

Domino's Pizza founder planning Rees Jones course

By JAY FINEGAN

ANN ARBOR, Mich. — Tom Monaghan, impresario of the Domino's Pizza empire, is in the permitting stage for an 18-hole golf course near this University of Michigan community. If approved, as appears likely, the course will come with all the toppings, particularly an acute environmental ethic.

Monaghan is not scrimping on this facility, to be called Ave Maria International Golf Club. The course is expected to cost about \$20 million and will feature a 34,000-square-foot clubhouse that originally was going to be Monaghan's personal residence.



Tom Monaghan

"The clubhouse is going to be built in a Frank Lloyd Wright style—low-profile, natural materials, really pretty jazzy," said Bill Koshelnyk of the Ave Maria Foundation. "It will be a very exclusive, upscale operation."

"This is not your typical country club," added course manager Don Schrottenboer, who said the club will be the equivalent of those that charge \$50,000 or more a year for individual memberships.

Monaghan is hoping that the natural character of the course will appeal to golfers willing to part with hefty fees for a pristine environment. He believes the course will fit well with the character of the area. "Ann Arbor is synonymous with higher education," he said. "It's one of the country's great centers of academic life. And environmental quality is always a priority with intellectuals."

REES JONES DESIGN

The layout, designed by architect Rees Jones, will occupy a 390-acre tract, including some 70 acres of wetlands. The plan seeks to preserve vegetation and topographical features in a near-natural state, with minimal alterations. His design specifies the filling of only one third of an acre of wetlands, with raised boardwalks crossing less than a quarter of an acre.

But that small wetlands loss will be more than compensated for by the creation of new wetlands. "We're filling in less than half an acre, but we will be adding about an acre," said landscape architect Henry Byma, of SmithGroup JJR, an Ann Arbor landscaping and engineering firm.

Byma added that Jones was chosen as the designer "to help us arrive at a reduced impact on the environment." Jones' work, he said, "emphasizes preservation of as many natural features as possible."

MICHIGAN STATE INVOLVED

The landscape design exceeds mandated watershed and flood-control requirements. Sophisticated turf management strategies, developed with guidance from Michigan State's department of crop and soil science, are aimed at protecting soil quality and groundwater resources.

The club, situated northeast of here, will help fund Ave Maria University, the "umbrella" organization Monaghan established that includes Ave Maria College, in Ypsilanto, Mich., and St. Mary's College, in Port Orchard, Mich. Monaghan also set up a branch of the university in Nicaragua.

NGF report forecasts development slowdown for 2001

By ANDREW OVERBECK

While the number of new golf course openings in the United States once again topped the 500 mark in 2000, the number of openings forecast for 2001 could be significantly lower, according to the National Golf Foundation's recently released "Golf Facilities in the U.S." report.

The record development pace continued in 2000, with 524 golf courses totaling 398.5 18-hole equivalents opening across the country. That number is up approximately 34 percent from 1994 figures (see accompanying chart).

However, at the close of 2000, a total of 707 courses were under construction, a 25-percent decrease from year-end 1999 figures. The total courses in planning increased only slightly to 1,049. Of those under construction, 535 courses are scheduled to open in 2001.

According to the NGF, approximately 60 percent of these courses actually open in a given year. If that trend holds true, new openings and expansions may only reach 321 in 2001, meaning that the number of 18-hole equivalents could be the lowest figure since the early 1990s.



Source: National Golf Foundation

DeVries debuts first solo course design

By ANDREW OVERBECK

KINGSLEY, Mich. — Mike DeVries has unveiled his first solo design here at The Kingsley Club, a private equity membership facility just south of Traverse City.

The layout, which opened May 19, was constructed in-house by DeVries and superintendent Dan Lucas.

"We moved about 30,000 cubic yards of dirt," said DeVries. "That includes 10,000 yards for greens mix and tee mix."

The reason for the minimal amount of earthmoving required during construction was because the "holes were just there," according to DeVries. The

designer had his pick of 400 acres of land and chose the best 200 for the 6,750-yard par-71 course.

"I especially like holes two through seven," he said, "because of the unique landform that they are situated on and how they relate to one another. Due to the openness of the site there, one gets to experience



The green complex on the 215-yard, 16th hole

the holes from many different vantage points."

Construction at Kingsley began in fall 1998. The course features fescue fairways and bentgrass greens. The club is a golf-only facility and membership will be limited to 250.

GTA sells The Woodlands, Palm Desert CC

GULF SHORES, Ala. — Golf Trust of America, continuing to unload courses as its liquidation plan proceeds, has sold The Woodlands for \$6.4 million to Brights Creek Development Co. The Woodlands, here in Gulf Shores, is an 18-hole daily-fee club opened in 1994. GTA also has sold Palm Desert Country Club (Calif.) for \$4.075 million to Dahoon Investment Co.



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