

GCSAA championship

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CANYON SPRINGS: GREEN SPEED CHALLENGES

Steven Dennis at Canyon Springs is currently in the process of renovating bunkers and hopes to be finished, at least with the greenside bunkers, in time for the tournament.

Set in the "hill country," the 7,077-yard layout is laid out in two big loops, one for the front nine and one for the back nine. "The course is really spread out. Sometimes you can feel like you're the only one out there," said Dennis. "We sort of have a rustic look here with canyons and dry creek beds."

One of the most challenging aspects of the course will certainly be the greens. "Our greens probably have more ridges and undulations than most courses. Reading the greens will be one of the keys to playing Canyon Springs," he said, "and we'll probably maintain green speeds at nine feet to nine and a half. You don't want to get above the hole on certain greens, because you'd more than likely be looking at a three putt."

Designed by Tom Walker and opened in 1998, the course presents numerous challenges. "Be cautious of our tall native grasses," Dennis warned. "They can be treacherous. And on the eighth hole, don't try to bite off too much or you'll be in some serious trouble. It's our number one handicap hole with a two-part fairway. You may want to lay up with a two iron or three wood, and then go for a long shot in to the green."

With a couple of scenic waterfalls, one on the tenth hole and another off the 18th green, and some challenging greens, Canyon Springs will provide for attractive and competitive championship play.

TAPATIO SPRINGS: IN THE HIGH COUNTRY

At 1,900 feet, Ted McClure's Tapatio Springs Resort is the highest of the six courses in the championship. Designed by Bill Johnston, the Valley and Lakes nines opened in 1981. The Ridge Course, once an executive course, was renovated and reopened in 1999 to create a 27-hole championship layout.

Other than some bunker clean-up, McClure is currently taking care of some overdue tree trimming to keep the course well-groomed for his peers. "We're a fairly wide-open course, with quite a few trees," said McClure. "We also have a fair amount of water that comes into play here. Frederick Creek cuts across holes two, three, four, five and six on the Lakes nine,

and holes three and eight on the Valley nine.

"The Ridge Course," he added, "has water that comes into play on holes one, two, three, four, five and seven. You don't have to hit it long to score well, but you definitely need to keep it straight." Though it's uncertain which 18 holes will be played, McClure deems the Valley nine to be slightly tougher to play, since some of the par-4s play a little longer.

SILVERHORN: A TREE-LINED LAYOUT

Barring some sort of strike from Mother Nature, Neil Thraikill assures that Silverhorn Golf Club will be in top shape for championship play.

The 6,922-yard traditional course, designed by Randy Heckenkemper, was submerged for a week during the 1998 flood. "We had 24 inches of rain in 20 hours," said Thraikill. "Some greens were totally submerged for five or six days under about 10 feet of water. The silt settled and really left a mess."

"We haven't been able to really get back to where we once were," he said. "but we'll be geared toward high-end maintenance and focused on frequencies as the tournament gets closer. We'll be mowing more often and very detail-oriented to present a great round of play."

Thraikill offered some strategic advice for those who must navigate this woodlands course carved out of 220 acres. "The front nine is fairly open, which is evident on the par-5 first hole. The back nine has a very tight tree-lined layout with creeks running through it. You really have to put a premium on accuracy off the tee."

"Placement can be critical," he added. "You can land in the fairway on a lot of holes and still have a lot of work to do to get the ball where it needs to be."

The greens are not severe at all, not very undulating, and are fair putting surfaces. We'll try to get the green speeds up between 10 and 11 feet for the championship.

FAIR OAKS RANCH: DORMANT FAIRWAYS

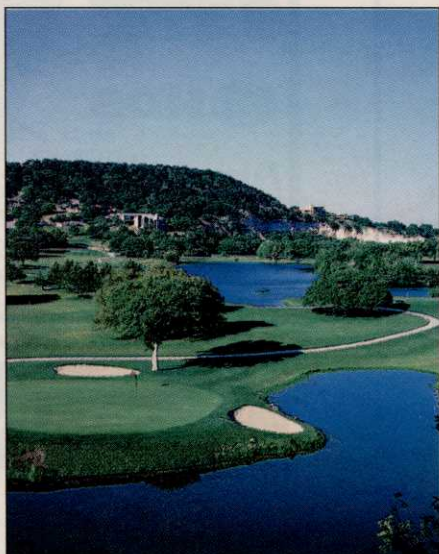
During 16 months of drought, superintendent Mitchell Kiser at the Fair Oaks Ranch Golf & Country Club decided not to overseed the 419 Bermuda grass fairways with ryegrass this season. "At the time, we believed there wouldn't be enough water to grow the seed in, so we made the decision to go for an early spring-up next year," he said. "For the tournament, we're looking at options to darken the fairways so that, at least from the tee boxes, the players will be able to pick out the fairways and a target line."

The private, high hill-country club offers 36-holes—the Blackjack Oak and Live Oak courses. Kiser anticipates that the Live Oak course will be the one chosen for his peers to play. "It's an old-style course with small undulating greens, some rolling terrain, lots of trees, and fairly tight," he said. "The course is only 6,700 yards, but it requires a smart round of play. Especially with the last four holes, players will need to finish strong to score well."

"Our number-one handicap 15th hole is a long par-4 that plays into the prevailing winds," he said. "There's also a creek that runs right in front of the green, so a long carry is challenging. The 16th hole is a little par-3 over a ravine, and it's uphill with a narrow shoot. The next hole is a par-5 with a double ravine. Because of the position of the first ravine, players typically will not use a driver off the tee."

"The 18th hole is a par-4. It's not very long, but it's very tight," he said. "Unless you hit a perfect drive, you could easily end up in a large bunker to the right or behind some trees. The last hole also plays into the wind that time of year."

Players won't need their drivers very often at this course, but strategic play will be imperative to have any hopes of winning. ■



The par-3 third hole at Tapatio Springs Resort

Golf Trust of America

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Barbara, Calif., might go to a company that recently built a hotel next door, he said.

The other large, public golf course holding company, National Golf Properties (NGP), "can probably pick off a few courses, as well," said Penney, who tracks NGP for RS Investment Management. "They have looked at the whole deal, and there are six to eight courses that they would like, at the right price."

Penney added that NGP, although subject to some of the same financial pressures as GTA, appears to be in substantially better shape. "About 45 percent of their debt is variable-rate, so we've had to lower numbers a couple of times due to the fact that rates are going up," he said. "But they're so big, with 184 courses, that they'll be okay. They've also been more cautious. They grew nice and slow." ■

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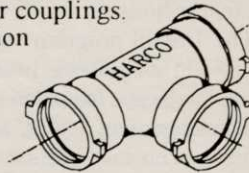
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Continued from page 9

Daniel Ward, senior manager of curriculum at the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA), Karnok and the USGIS were able to key in on the feedback from superintendents.

"The issues being addressed were flexibility, availability and cost," said Karnok. "We wanted to establish an alternative certification program that would be widely accepted by the industry. Also, rather than just create a continuing education program that offered a certificate, this program will provide college-level credit. Upon completion of the program, the student will have 27 hours of college credit that may be used toward an associate or bachelor's degree."



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The USGIS program will include courses in soil science, pest management, landscape irrigation and other turf management topics, as well as courses in business, arts and science to satisfy requirements for electives. ■

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8* — GCSAA Seminar, "Bentgrass Management & Rootzone Maintenance", Indianapolis, Ind.

8* — GCSAA Seminar, "Lake & Aquatic Plant Management", St. Louis, Mo.

8* — GCSAA Seminar, "Advanced Weed Management", Portland, Ore.

8-11 — 2001 North Carolina Turfgrass Conference and Show in Charlotte, N.C. Contact 888-695-1333.

9* — GCSAA Seminar, "Golf Course Restoration, Renovation and Construction Projects", Pittsburgh, Pa.

9-11 — Eastern Pennsylvania Turf Conference & Trade Show. Contact (814) 863-3475.

15-18 — Michigan Turfgrass Conference in Lansing. Contact 517-321-1660.

16-18 — Maine GCSA Turf Conference Samoset Resort, Rockland, Me. Contact mgcsa@maine.rr.com.

17-19 — The Mid-America Horticultural Trade Show in Chicago. Contact 847-526-2010.

24-26 BTME Show (England). Contact www.bigga.org.uk

25 — Golf Range Assoc. of America Annual Conference & Trade Show. Contact 203-544-9504.

28-1 — 74th World Conference on Club Management in San Diego. Contact 703-739-9500.

FEBRUARY

15-17 — Golf Course Superintendents Association of America Conference and Show in Dallas. Contact 800-472-7878.

16-18 Barcelona European Golf Show. Contact (+34) 93 233 23 38.

24-27 — Canadian International Turfgrass Conference and Trade Show in Vancouver. Contact 800-387-1056.

26 — New York State Turfgrass Association Southeast Regional Conference. Contact, 800-873-8873.

MARCH

1-2 — Fairway 2001 Munich, Germany. Contact +49(89)32353-219.

7-9 — New England Regional Turfgrass Show in Providence, R.I. Contact 401-848-0004.

* For more information contact the GCSAA Education Office at 800-472-7878.

Periodicals postage paid at Yarmouth, Maine, and additional mailing office. *Golf Course News* (ISSN 1054-0644) is published monthly by United Publications, Inc., 106 Lafayette St., P.O. Box 997, Yarmouth, ME 04096. Phone number is 207-846-0600.

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