BRIEFS

GEORGE GETS MASS. JOB

DANVERS, Mass. — WMSJ Co. Inc. has selected George Golf Design, Inc. to construct a three-hole practice facility and upgrade the existing driving range complex for Sun 'N Air golf facility. The facility will consist of three par-3 holes of 110, 200 and 170 yards, a combination of natural and artificial grass tees, and a short-game area which allows the practice of all shots within 50 yards of the hole. The third hole features a 6,000-square-foot green over water. This addition will provide an upscale golf practice and learning facility to the Boston area. Construction is under way by Quality Grassing & Services of Lithia, Fla. "This facility will provide the opportunity to teach every shot in the game," said course architect Lester George.

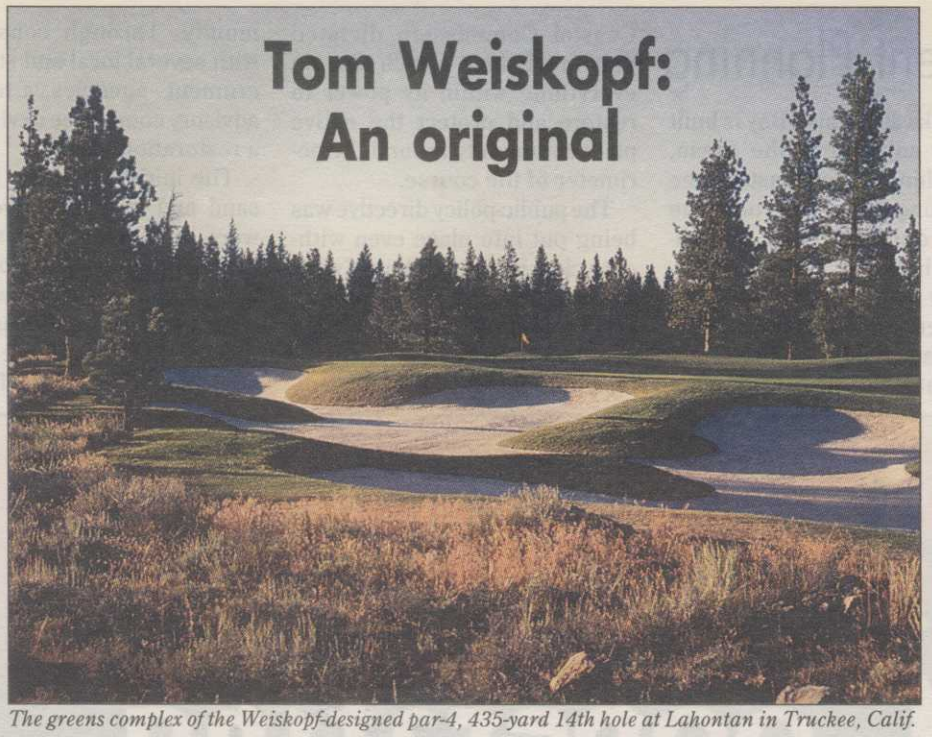
PLAYER INKS APPALACHIAN PROJECT

MOUNT HOPE, W.V. — Gary Player Design has been signed to design an 18-hole course as part of an extensive development near Beckley by Sun Mountain Enterprises, Inc. The project will include a hotel, outdoor amphitheater, conference center, driving range and residential components. The Sun Mountain property is situated in the Appalachian Mountains. The Player team was given the chance to study more than 2,000 available acres before it settled on the most dramatic 400 acres. The holes will be situated in and wind their way through valleys, featuring elevation changes of up to 100 feet. The design also will include numerous lakes and bunkering in Player's design characteristic. Construction of the lighted driving range is underway and the golf course is set to break ground in March. Sun Mountain Resort course opening is planned for July 2000.

ASGCA OFFERS DEVELOPMENT BROCHURE

CHICAGO — A free booklet, Golf Course Development Planning Guide, from the American Society of Golf Course Architects (ASGCA) is helpful to anyone taking the first steps to develop a new golf course. The 16-page brochure, with full-color illustrations and photography, covers all the key components involved in a new course project. To get a free copy, people should send a self-addressed, business-size envelope to the American Society of Golf Course Architects, 221 N. LaSalle St., Chicago, Ill. 60601.

Tom Weiskopf: An original



The greens complex of the Weiskopf-designed par-4, 435-yard 14th hole at Lahontan in Truckee, Calif.

Q&A

When Tom Weiskopf quit the PGA Tour at 40, he was the fourth all-time money winner and sixth all-time tournament winner. In 1984 he joined Jay Morrish as a design team whose first creation, Troon Golf and Country Club in Arizona, was selected Best New Private Course in 1986 and whose Shadow Glen outside Kansas City and Forest Highlands in Arizona finished one-two in 1989. Morrish and Weiskopf went their separate ways in 1995, but Weiskopf has continued to design award-winning golf courses, most notably Loch Lomond in Scotland, already rated among the world's best. GCN Managing Editor Mark Leslie caught up with Weiskopf at his Scottsdale, Ariz., offices after the New Year.

Tom Weiskopf

Golf Course News: Compare the satisfaction of seeing a finished course of yours to winning a Tour event.

Tom Weiskopf: The comparison would be the recognition for a lot of hard work. There is a lot of preparation that goes into tournament golf. There are a lot of determinations during four rounds of golf. And it's over a much shorter time frame than it is doing a golf course.

There is a tremendous difference. Playing tournament golf is a wisp-of-the-will existence. When you win a tournament, it is soon forgotten by the general public. Whereas when a golf course is finished and is being played, it is there for a long, long time and is in living memory for a long time.

GCN: How do you respond to grousing by golf course architects about Tour pros "jumping into the business"? Is it sour

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AMP: Examples from California

By DR. ROBERT ABBOTT

PART 2

The theoretical concepts behind Adaptive Management Planning (AMP) are not difficult since it is essentially the same experimental method taught at all good universities.

The difference is that AMP is a management strategy based on information derived through experiments designed within the context of social/economic policy constraints. Putting AMP into practice is much more challenging than an experiment back in the nursery area for a new fertilizer on your favorite strain of turfgrass.

AMP tends to involve people from a variety of disciplines, and a considerable expenditure of energy and money. The real virtue of the AMP approach is that it enables superintendents and developers to move beyond the gridlock, head-butting, red-in-the-face frustration stance with the regulatory community. AMP elevates the interactions and communications into a let's-talk-it-over mode, so that they all can come up with answers.

But AMP is also very exciting because of the rewards of solving a tough problem, and achieving real understanding through a community effort that tends to create long-term professional relationships.

Here in Northern California there are many examples of AMP at golf courses. Two striking examples are observed at Pebble

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Dyes designing 4th in Dominican

By PETER BLAIS

LA ROMANA, Dominican Republic — Architects Pete and Alice Dye are building their fourth course here at the Fanjul resort, home of Casa de Campo (Teeth of the Dog), one of the Dyes' best-known layouts.

Altos de Chevon, which means high above the (Chevon) river, began construction a year ago and is scheduled to open by fall 2000. It will be the third Dye-designed resort course here, joining Casa de Campo and The Links. Casa de Campo opened in 1971 and hosted the world amateur championship in 1974. La Romana Country Club, also a Dye project on the resort grounds, is a private layout.

Despite the devastating effects of last fall's Hurricane Mitch, course work quickly resumed. The green pads were under construction in early January, according to Alice Dye.

"We didn't have rain, like Puerto Rico," Dye remembered of Mitch. "We had much higher winds. They were clocked at 225 miles per hour. It denuded all the trees.

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Wild Horse Golf Club forecast to be one of state's best.

Nebraskan neighbors build together

By MARK LESLIE

GOTHENBURG, Neb. — In Nebraska, "community" takes on a whole new meaning. And "community-owned golf course" does not necessarily mean "municipal golf course." Such is the case at Wild Horse Golf Club here, where more than 200 people not only hold shares in the course but probably also got down and dirty building it.

"I tell you what: These [Nebraska] people work together to help each other out," said Dan Proctor, who co-designed Wild Horse with partner Dave Axland of Bunker Hill Golf Course Design and Construction. "If somebody needs something, they go and help them. Local people did most of the tilling. After their work, they'd bring a tractor over to the site. Some

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grapes, or is some of it justified?

TW: Some of it is very justified. They make a good point if their comments are directed toward those who don't spend any time trying to be involved in the business, trying to learn what it takes to design, to administrate during site visits through construction and the final project. In other words, if the pros are basically putting their name on a course. But there are some exceptions to the rule. There are some who make it a priority in their life and put it ahead of playing tournament golf and do spend as much time or even more time than those who are critical of the pros. Consequently, they put their heart and soul and effort into it.

I would argue the point [against pros/designers]. In past history, there hasn't been anyone who has not played the game at a pretty high level who has designed many great courses. I'm talking about a lot of great players who originally designed the old courses. Harry Vardon, Jack Neville, George Crump. Tom Fazio was a near-scratch player. Pete Dye is a very good player. I just don't see how you could not be a pretty good player and design. I think they have a tremendous advantage over somebody who isn't a good player. If they've done their homework and get involved in every detail that it takes throughout construction and site visits and into grassing — start to finish — and still can hit a 4-iron 2 feet from the hole, they should be a better designer because of their experience of seeing those who have played the game at its highest level on the greatest courses over the whole world.

GCN: Which Tour player/designers are committed, do you think?

TW: [Ben] Crenshaw. Jack [Nicklaus]. Jerry Pate. And John Fought is very committed to it. There may be some I haven't thought of. But for the most part they are signing their name on the dotted line.

GCN: Some complain that certain Tour pros design courses to fit their own game. Is that a tendency you struggle with?

TW: I think anybody would tend to put some favoritism in their course that came from the stronger parts of their game. That's human nature. That's something that you have to be extremely aware not to overdo.

The other thing — and I'm not defending [Jack] Nicklaus — is, that's the way he sees it. That is his canvas. That was also what he was hired to do. That owner hired Jack and liked his golf courses and liked the power of marketing Jack can get.

GCN: What makes a golf course a great golf course?

TW: Test of time. Only one factor. A great golf course doesn't just happen instantly. Courses, to me, only become great when they've hosted significant championships. The players in the game at that tournament know whether it's a great test of golf.

GCN: How would a Shadow Creek fit into that category, then?

TW: Until Shadow Creek hosts something significant like the Nevada State Open, you can't call it "great." I've played it twice and it is a wonderful course. But "great"? We've overused that term.

I have a hard time with these rating panels and dealing with the selection and the criteria of the members of these panels. I don't totally agree with it.

Granted, it's a way to get publicity. I think they'd be better off listing them alphabetically.

Tom Watson made a terrific comment and I always keep it in mind. He said conditioning is important, but it is not the most important factor. If a golf course has to be in perfect condition for you to execute a well-placed shot and get excellent results, then the course is designed wrong. Tom named a course and said if it isn't in the finest condition how could you play it effectively, because you're always hitting over something to land it correctly.

GCN: You once said the best courses since the late 1930s will be built in the 1990s. It's 1999. Has that prediction come true?

TW: Yes. And I think it will continue because, starting about 1990, the pendulum has definitely swung back toward traditional designs — golf courses that mirror the strategic qualities, beauty

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and maintainability of those courses that are so highly respected around the world.

GCN: Will you name a few?

TW: The first that comes to mind is Sand Hills [in Mullen, Neb.]. That's a very, very good example. Where I coming from is, if they're not maintainable, they're not playable.

GCN: Then what do you think of, say, the PGA West Stadium Course?

TW: It's spectacular. The imagination that Pete Dye put into that piece of ground and the results are as creative as you could imagine. It's memorable. It is truly a good player's golf course. But it's difficult to maintain and is not for the average player and his enjoyment.

GCN: What are the top three points in your design philosophy?

TW: Beauty, variety and, most importantly, the margin for error on and around the greens.

Beauty comes from bunker styles, bunker locations on the golf holes. Bunkers, to me, are threefold. They are used either strategically, directionally, or as "saving" bunkers.

Variety I mean in two ways: variety of shots that are required; and variety of the golf holes.

About margin of error: I don't put a lot of contour in my greens because of the green specs. I protect myself because of the subtle rolls I put in. Then they can get the greens as fast as they want and they are still playable.

I design for a lot of pitching and chipping and places to play safe around the greens. I'm a fan of bump and run.

GCN: You talk of water and the overuse of it. What do you think of it?

TW: I try to stay underneath six holes having water. The worst thing in the world is to lose a golf ball.

GCN: Differentiate your design philosophy for public versus private courses?

TW: On a private course, you're allowed more flexibility and versatility. And you can be much more illusionary and penal — simply because a shot is only blind once in a golfer's memory and they adjust their game to avoid the difficult situations. Whereas on a public or resort course they may be there only one time, and you want to be very straight-forward and not conceal things visually — no hidden bunkers. The greens are bigger, the challenges less severe and demanding.

I always remember a statistic: There are 26 million golfers in the U.S. That's anyone who plays six rounds of golf in their season. Ninety-two percent do not break 90. That's assuming they all know and abide by the rules. One half of one percent break 80. That's why I believe the design philosophy has to consider a margin of error most of the time.

GCN: What "problems" exist with modern courses that have not returned to traditional design?

TW: I think if the old architects were alive today they probably wouldn't design things much differently than we do. The problems are simple: The complement of residential communities internally within the golf course system. The hardest thing to deal with is the sewage and drainage systems, the traffic system. On the old courses, they all had peripheral housing, virtually void of any internal housing. But, we have to string these courses out to maximize frontage for residential lots. We have houses between every green and tee and eliminate one of the enjoyments of the game, comfortably walking. [Alister] Mackenzie and these other guys would use more mounding to conceal bad visual impacts — like cart paths, roads, or pump houses.

Another problem is the environmental impact today. Environmental constraints are unbelievable. All these great old courses are so gorgeous with wetlands. They violated so many of the things we can't do today. You can't even get approvals for properties that once were never a concern.

The third thing that's difficult is the availability of great land for golf. If you look at all the old courses, and a lot of them are plantations like Oakmont and Oak Hill, they were void of trees. They had good choices of land.

Architects today are doing a doggone good job of trying to go back in time. They've tried all the things in the '60s, '70s and '80s and those things are not quite as

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accepted today. They get tired of hearing about all these old great courses, so they feel, "Let's try to copy those again."

If you look at guys who played in the '60s and '70s, they all tried to swing like Jack Nicklaus. They had that reverse C, that slide through the ball, because Jack was the greatest and we wanted to play like him. Then Curtis Strange and Nick Faldo came along, and dominated the game; and they went back to the old Sam Snead-Ben Hogan swing. The straight left side; you eliminate the slide because the equipment has changed, too. But the swing changed dramatically in the '80s and '90s.

Likewise, the three guys who had the greatest impact on architecture in modern times were Robert Trent Jones Sr., Pete Dye and Jack Nicklaus. Unbelievably contrasting styles. Everything is a copy or recopy from Day One, and Dye and Nicklaus were getting all the work, getting all the recognition, and everybody in the business said, "Let's copy Pete, let's do the mounds, the deep bunkers, the pot bunkers, the links-type look. Then they realized in the '80s it was still not as popular still as what was done in the first 30 years. And we've all gone back to the old '30s style. Even Pete has modified his stuff. Jack has modified his stuff.

It's just like the golf swing. They thought it was right because they were getting all the work, getting all the money, getting all the demands.

GCN: We were discussing the Tour players and how much time they spend on a design project. How much time to you spend on site?

TW: I quit playing. I gave up my career. I was 40 and fourth all-time leading money winner, behind Jack Nicklaus, Lee Trevino and Tom Watson. Architecture was what I wanted to do. It was a change of vocation. It was a change of lifestyle. Even though I was involved with the game, it was a totally different lifestyle. I started working for people. I always wanted to try it. And I always knew that if it didn't work I could go back and play. That's a nice option, isn't it? Fortunately, my first course with Jay, Troon, won the best new course. So I got instant recognition, and that's quite difficult. It takes anybody starting out in this business two to three years to get recognition because you have to get a variety of product for people to see. Then we won again, three years later, with Shadow Glen; and Forest Highlands was No. 2 by one vote. Within a four-year period — and probably we only had six or seven courses out there — we had two wins and a second. That's the hard thing for young guys starting out: to get enough courses, with some variety, for people to see.

I didn't even think of the Senior Tour coming along.

As far as time on site is concerned, I have never been on a job where I have been less than twice a month, minimum. It usually takes eight to 10 months of construction time. I always walk the site with the ownership before accepting the job. I want to know the ownership and their philosophy. And the marketplace they are in has to balance the scale with the site. I'm not going to work on a terrible site knowing the ownership doesn't have the money to make it a good site.

GCN: You mentioned the Senior Tour and you're 56 now. Any plans?

TW: I'm going to play a little more. But I will never allow my golf to overtake my commitment and responsibility to my owners.

I still believe that I would not be the designer that I am without having the opportunity to have been a professional golfer and to play golf competitively on the great courses of the world. I look at that list of best courses and there are very few I haven't played.

Also, back then, they had time on their side. The interest clock is running so hard and fast now that we don't have the time to look at things and dwell on them, for the most part. They had two to three years to design a course. The two best courses I've done took a lot of time: Loch Lomond and Double Eagle. So I had time to make decisions and challenge myself.

The best courses I've ever been involved with were those I had more than enough time to make the right decision on.

Most of the time today, you

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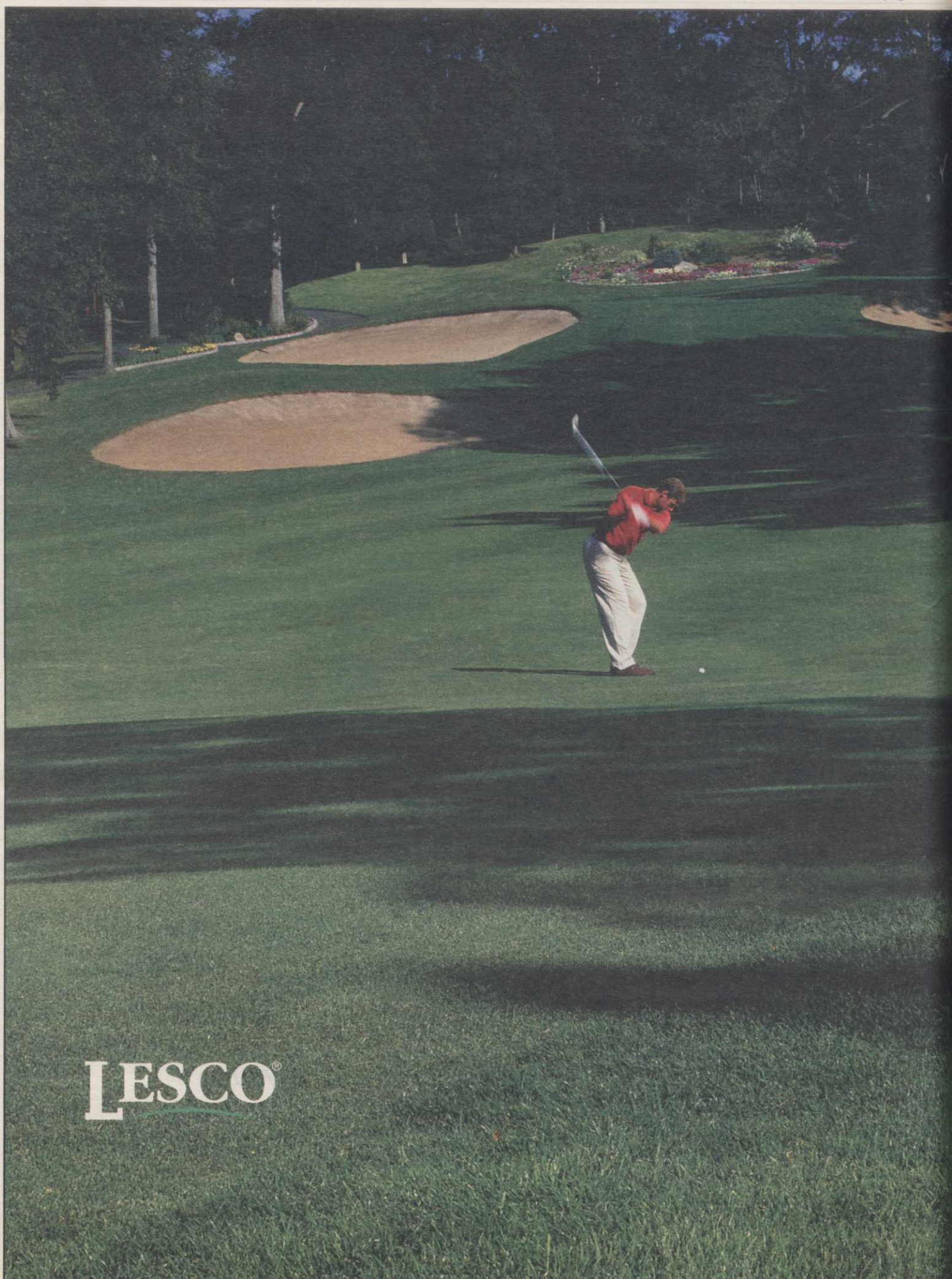

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never start on schedule. We give the owners a schedule, and it's always geared to grassing, and we always start two to three months later than we should have. And then you're hastily doing things.

So many things have changed. Go back to the turn of the century when they were playing with the gutta percha ball and wooden shafts. And look at the contrast of the era of Mackenzie and [A.W.] Tillinghast and [Donald] Ross and [C.B.] Macdonald, and what they had to use to construct things with — mules and plows and they played over and around things. We play through things. We just eliminate things today. That's because lawyers were invented, everybody wants to sue everybody and you can't have a blind shot anymore. And that should be part of golf.

GCN: Tell us about your staff.

TW: Dave Porter has been my senior designer the last five years. He has engineering and agronomic degrees and was a superintendent at Pebble Beach for three years. Tony Heckenkemper of Tulsa, Okla., does our working drawings. Judy McCray is my secretary. And we use three consultants: Larry Rodgers, who does most all the irrigation design; Troon North superintendent Jeff Spangler, who is our Western agronomic consultant; and Terry Buchen, who is our Eastern consultant.

GCN: How many courses do you design per year?

TW: Four to six.

GCN: You were partners with Jay Morrish for 12 years. Has it been strange competing for jobs with Jay?

TW: I don't know if it has happened. We're never told who we're competing against.

But I can tell you this: I learned a tremendous amount from Jay Morrish. When I worked with him, we got along great and accomplished some wonderful things. We were a terrific team and complemented each other very well. But there will never be another one [partner] for me.

GCN: If you had to hire somebody else to design a golf course for you, who would it be?

TW: Pete Dye, no doubt. He has the most imagination and creativity of anybody's work I've ever seen. And we're only limited by our imagination in most cases.

Pete takes a bad piece of property that is void of character, that has no strategic value to work with — like big trees, rock outcroppings, ravines, drainage channels, streams and lakes — and turns it into something wonderful. When I play a Pete Dye course I look at it strategically and have never questioned the location of streams, lakes and bunkers relative to the shot he is asking the player to negotiate. He always has them in the right place.

Pete's unbelievable. I wouldn't even think of anybody else but him. But it will cost me in construction costs. You know what I mean. If I've got the extra $1 million or so, Pete's who I want.

GCN: What is your favorite Weiskopf design?

TW: Loch Lomond [in Scotland], by far. It is an unparalleled piece of property. You wouldn't find a property like that anywhere in the world. It's on the most famous landlocked lake in the British Isles. It's at the base of the mountain range with the Scottish Highlands, 180 degrees around it. It has 500- to 700-year-old deciduous hardwoods, 10 or 11 different species that are from 3 to 6 feet in diameter. It has a 30-foot elevation change and it has a marsh, peat boggish wetlands, and two trout and salmon streams that run through the property. And 800 acres to put the golf course where it should be, with no houses.

GCN: Has this vocation lived up to your expectations?

TW: What I have found out about this business that is very interesting, fulfilling and intriguing is the fact that you have to really keep your eyes and ears open because you're working for someone else and using their money and reputation — not that yours isn't important, too. You have to be on the job a lot. It's a lot more difficult than people think. It's exciting, ever-changing. There are land mines that continually need to be dodged. And solutions have to be the right solutions. So you have to depend on a lot of people. That's what keeps me going. I think I'm as enthusiastic now as when I did my first course.