel himself said: "If you're a good conductor of the orchestra, it doesn't matter your nationality you can still play Carnegie Hall. For us, this is a new challenge and an opportunity for people to see our work. Hopefully, they will judge it favorably. If they do, one might see a change of style or approach [in America]."

While Clark was "first in" in this latest incursion into the United States, with his Belgrade Lakes (Maine) Golf Club opening its front nine in July and back nine in September, the initial push was made by Fred Hawtree in 1973 at Mount Mitchell in North Carolina.

"The developer, Vern Floyd, went to St. Andrews and met John Campbell, the superintendent," said the 82-year-old Hawtree from his Oxfordshire office. "John was a friend of mine and introduced us. It was thought that a 'little

touch of British' might give it [the new course] an edge. In theory the aim was to get away from the American style."

The exclusive Carnegie Club, which hired Steel to add a nine-hole track to his Carnegie Links at Skibo Castle in Dornoch, Scotland, has hired him to design an 18-hole course as the cornerstone for Cherokee Plantation. Ground was broken in late August on this 4,000-acre development along the Combahee River between Savannah, Ga., and Charleston, S.C. "Our client is British, which makes a difference," said McKenzie.

"The whole concept with Cherokee Plantation is for visitors to enjoy the experience, which is like Skibo's Edwardian-type life."

Jim Tullis, the developer at the Spirit Ridge Golf Course at Blount Springs, Ala., imported Steel to design a traditional-style golf course reminiscent of those early British-designed projects in the United States.

Tullis's wife Linda explained: "The historical tie with the United Kingdom is hard to ignore, Birmingham, Ala., being named after Birmingham in England. We had seen examples of Steel's work elsewhere in the world and were keen to have him design his first course in the United States."

It is ironic that when Blount Springs first came to prominence as a health resort, golf was heading west over the Atlantic from the UK, and now during its second birth its owners have gone back to the homeland of golf for an architect.

"The course is designed to fit in with the 'New Old Town' and be distinctly different from the new golf courses in the area," McKenzie said.

Old World-New World. Classic Style-Modern Style. The clash, and the comparisons are continual fodder among golf course architects from the two continents.

"My complaint," said Steel, "is that too many architects today, even if they got into the Garden of Eden, would not be satisfied. They'd turn it upside down and put it back together again. That may be fine in certain parts of the world, but I think the golfing world will get fed up sooner or later."

"One objection of mine," he added, "is that [the modern] style of design forces the golfer to play only one style of shot — all big powerful through the air. The old choice of shots that you could play is disappearing fast."

Having grown up in the UK where golf originated, Steel, Hawtree and Clark have those classic courses in their blood. That influence is obvious in their design philosophies.

"The pre-war architects had to use their wits much more and keep the thing simple," Steel said. "I'm not sure modern architects haven't complicated things unnecessarily. Simple is best, certainly cheapest."

"I don't think golf courses are different

Continued on next page

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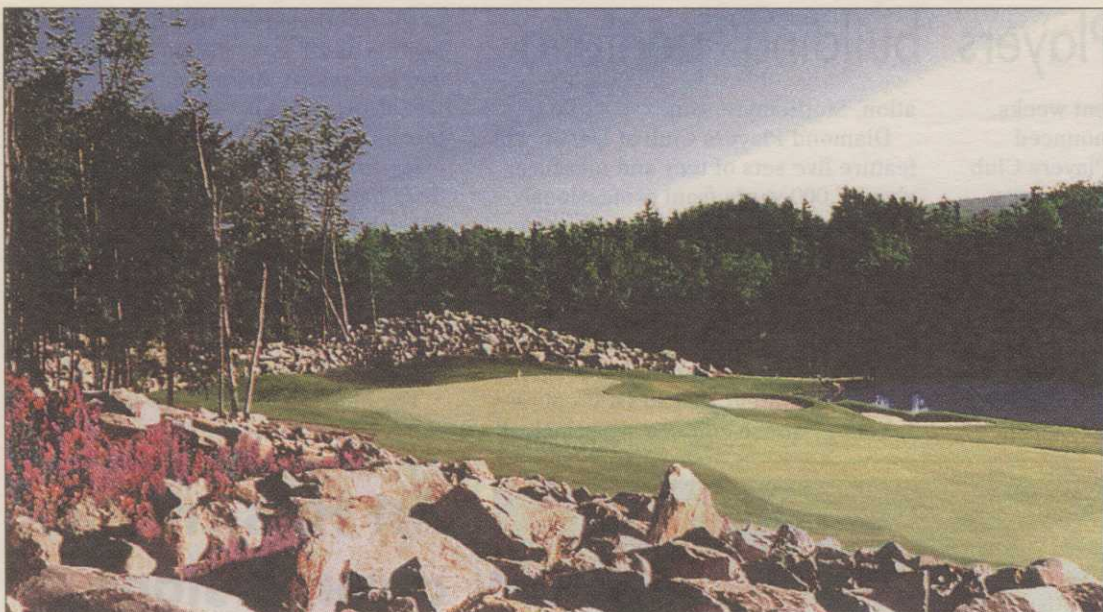
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Photo by Charles Brisco-Knight



The greens complex on the par-5, 520-yard 6th hole at the Clive Clark-designed Belgrade Lakes (Maine) Golf Club.

The return of the Redcoats

Continued from previous page

from any other fashion in the world... Some people think you have to keep changing your product. It's not perhaps a direct parallel, but this [modern] style of golf course architecture couldn't possibly have taken place 40 to 100 years ago. It depends on high-technology and mechanization as well as money."

This financial observance is backed up by Hawtree senior who, along with partner and son, Martin, designed a second course in the United States some seven years after his first project.

"With our second course [at Asheville, N.C.], we tried to make it English," Martin said. "But what, after all, is the English style? Links? In the middle of North Carolina? The style is simpler perhaps; it is certainly cheaper."

"I think you've got some very bold courses in Britain, great courses that have stood the test of time," Clark said. "And, contrary to what most Americans think, they're not all in Scotland. There are some very good courses in England. They don't get played by Americans to the same extent, because a lot of people over here think of Gleneagles, St. Andrews, Turnberry... In terms of design, a lot of these old courses look natural. They not only look like they've been there for 100 years; they have been there for 100 years. And they tend to fit into the golfing environment extremely well."

Asked if he is seeing a return to the British style of design, Clark said: "I think it's a cross between the British style and high-tech. Traditional courses are being built that are enhanced by technology, if you will. In general terms, and in particular in the desert area here, the courses are more high-tech regarding earth-moving and landscaping.

But, definitely there has been a trend away from penal golf in last few years. In terms of playability, softer courses are more in demand.

"On the very old golf courses on the links land, the earth was already moved... Even a lot of the bunkers were virtually there because of the sheep. Links land is a very specific land and has a definite look. Now 'links' is a word that's very bandied about."

At this point, Clark is working on Patton Station Golf Club in San Bernadino, Calif., a resort course on which ground was broken in September, and a resort project located between Palm Springs and Los Angeles, which is in the early planning stages.

Here, he will again get to ply his trade, a design style which he says is "the traditional look but with features."

"I love features brooks, lakes, bunkers, rough, trees, anything that causes trouble on a golf course," Clark said. "If you like introducing features, that's great. But you have to be very careful that they don't crowd the course, or make the fairways too narrow or affect the landing areas too badly."

Besides having more projects, America offers larger budgets to build courses.

"There is the belief," said Steel, "that the more it costs the better it is. That's redundant nonsense."

"In England you generally have to make do with smaller budgets, simply because there is virtually no housing permission and any new course is going to be stand-alone," said Clark. "If you were thinking of spending millions on it, you would have to think very carefully, because you have nothing to sell but the golf."

ENTERING THE FRAY

While Steel and Hawtree have ventured across the pond largely

In America 'you get more bites of the apple. In a year, there are at least 400 new courses going in here.'

— Clive Clark

due to their connections in Britain, Clark contends that architects must move to America to gain a foothold in its highly competitive market.

"I think you have to live over here," he said from his office in Palm Springs, Calif., where, since 1997, he lives nine months of the year. "I don't think you can play ball from the other side of the Atlantic. It would be very difficult to be 'in the know.'"

"With so many Tour and Senior Tour players designing courses, plus the big-name designers like [Tom] Fazio, [Arthur] Hills and the Trent Jones family, it's very competitive," Clark added, "and people, to some degree, want to buy a fine product and endorse it with a 'designer label,' which is understandable."

On the other hand, Clark said, in America "you get more bites of the apple. In a year, there are at least 400 new courses going in here. There aren't 400 being opened in Great Britain and Europe. So although there are more designers and more competition, there is also a lot more action over here."

At the same time, he acknowledged that gaining recognition in America is more difficult because of its size and population. "To put it in focus," he said. "England probably drops into California three times, and then you've got another 49 states left. The scale of it is absolutely vast."

Nevertheless, Clark said, "It might sound rather big-headed but I've always had enormous confidence in my own ability.

Therefore, it is a challenge, but I am aiming to get to the top of the pile."

For all these Brits, patience is a virtue. "Any new market you come to takes a long time to get successful in," Clark said. "First to get your first job, then for that job to be ready to show."

"If we're invited, we'd love to," said Steel about designing more courses in America. "With a more limited amount of new work in Britain at the moment, one is looking for new avenues.

And working in America marries the background of so many of courses being built by British architects."

Born into the era of British design exports, Fred Hawtree wryly observed that "Wherever we lead, the others eventually follow."

Although he recognizes that he personally is a little beyond trailblazing, the new generation is ready to take up the baton.

"Martin would love to go back [to America]," Fred said.

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