



The Bull at Boone's Trace, a GDC course.

## GDC takes the small builder title

By PETER BLAIS

**Y**ARMOUTH, Maine — What do gymnast Olga Korbut, pitcher David Wells, bowler Dick Webber and Golf Development Construction Inc. (GDC) have in common? They've all posted perfect scores/games.

Louisville-based GDC is the latest to turn the trick, capturing all 80 of a possible 80 points to take the 1999 *Golf Course News* Small Builder of the Year award. It is the first time GDC has taken the honor and the first time any firm has received a flawless rating from the developers, architects and superintendents who rate their work.

Others finishing high in the Small Builder balloting included Oliphant Golf Construction, Turf Drain, Furness Golf Construction, Frontier Construction, Formost Construction, Course Doctors, Pennink Arrimour Golf, Terry Johnson & Associates, Intergolf Design and Daylen.

GDC will receive the award at the Golf Course Builders Association of America annual banquet during February's Golf Course Superintendents Association of America International Conference and Show in New Orleans.

Among GDC's 1999 projects were a nine-hole addition to Panther Creek Golf Club in Utica, Ky.; a nine-hole renovation to Shawnee Hills Country Club in Harrisburg, Ill.; and a new, David Pfaff-designed 18-hole course called The Bull at Boone's Trace in Richmond, Ky.

Panther Creek was a nine-hole addition built over a former strip mine. The site included three deep ponds. The project required some major earthmoving to rid the property of the spoilage that dominated the landscape. Managing partner Louis Miller designed the new holes himself.

Shawnee Hills is a nine-hole country club that lost all its greens in 1998. GDC completely renovated the facility, which reopened by mid-summer 1999.

The Bull at Boone's Trace is an 18-hole course located within a 2,300-acre tract that Miller said has been receiving strong reviews.

"We are very pleased with the results of GDC's work," said Shawnee Hills superintendent Herman Hutchison. "The completed work met with all of our expectations. GDC helped us throughout the grow-in period, with excellent results."

GDC offers construction services com-

plete through grow in, taking the grass through three mowings, multiple fertilization applications and, if needed, applications of fungicides and insecticides.

"We charge a lot for that," Miller said. "We provide the men and equipment. But then the owner has a finished product. You don't have a superintendent with no grow-in experience who is trying to follow you. That superintendent may or may not be qualified to grow in a course. For us, it was born out of necessity to get our money and get our retainage [the 10 percent developers typically hold back until construction is completed]. Once you're through grow-in, the architect signs off, the owner signs off, everybody is happy."

"Grow-in is not cheap. It's \$100,000. It's a break-even for us. But it guarantees I'm going to get my money. And the client gets a finished product. We don't require it [that the developer signs on for grow-in]. But when you offer it, most will turn it down initially, then come back knowing it's too good to pass up. The developer or architect will usually go to the owner and say, 'You're crazy if you don't take this.'"

GDC is a certified course builder with more than 100 years of golf industry experience between partners Miller (secretary/treasurer), Clark Fenimore (vice president) and Jim Kirchdorfer (president). Miller, Kirchdorfer and Fenimore joined forces to build their first project, 27-hole Quail Chase Golf Club in Louisville, in 1987. Since that first year, the firm has been involved with more than 95 golf course projects.

Miller, who is GDC's managing partner, has been in the golf business for 37 years. He has a degree in agronomy from Pennsylvania State University and a bachelor's degree in English. He has been involved with Louisville Country Club for 30 years, first as a superintendent and now as an agronomist.

GDC did all the renovation work in preparation for the 1996 and 2000 PGA Championships at Valhalla Golf Club in Louisville. It will prepare the course for the 2004 PGA Championship and the 2007 Ryder Cup. GDC also built the nation's initial First Tee facility, a three-hole, kids-only layout named Shawnee Golf Course in Louisville.

GDC is a regional builder, working primarily in the Upper South and Midwest.

Continued on page 28



## Decisions.

NX-PRO with Meth-Ex 40 delivers the dependable, controlled release you expect from a leading nitrogen source. Plus, its homogeneous analysis has all the essential nutrients your turf craves. Of course, if Meth-Ex 40 isn't quite what you had in mind, we have just what you're looking for. NX-PRO with Poly-X PRO. Just take your pick. NX-PRO will do the rest. Available in greens or fairway grades. Call your nearest Lebanon Turf Products Distributor. Or 1-800-233-0628.

**Lebanon**  
TURF PRODUCTS



## Fearis

Continued from page 17

fit in," the low-budget superintendent would say.

The limited-budget initiative is a way to overcome that perception of cliques. It is sort of a chapter outreach program.

As chapter members and local distributors you know the limited-budget facilities in your areas. Identify the superintendents at

those courses. Then make a telephone call, or better yet, a personal visit. You do that and you break the barrier of the clique. You invite them to the meetings and maybe waive the chapter dues for a year, if that's what it takes to get them to come to the meetings. GCSAA is giving its chapters a free membership to award to a course that is identified through this limited-budget initiative. We

waive the dues and hopefully the chapter does the same.

You make the new superintendent feel at home. You remember how you felt when you went to that first meeting? You didn't know anybody. You had no idea who you were going to play golf with. So, instead of playing in your regular foursomes, you put this new person in your group. You follow this up by offering advice if they

mention a problem they are having at their course. Maybe you stop by their club for a visit. And let them know GCSAA will follow up with any information it has that may help them.

Hopefully they'll see that the local chapter is helping them and consider attending the national conference and show.

It goes back to this affordable, accessible golf the whole indus-

try is stressing. The growth of the game won't occur solely at the \$175 green-fee facilities. Somewhere there has to be a place where women, kids, minorities and Generation X-ers can go, learn the game and not pay an arm and a leg for it. Limited-budget facilities are where this can happen. I'll bet 90 percent of superintendents can trace their roots back to facilities like these, either playing or working. If the game and out industry is going to grow, it's going to happen largely at these limited-budget courses. ▶

## MacCurrach

Continued from page 24

overloading the capacity of the company," MacCurrach said. "I tell our clients and architects we are a good five-job company. If we have guys on five different sites, we're good. If we have guys on six different sites, we're not so good, we're okay. If we get stretched to where we are finishing one and starting one, and we get some overlap where we have guys at seven different locations, we're not a good company.

"Growth-wise, we've been extremely controlled. My nightmare would be to get a telephone call from an owner someday saying, 'We're not getting enough production from this.' I just never get those calls.

"We don't bid a lot of work. If we show up at a bid meeting, it's because we want the job. I don't throw in a bunch of complimentary bids. Our batting average on bids is pretty good because we don't bid a lot of jobs. We have a lot of negotiated work coming our way. Some of these architects are starting to lean toward us on some of their nicer jobs. That's a blessing."

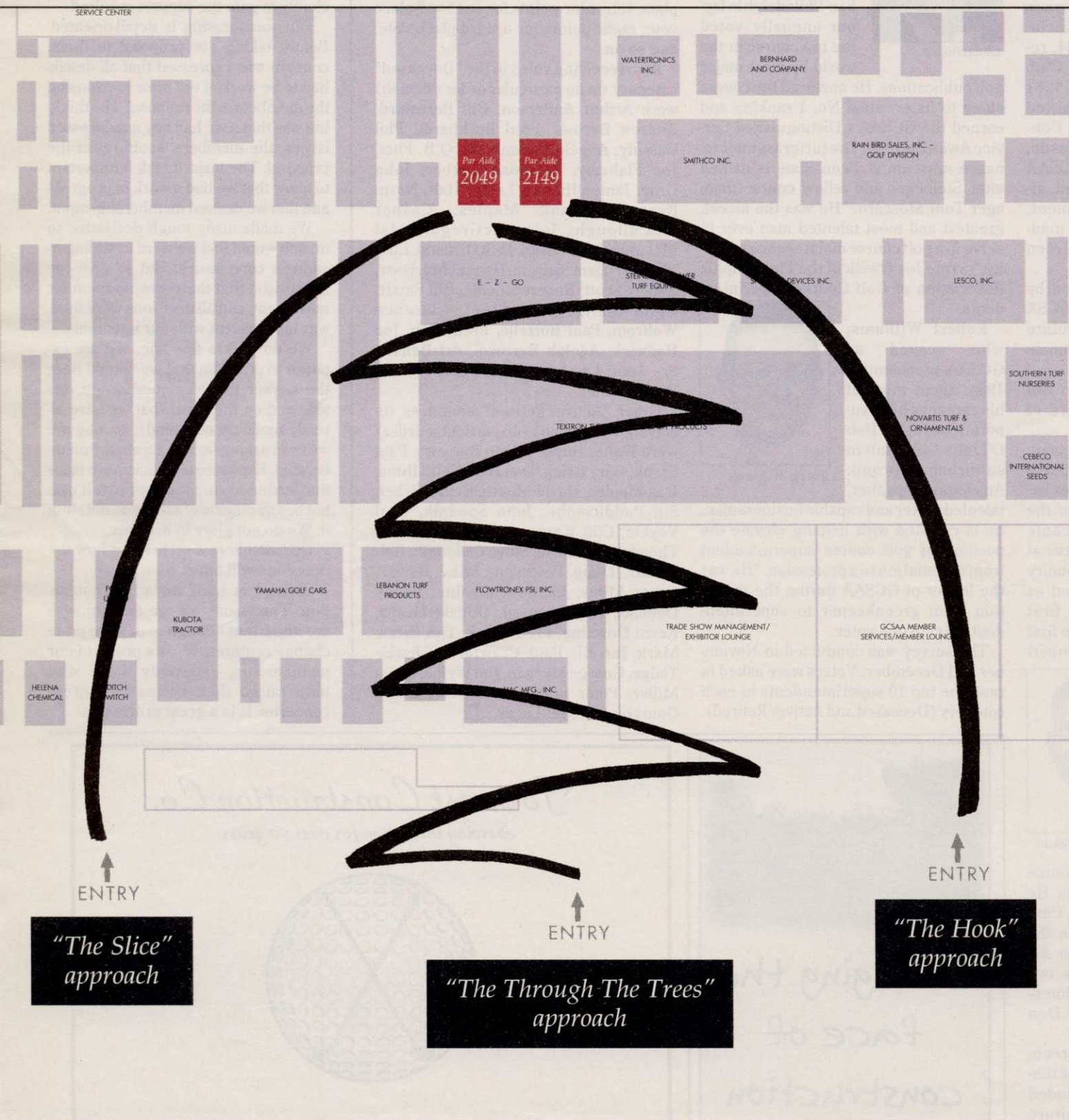
MacCurrach has never set goals in terms of total revenues or employees. At the end of each year, he said, he meets with his accountant and is always amazed at how much money the firm has made.

"We've always focused on the journey and not the destination," he said. "We don't have a five-year or 10-year plan around here... If I lose a bunch of people, I'll take on less work. Our capacity of personnel drives the volume of work we do. We'll never overextend the capacity of this company." ▶

## GDC

Continued from page 25

"We're at a comfortable size for us right now," Miller said. "We can run up to 90 employees and as many as four full-time jobs. We don't want to get much bigger. That way we can retain hands-on control. When the architect's on site, I want to be there, too." ▶



However you find your way to our booth, you'll be thrilled that you made the visit. For yet another remarkable new product from the leading name in the industry, swing by booths #2049 and #2149 at GCSAA. 1-888-893-2433.



CHANGING THE COURSE OF GOLF.