

GOLF COURSE NEWS

THE NEWSPAPER FOR THE GOLF COURSE INDUSTRY

A UNITED PUBLICATION
VOLUME 11, NUMBER 3
MARCH 1999 • \$6.00

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HOUSTON TO GET REES JONES' TRACK

Rees Jones (far left) has put down his first complete design for a course in the state of Texas for the Redstone Group, owners of The Houstonian Hotel. To be called Shadow Hawk Golf Club, membership will be limited to 300. See page 47.

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AGC/CCI to buy Cobblestone Golf

By PETER BLAIS

DEL MAR, Calif. — Two major players in the golf course management industry — American Golf Corporation and ClubCorp Inc. — have joined together to acquire Del Mar-based Cobblestone Golf Group from the Meditrust Companies for \$393 million.

The new partnership, Golf Acquisitions LLC, is expected to close on the 45-course acquisition by March 31. Upon closing, the two companies will divide the Cobblestone portfolio.

Meditrust, a Massachusetts-based real estate investment trust (REIT), bought Cobblestone in late 1997 for \$241 million. Cobblestone nearly doubled in size under the Meditrust banner. But the REIT experienced some

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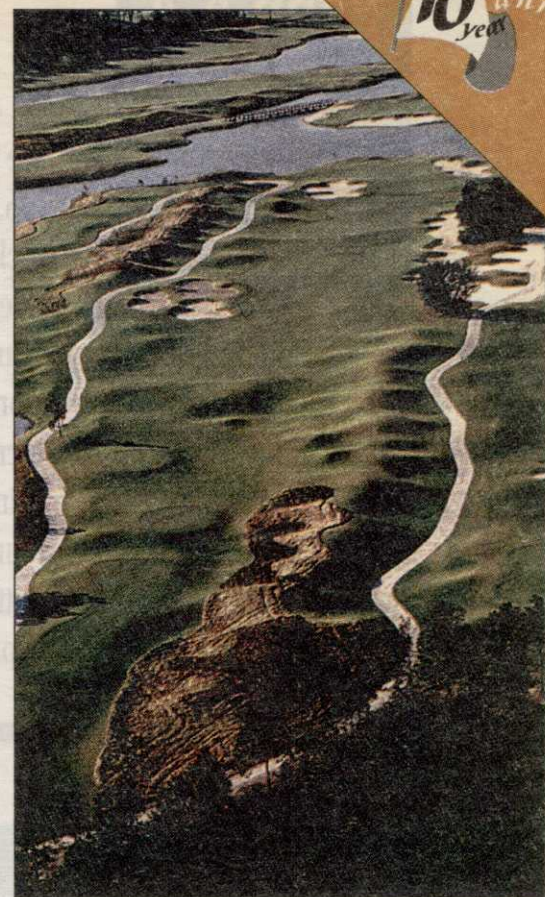
Griffin walks the walk

By MARK LESLIE

ORLANDO, Fla. — Griffin Industries has become the first company to join the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary System, committing its 20-odd properties around the country to environmental stewardship.

Announcing the move at a press conference here, Audubon International President Ron Dodson said Griffin has "picked up the mantle of conservation activism at their plant sites and corporate facility. They are, indeed, walking the walk and talking the talk."

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N.C.'S GRAND STRAND OPENS 101ST

SUNSET BEACH, N.C. — March 1 saw the opening of the first 18 at Thistle Golf Club, the area's 101st golf course to hang the 'open' shingle. Thistle was designed by Tim Cate, a protégé of noted architect Willard Byrd. Above is the par-4 6th.



THOMPSON GIVES PLAYERS A VIEW TO REMEMBER

LACEY, Wash. — Peter L.H. Thompson's Vicwood Golf Links at Hawks Prairie will be open and ready for play this spring. Built on a former logging site, the course offers rolling terrain, wetlands, water and this stunning view of 14,000-foot Mr. Rainier (above).

Audubon to open first course this fall

By MARK LESLIE

MEMPHIS, Tenn. — It was a different process but the same result: The first Audubon International Golf Course will open here this fall — the Jack Nicklaus-designed Spring Creek Ranch.

"This is not how we thought we'd get there," said Audubon International (AI) President Ron Dodson, "but it is truly the first Audubon International Golf Course."

AI courses, thought for the last year to be on the verge of reality, have been stalled for one reason or another — to a great extent because Dodson and AI-affiliated scientists are writing the "rules book" as they go. In fall 1997, the AI Golf and the

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Richmond 1st Tee ready to roll

By MARK LESLIE

RICHMOND, Va. — A judge's stunning reversal of his own decision has paved the way for the Richmond First Tee project to, finally, get under way.

Richmond organizers, who had hoped to open the nation's initial new First Tee facility, had been stalled for months by opponents using legal challenges and appeals to administrative county approvals. Now, it appears, they can proceed.

On Feb. 3, Circuit Court Judge Jack B. Stevens reportedly told a

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