

TOP NEWS STORIES OF 1999

The vagaries of the weather often dominate the news pages of *Golf Course News*. So it was again this year. The two major weather-related stories involved the drought that lasted from early spring through late summer in much of the Eastern United States, followed by the wind and water damage Hurricane Floyd and the subsequent rains visited along the East Coast, particularly in the Carolinas.

Some high-profile courses were in the news. Pebble Beach opened the year by breaking ground on a new 5th hole that officials believe will improve the layout immensely. This summer an American group, led by Arnold Palmer, purchased the Pebble Beach Co. for \$820 million from a Japanese firm that had owned the resort and its four courses since 1992. Farther down the California course, a leak in a sewer line was believed to have undermined a portion of Ocean Trails Golf Course in Rancho Palos Verdes, sending a 200-by-400-foot section of the course 50 feet toward the Pacific Ocean and leaving behind a deep ravine.

On the opposite coast, Southern New Jersey's Pine Valley Golf Club, annually ranked the top course in the

world, saw architect Tom Fazio break ground on a daily-fee layout called Pine Hill Golf Club less than a mile away.

The news was mixed on the golf course supply-and-demand front. The 448 new U.S. golf facilities opened in 1998, the second-highest number ever, may be matched or exceeded when the final count becomes available for 1999. Nowhere was the growth more evident than in Myrtle Beach, S.C., which witnessed the opening of the Grand Strand's 100th layout.

But while golf course supply headed up, the number of rounds played (the major measure of golf demand) took a slight dive, down 3.4 percent overall in 1998. Increased supply and decreasing demand is the type of news that bothers course operators. Still, that news was tempered somewhat by another NGF study that showed playing fees rising roughly 12 percent annually since 1994.

While it's too early to tell, anecdotal information from superintendents and others in the golf industry indicate that, Hurricane Floyd aside, 1999's generally dry weather resulted in greater demands for tee times.



Ocean Trails' 18th hole.

Seaside course trying to stay out of water

By ANDREW OVERBECK

RANCHO PALOS VERDES, Calif. — Southern California's answer to Pebble Beach suffered a massive setback June 2 when a 200-by-400-foot section of the 18th hole shifted out 50 feet from the rest of the course leaving behind a 60-to-90-foot deep ravine between the 18th and 12th holes.

The section of the course that shifted sat on an ancient landslide, which was bisected by an aging Los Angeles County sewer line. It is widely speculated that a

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leak in that sewer line touched off the land movement.

The Ocean Trails Golf Course, designed by Pete Dye, was only weeks away from opening and developers are now faced with the task of reconstructing the damage.

"It has always been complicated with this project," said developer Ken

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