

Tournament Players Club planned for Mexico City

By PETER BLAIS

MEXICO CITY — Construction is scheduled to begin late this summer on a PGA Tour Tournament Players Club golf course 30 miles northwest of the Mexici City.

Hurdzan/Fry Golf Course Design — in conjunction with professional golfer John Cook

and PGA Tour lead designer Chris Gray — has completed the preliminary design for the 18-hole, private/resort course scheduled to open in 2002.

“The housing plan has been wrapped around the golf course,” said Hurdzan/Fry Senior Design Associate David Whelchel. “They let us put the golf course where

we wanted it, within reason.”

Group IUSA, which has built several courses throughout Mexico, is the developer, according to Whelchel. The first phase of the TPC project will include the course, a hotel and commercial area. A second course is under consideration. Corporate villas are also planned in hopes

of eventually landing a PGA Tour event, Whelchel said.

Whelchel said the property is located at 7,000 feet altitude, which should allow for plantings of bentgrass, ryegrasses and fescues, although the final turf selection has not been made. Bisecting the property are two small rivers, one of which has carved a bluff that will play an important part in the course design.

“On a clear day you can see two volcanoes east of the city,” said Whelchel of the mountainside site. “We’ll probably move more than a million yards of earth.”

Cook’s father, Jim Cook — who runs a tournament management firm and oversaw the Mexico Open — brought the Hurdzan-Fry team in on the project, Whelchel said.

Austin CC

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The situation was resolved in part with oral histories from two surviving Austin Country Club members who recalled the layout, along with approximate yardages and course features. Still, the descriptions did not provide quite enough information for a draftsman to draw the holes on paper.

Enter Ed White, 1936 Walker Cup Team member and the University of Texas’ first NCAA Individual champion.

Asked what he remembered about the course he played as a Texas undergraduate, White responded, “Want me to draw it for you?”

White’s sketch was turned into a color rendering by Planned Environments, Inc., the firm that also did renderings of the second Austin Country Club location on Riverside Drive and the present-day Davenport Ranch layout.

Unfortunately, White never got to see the finished product. He died of cancer last fall.

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tory of changes to the course, beginning with the original plan. Using early engineering drawings and a series of aerial photographs from different eras, it was determined that the layout and greens were unchanged since the inception. However, as with most courses of this era, bunker shapes, sizes and locations had been modified or changed with time.

The construction of the bunker project was completed in late fall of 1999 by TurfDrain, Inc. of Guelph, Canada. Overseeing the construction were project architect Howard Nauboris and superintendent Andrew Socie.

Grosse Ile Golf & Country Club’s second phase construction will include drainage of six greens, fairways and roughs and a state of the art irrigation system. Work will be completed this year.

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