

BRIEFS

EAST AMWELL TOWNSHIP, N.J. — Tom Fazio is set to begin work on an 18-hole, private layout at The Ridge at Back Brook this fall. The course will meander across 300 acres of varied terrain and Back Brook stream, said developer Joel Moore. According to Fazio, the course has 25 to 30 exceptional natural settings for golf holes. The course, in addition to a clubhouse and practice range, is slated to be completed in summer 2001.

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PALMA SOLA, Fla. — The Estuary has received approval from the Manatee County Commission following lengthy negotiations with commissioners. The project, which is being developed by Robinson Farms, Inc., is slated to include an 18-hole course and 448 homes. The development of the Estuary had been held up due to environmental and drainage concerns and confusion over a county-owned right of way. Robinson Farms won the commission over when it announced plans to restore shoreline buffers and reconnect 100 acres of mangroves with the tidal system of the Perico Bayou.

Record number of courses under construction in U.S.

JUPITER, Fla. — According to the National Golf Foundation's latest annual report on facility development in the U.S., in addition to the 448 courses that opened last year, there were an additional 1,069 courses under construction as of Jan. 1, 1999, of which 870 are scheduled for completion this year.

And there are another 708 courses across the country that are in the planning stage of development. This is the third straight year and only the fourth

time since 1990 that the "in planning" total has eclipsed 700.

In looking at the probability of 870 new courses coming on line in 1999, National Golf Foundation historical data shows that less than 60 percent of construction projects in any given year meet their original completion dates.

Consequently, the projected number of courses that will open in 1999 may be closer to 500 which would still surpass the 1995 record by a wide margin.

Speaking of records, the 1,069 courses under construction at any one point in time is an all-time high. The previous mark was 932 set in 1997.

NGF Research Manager Jim Kass points out, "if just a few more of the courses that were scheduled to open last year had met their completion dates, 1998 would have been the record year everyone had expected it to be." "However," says Kass, "last year was one of extremes for bad weather, and delays were encountered almost everywhere. As a result, a fair share of courses with late 1998 completion dates were forced to slip over into 1999. This was especially true for projects in the northern parts of the country."

As has been the case throughout most of the past 10 years, a significant number of courses coming online in 1998 were nine-holers. Last year, they accounted for 54 percent or 241 of the 448 courses built. And of these, nearly 60 percent were additions to existing facilities.

"Among other things," says Kass, "this tells us that a fair amount of the new facilities are being opened nine holes at a time. At the same time, it also says that

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Courses opened in 1998

Rank	State	Courses
1	Michigan	34
2	Florida	33
3	California	21
4	Pennsylvania	19
5-T	Indiana	18
5-T	Georgia	18
7-T	Illinois	17
7-T	Wisconsin	17
9-T	Minnesota	16
9-T	North Carolina	16
9-T	Virginia	16

Courses under construction (as of 12/31/98)

Rank	State	Courses
1	Florida	81
2	California	79
3	Michigan	63
4	New York	54
5	Texas	52
6-Tied	Pennsylvania	43
6-Tied	Ohio	43
8	Georgia	38
9	Wisconsin	36
10	Virginia	35

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