

## O'Brien to manage operations at First Tee

By JOEL JOYNER

ST. AUGUSTINE, Fla. — Joseph O'Brien, former chief operating officer of the GCSAA, has joined The First Tee as senior managing director of operations. While staying focused on development, O'Brien intends to offer services as part of the organization's game plan.

"The First Tee is really moving from a largely catalytic organization designed to help communities create affordable, accessible golf facilities for juniors, to one that also functions as a service organization," said O'Brien.

Having worked in chapter relations with the GCSAA, O'Brien is conversant with the challenges and opportunities of working with reasonably independent entities to achieve the same objectives.

"We're establishing a computer network between all our chapters by providing hardware, software and even cameras in order to formally register all the youngsters in the program," he said. "With 52 chapters, it's a monumental project."

### THE FIRST TEE NETWORK

Computers and training manuals have already been delivered to the chapters, and a national database will be prepared. "Chapters will be able to track student participation and development in the program," said O'Brien. "Their life skills progress, clinic and lesson participation and the success of their play will be collected to create a database.

"The chapters also can use their own imagination to utilize the computers to the fullest," he said. "Educational games may be offered to further develop student learning. Down the road, we also could help individual chapters create their own Web sites."

### PAR AND BIRDIE LEVELS

The organization has released its life skills curriculum for the par and birdie training levels. "We have trained personnel across the country ready to implement that program," O'Brien said. "The eagle level is still in development and will probably be available next year."

The life skills program covers everything from proper attitude and relationships on and off the golf course to terminology, rules and respect for the game.

### OTHER COMMITMENTS

The First Tee is following through with its other promises.

"We're sending practice balls to our chapters, in rather large quantities, as well as junior golf club sets and individual practice clubs," said O'Brien.

One of his charges is to expand opportunities The First Tee may have in building coalitions with other youth organizations. "I'm looking at organizations that

work with children, are urban in nature, and may even have their own set of instructional processes attached," he said.

"Organizations like the Boys and Girls Clubs, the YMCA, police organizations and schools will help to increase the participation in and success of our junior golf program," O'Brien added.

## Hermitage

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efforts."

### COLLEGE OUTREACH

Eller and Schultz are now bringing in college students from Middle Tennessee State University's biology department to develop educational programs, nature studies and environmental quality enhancements.

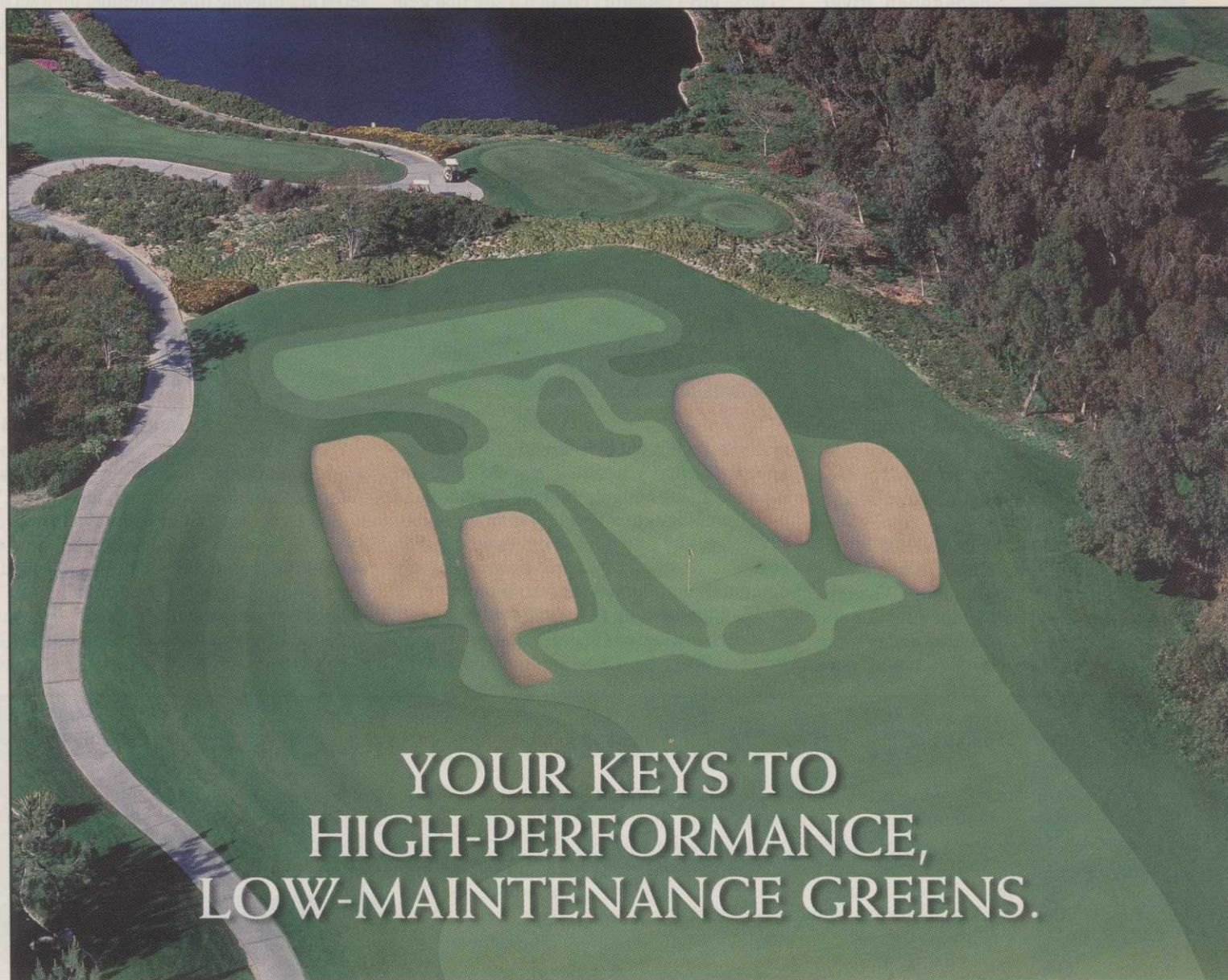
In addition, MTSU faculty and

students plan to collect water samples four times a year and make recommendations as needed to improve the quality of runoff at the site.

This year, more than 130 elementary-school teacher candidates are scheduled to see the advantages of a properly designed and maintained golf course. They will experience how the course can be a living laboratory for their classes. ■



Joe O'Brien



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