

BRIEFS



Stoned in Pa.: Hurdzan-Fry track a blast in more ways than one

By MARK LESLIE

ELLWOOD CITY, Pa. — The dynamiters at the quarry can't blast the limestone fast enough to keep up with construction of Olde Stonewall Golf Club here. Ten- to 14-foot-high stone walls stretch as long as 420 feet on parts of the course and serve to bulwark many tees and greens, while visitors might confuse the maintenance building or clubhouse with an English castle and this Pittsburgh suburb with British countryside.

"The golf course is starting to look like a quarry," said Joe Niebur of golf course builder Niebur Golf, Inc. "People will be shocked when they play it."

"Purely for scenic reasons, you will go away talking about it, in awe of what the guy has done," said course architect Dana Fry about developer Rick Hvizdak, who fell in love with the limestone produced by a nearby quarry and decided to make it a keystone of the design.

"There is no cutting corners [with Hvizdak]," Fry said. "In a way, he's the ultimate client because he makes his decisions totally on what's best for golf, period. A lot of guys talk the talk, but he lets his wallet do the talking and he does it first-class."



Limestone boulders formed walls and served as the foundation for tees and greens at aptly named Olde Stonewall Golf Club outside Pittsburgh. This shot of the par-3 15th hole looks back from the green at four sets of tees in the background.

Initially to be called Heron's Landing, Olde Stonewall Golf Club became the course's name when it became apparent boulders would play such a dominant part in the project. Ranging in size from 2 tons to 12-ton giants that dwarf even

bulldozers on site, the rocks total 35,000 to 40,000 tons at \$32 per ton. Do the arithmetic, and that is about \$1.28 million for stone on the \$11-million project.

It is so much that folks at neighboring

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BLACK KNIGHT AT GRAND TRAVERSE'S NORTHERN KNIGHT

Gary Player patrols his first signature course in the state of Michigan, Northern Knight, currently under construction at the Grand Traverse Resort in Traverse City. The 7,161-yard layout was completely seeded by mid-July and is scheduled to open in the spring of 1999. Fairways and greens are seeded with Providence bentgrass, tees with Penncross bentgrass and roughs with bluegrass and fescue. Country Golf is the course builder. KSL Recreation owns and operates Grand Traverse.

OWL'S NEST OPENS FOR PLAY

CAMPTON/THORNTON, N.H. — The owners of Owl's Nest Golf Club here have opened its par-72, 7,012-yard layout. Owl's Nest Golf Club was designed by Cornish, Silva and Mungeam, Inc., and has been sculpted around the natural topography of the Pemigewasset River Valley and White Mountain National Forest. Owl's Nest offers five sets of tees on every hole to accommodate golfers at any skill level.

FAZIO'S BIGHORN FACES DEC. OPENING

PALM DESERT, Calif. — Bighorn Golf Club's new Tom Fazio-designed Canyons Course is nearly complete and will be ready to open for member play in December. The Canyons Course, a 7,054-yard, par-72 layout, is set among rock-studded canyons, copper foothills, streams, waterfalls and rich desert flora. It includes a variety of environmental and elevation changes, and panoramic views from every hole.

\$500M PROJECT BOASTS COURSE

AURORA, Colo. — U.S. Home Corp. has broken ground on a \$500-million adult housing development here, Heritage at Eagle Brand, that will feature an 18-hole golf course.

Vegas course copies great holes from British Open

LAS VEGAS — Eighteen holes inspired by famous holes played in the British Open comprise the new Royal Links here.

A daily-fee course developed by Southwest Golf and designed by Dye Designs International, the project will include a traditional Scottish-style clubhouse and numerous museum-quality displays honoring the history of the game.

"Golf is very, very special to me," said Bill Walters, chairman and CEO of Southwest Golf. "I look at this as an opportunity to give something back to the game by providing players who might never visit Great Britain an opportunity to experience golf the way it was originally in-

tended."

The Royal Links is not affiliated with or sponsored by The British Open or any of the courses that inspired The Royal Links, nor has permission been sought or attained to use their names or hole designs.

In designing the 6,970-yard, par-72 Royal Links, Perry Dye sent his design team to the United Kingdom to experience the golf courses for themselves.

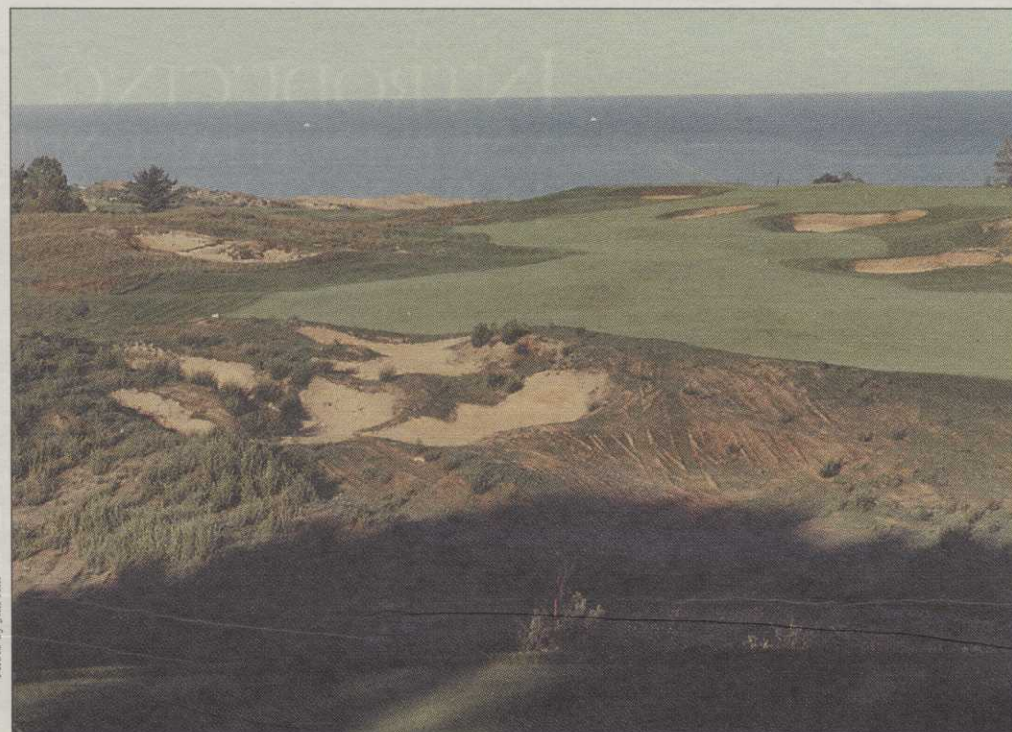
"What we learned from visiting the actual golf holes that inspired The Royal Links is much more than simply what the holes looked like and how things were laid out," said Dye. "Those things

you can get from a drawing or a photograph. Rather, we gained first-hand knowledge of the real nuances that give these great holes their endearing character.

"For instance, we now know exactly what it feels like to stand in one of these menacing sod-faced bunkers and peer out towards the green. We know from experience how deceptive reverse bunkers can be to a player. And, all of these 'feelings' will enable us to ensure that what we are building here in Las Vegas is truly authentic."

The scorecard reads like an all-star

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The par-4 3rd hole at Arcadia Bluffs looks out over Lake Michigan. The photo is taken from the tee box. The green is being watered at the center of the background.

Rick Smith's Arcadia Bluffs set for 1999

ARCADIA, Mich. — Perched dramatically above Lake Michigan, and offering water views on every hole, Arcadia Bluffs Golf Club is entering its final construction phase in anticipation of a summer 1999 opening.

"It reminds me of Ballybunion in Ireland," said course designer Rick Smith of the property located just north of Manistee.

"When I'm here, I stay on-site until sundown, because the landscape is so intriguing and so enjoyable to work," said Warren Henderson, the senior design associate on the project. "There's not a day that goes by when I don't see something new and amazing."

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British Open holes spice Vegas creation

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roster of British golf. The 8th hole will play similar to Royal Troon's famed "Postage Stamp." Number 10 will be reminiscent of St. Andrews' hazardous "Road Hole." And the 12th hole will remind players of the pivotal No. 6 at Royal Birkdale, where Mark O'Meara nearly lost his golf ball

and the title on the final day of the 1998 British Open.

"Many players never get the opportunity to play the grand old courses of Great Britain. And for them, The Royal Links is meant to provide a connection to the history and tradition that make golf the game it is," said Walters. "But even without all that, this course

will stand on its own as an exceptional and challenging place to play. Even though in many aspects it will feel as though you're walking through a museum, players should come expecting a real test. We chose the holes we did because they represent some of the best golf has to offer."

"Because the plants that grow

in Scotland will not grow in the desert of Las Vegas, we sought to simulate the texture of Scottish landscaping by using relatives of those species found in Scotland from other parts of the world," said Dye. "I think people will be amazed how closely the desert plants we have selected resemble those in the Scottish countryside. We've even heavily sanded the fairways to give them the same feeling as those in the

Scottish links land."

Players at The Royal Links will have the option of walking the golf course assisted by caddies, and the course will feature monuments indicating the spots where great moments in golf history took place on the holes that inspired The Royal Links. A scoreboard on the course will feature the scores of players from various rounds of the British Opens throughout history. A display honoring American winners of the British Open will be erected near the practice green to add to the museum-like quality of the golf club.

Building the \$20 million The Links of Las Vegas, Impact Golf Construction, Inc. faced major irrigation and drainage challenges. The scheme is elaborate, drawing reclaimed and treated water from the sanitary treatment facility adjacent to the property on the east side of the city.

Joe Gomez, project manager for Impact Golf, oversaw initial grading that began last December and the entire drainage, irrigation and course shaping that was accomplished by mid-May in order to meet the grass and landscaping schedules.

"What took Mother Nature hundreds, if not thousands of years to develop naturally in the British Isles, we're trying to shape in a couple of months with graders and scrapers," said Gomez. "The mounds and moguls, links-type fairways, and bunkers are all to the exact measurements of their real counterparts along with the oversized greens that are signatures of the Scottish golf courses."

The fairways are going to be planted with Bermudagrass and the rough will be a combination of fescue, tall meadow grass and zoysiagrass that will help deliver the patchy look of the Scottish links courses.

The drainage system is quite intricate. Although Las Vegas expects to have only an average of 4 inches rainfall a year, there will be a series of 600 small catch basins and more than 60,000 feet of drainage pipe under the golf course, rough, tees and greens.

"From time to time on golf courses built on desert ground with high salinity," said Gomez, "you have to totally flush the grass salts from the soil under the grasses. In these circumstances we will water everything to the maximum, collect the water in the catch basins and drain the water away."

Gomez has employed a Vermeer V-5750, 59-horsepower rubber tire trencher with a trencher/plow combo to install the system. Cutting trenches at a minimum of 4 feet for the solid HDPE pipe, the trencher's vibratory plow was used to install the coiled 1-inch flexible polyethylene drip lines for the trees and bushes.

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