

By MARK LESLIE

**E**ASTLOTHIAN, Scotland—American golf course architect Tom Doak, once a caddie on the Old Course at St. Andrews and an understudy of Pete Dye, is returning to Scotland to design his first two courses here.

Sandwiched between Muirfield and North Berwick West Links, the Doak-designed Archerfield Golf Links and Fidra Golf Club will give players five miles of contiguous linksland golf along the coastline here. Town officials are reviewing

## Doak track between Scottish greats

construction drawings, and developers hope to begin work by late March.

Doak promises four holes of the Fidra layout will flow along the beach overlooking Fidra lighthouse, while the Archerfield course will be a man-made links track featuring sod-wall bunkers and a prominent berm.

Doak design associate Bruce Hepner said there is no evidence of it now, but

a course dating back to the 1700s once sat on the Archerfield acreage. Before that, it was practice field for archers. Thus its name.

Kevin Doyle from Edinburgh, who owns and builds scores of pubs and restaurants throughout Europe and owns a construction company, is the controlling partner in the venture. Managing partner John Ashworth, who owns the famous golf shirt

line, first bought the property and started the project on its way.

This will be the Doak team's first course design in the United Kingdom.

Asked if they felt pressure as Americans building a course in the "home of golf," Hepner said: "Excitement is what we feel. We are bringing as many of our people as we can."

"The land along the ocean is pretty dunesy and windswept, and the rest is a flat field," he said. "This will be a wonderful learning experience."

## Northwest Angle

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The Angle course is more than golf, however. Given the relatively short window of opportunity (an early spring and a late fall might allow for four months of swinging), and the fact that the season coincides with the money-making chances of the fishing world, time on the links is a treasured commodity.

A couples of hours a week re-establishes friendships with neighbors after an eight-month break. Fiery feuds are rekindled. Business deals and expansion possibilities get discussed. Canadian impositions are lamented. Hunting and fishing tales are exaggerated.

Golf becomes an acknowledgment of the need for a social bond in a community that prides itself on the strengths of individuality. A town meeting with a pitching wedge, if you will.

Risser's golf plans for the future are modest. Better mowers. Maybe a little wider fairway for No. 9. A few more bunkers. The right lottery ticket, or a fortuitous will-reading might bring bentgrass greens to the Angle. But for now, that's merely a pleasant thought, just like the course was in 1975.

"We like to think about it," smiled Judy Risser.

George Risser flinches as his errant drive clangs off the guinea fowl/peacock enclosure he placed between the first and second fairways. The birds inside erupt in a raucous warble not unlike some heckling gallery, making it clear to the world that this golfer has misfired.

Risser has taken a chunk of his character and stuck it in this course. Like his neighbors, who have leveled airstrips and dredged marinas in equally improbable locations, he both struggles against and revels in the near claustrophobic solitude of the Northwest Angle.

It might be nice to have things a little easier, but if they were, he admits, it wouldn't be nearly so satisfying. As he swiped through the grass around the bird pen in a fruitless search for his ball, it occurred to me that if easier does not mean better, George Risser must find a great deal of satisfaction in his golf.

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