

BRIEFS

98 COURSE CONSTRUCTION STARTS REPORTED IN 1ST QUARTER

JUPITER, Fla. — According to the National Golf Foundation, 20 new courses came on line during the first three months of 2001. The first quarter also saw a total of 98 construction starts and the announcement of plans for 92 others.

FIRST NATIONAL FUNDING TEXAS COURSE

SAN ANTONIO — First National of America, based in New Jersey, has made a construction loan of \$6.2 million to developer Imarra Ltd., which plans to build Century Oaks Golf Course. The 7,155-yard, par-72 layout will be set on 744 acres in northeast San Antonio. In addition to funding the construction, First National will provide permanent financing of the course once it opens, according to Jerry Sager, the bank's managing director.

PALMER ADDING NEW 18 AT IRELAND'S KILDARE

STRAFFAN, Kildare, Ireland — An air of anticipation hangs over the K Club here in Ireland following the announcement that a second 18 will be added to the current Arnold Palmer-designed layout here, which opened in 1991. The K Club is soon to be a Ryder Cup venue. Palmer is again to be the designer, and a masterplan has been submitted. The K Club is 20 miles southwest of Dublin.

FRANK JOINS GEORGE GOLF DESIGN

RICHMOND, Va. — Driven by a widening call for his work, Lester George has hired Andy Frank as a design associate with George Golf Design Inc. George cited Frank's "exceptional background," which includes



Andy Frank

a degree in landscape architecture from California State Polytechnic University at Pomona and four years as assistant superintendent at highly regarded Industry Hills Golf Course in Industry, Calif. Frank also spent two years with golf course builder Landscapes Unlimited of Lincoln, Neb., and three years at Williamsburg Environmental Group, a company in Williamsburg, Va., which is heavily involved in the environmental aspects of golf projects.

Rulewich's Saratoga National opens in Adirondacks

By JAY FINEGAN

SARATOGA, N.Y. — This Adirondack resort town, best known for its thoroughbred race track and 19th century Victorian architecture, finally has a high-end daily-fee course. Saratoga National Golf Club, designed by Roger Rulewich, opened over Memorial Day weekend and should be in good trim for the affluent crowd of "summer people" who flock here for the cool mountain air.

Set by the shores of Lake Lonely, the 7,200-yard track plays through a former horse farm. Rulewich navigated the routing around a complex pattern of wetlands, traversed by 23 wooden bridges that lend the course a special charm.

Extensive stonework gives strong definition to green complexes, wetland edges and the clubhouse. Multiple tees, wide fairways and generous targets create an inviting atmosphere for each hole. A creek flows lazily through the property.

WRITING CHECKS

All told, it's a sharp new layout with plenty of interesting features. According to Rulewich, owners and developers Tom Newkirk and Bob Howard spared no expense in building the best course possible.



The 15th hole at Saratoga National, on the shores of Lake Lonely

"They turned out to be some of the easiest clients we've ever worked with," he said. "They've been excited about this project from day one and have been out on the site a great deal, watching it happen. And when anything came up that

looked like it might help the course, they were ready to write a check. We couldn't ask for anything more."

To avoid some of the grow-in issues, for example, they agreed to sod 74 acres.

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The third green at Tullymore Golf Club

Engh's new Tullymore Golf Club will challenge long-ball hitters

By JAY FINEGAN

STANWOOD, Mich. — The first time he saw the land for Tullymore Golf Club, Jim Engh knew he had to put on his thinking cap. The 600-acre parcel contained 350 acres of wetlands.

Tullymore opens later this month, and golfers will discover how the designer dealt with the swampy terrain that predominates across the property. He built 2,500 feet of boardwalk and set some back tee placements that require bodacious drives over the wetlands.

"The land has fingers of protruding hills coming down into the wetlands," said Engh, a golf architect based in Castle Rock, Colo. "You're playing over and around wetlands, but always into sandy hillsides with mature forest of

oak, ash and some pine. So it's the combination of the wetlands and the forest that adds an intriguing element. We carved into a lot of hills and preserved the wetlands in their natural state. It allowed us to do some unusual, dunesy holes."

Tullymore's debut will add a second daily-fee layout to a complex owned by Canadian Lakes Development Group. The other course here at Stanwood, an hour north of Grand Rapids, is St. Ives, which enjoys a five-star rating from *Golf Digest*. "They're going to have two very interesting and diverse courses," Engh observed.

250-YARD CARRY

The 7,000-yard Tullymore track
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Cupp designing Bonita Bay Group course at Verandah

BONITA SPRINGS, Fla. — Golf course architect Bob Cupp has been chosen to design the first 18-hole championship golf course at Verandah. The 1,456-acre master-planned community is being developed by The Bonita Bay Group along the Orange River in northeastern Lee County, Fla.

Cupp previously designed both 18-hole championship courses at Shadow Wood Country Club in The Brooks, another



A view of Cupp's Shadow Wood CC, another course he designed for Bonita Bay Group.

Bonita Bay complex. At Verandah, he is creating what he describes as a "distinct design" that will complement the locale.

"This location is very different from most areas in south Florida," Cupp said. "I don't know of another golf course in this area that has the same look and feel of this one, with the numerous old-growth live oak trees and river frontage."

Kitty Green, general manager of Verandah,

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GOLF COURSE NEWS

Engh's Tullymore

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promises to pose some stiff challenges from the back pegs, including some potential round-wreckers. A good example is a par-3 hole design that Engh modeled after the famous "Dell" hole at Ireland's Lahinch.

"I came across this sort of hole in the ground," he said. "I actually cut a little avenue through it with a little sliver of fairway coming through, with this monstrous green. It plays a variety of lengths, from 100 yards back to 250 yards. We

have an elevated tee, and from the back you've got to carry a drive into this hole in the ground where the green is. It's going to require a 250-yard poke.

"Because the wetlands were there, we couldn't make it like, say, 210 yards," Engh added. "That's the thing about this course—because of the forced carries out there, it is going to play extremely difficult from the back tees."

BAILING OUT

Taking mercy, Engh designed "bail out" sites on all shots, except from the back tees.

"From the next tee up, what we call the

main tee, everybody has a bail out," he said. "You can always take a different route. For the hackers, I moved the tees up, and the forced carries are out of play. On the third hole, for example, the front two tees don't have to carry anything. But from the back, you have to carry it 220 yards over the wetlands, and that's all there is to it.

"It's the same for every course I do," Engh explained. "My MO is that, if you pick the wrong tees to play from, you're probably not going to have fun. If you go back too far, you're going to get your tail kicked. But if you happen to pick the

right tee for your game and ability, you're going to have a ball."

SODDED BLUEGRASS ROUGHS

The course is wall-to-wall bentgrass, on all tees, fairways and greens. But the roughs were sodded with bluegrass. "Bentgrass comes up pretty quickly," Engh said. "The thing about bluegrass is, that's your erosion barrier. That's what keeps your bentgrass from being contaminated. And that's the area that will get the most cart traffic.

"My belief is, if you have a stand of grass, even if it looks like it's up and

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Cupp's Verandah

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said Cupp was asked to handle the project based on his track record of designing courses in concert with the natural surroundings. "We knew that working with Bob on this site would help us maximize the existing character of the property," she said.

SIMILARITIES TO SHADOW WOOD

Cupp said the oak trees will be used on most of the holes, particularly the ninth and 18th. Additionally, the course will finish amidst the main oak hammock.

"Because of the trees, the landforms of the course will be mostly subtle and will reflect a more traditional design that is normally seen up north," he said. "Regarding strategy and conditioning, this course will be very similar to those at Shadow Wood. And strategically, the length, the diversity of the holes and the dimensions will be similar. However, aesthetically, this course will be completely unique from any other course in the area and will reflect the 'old Florida' feel of the property."

Located on property formerly known as the Baucom Ranch, Verandah is bordered by 1.5 miles of the Orange River. The central feature in the community will be the river village, a gathering place comprised of individual amenity buildings, including a golf pro shop, a restaurant, a tennis/fitness area and a nature center, all within a large oak hammock.

36 HOLES OF GOLF

Verandah is being planned as a low-density community, with an average of approximately one residence per acre. The site design incorporates pedestrian walkways along the riverfront and winding throughout the community.

At least 65 percent of the property will be open space with natural preserve areas, parks, wetlands, lakes, 36 holes of golf, and a buffer along the river to help maintain the unique character of the riverfront. Verandah will offer a mix of single-family, villa and coach homes initially ranging in price from \$150,000 to \$500,000.

The Bonita Bay Group is a diversified company involved in the planning, development, sales and management of master-planned communities and free-standing recreational facilities throughout Southwest Florida. The company employs more than 1,200 individuals and operates five master-planned communities—Bonita Bay, The Brooks, Mediterra, TwinEagles and Verandah—along with 11 golf courses and two marinas. ■



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Saratoga Nat'l

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"We sodded everything except the fairways and the green surfaces, which we seeded with bent," Rulewich said. "All the roughs were sodded, and we carried that sod all the way to our edges."

Saratoga Sod supplied the turf and Chesapeake Turf, of Salisbury, Md., rolled it in.

CLUBHOUSE OF STONE

Similarly, Newkirk and Howard admired some of the stonework the designer used to buttress one of the greens, and consequently authorized a liberal use of stone throughout the property.

"Many of the pond banks and wetland edges, as well as greens and tees, are reinforced and stabilized with stacked stone walls that lend a strong visual element throughout the course," said Rulewich.

"They [the owners] seem to have the wherewithal to do all the nice touches," he added. "They're also building quite a nifty clubhouse for themselves, also using a lot of stonework. It has some unusual features, like a 'zero edge' pool. It's not contained but drops off to a waterfall. They even consider the clubhouse a second home. Upstairs, they have some private quarters for themselves and their golfing buddies."

CARRIES OVER WETLANDS

Working with general contractor Delany Construction, Rulewich's own construction company, a partnership called The Golf Group Inc., handled much of the heavy lifting. "We did the shaping and put the features together and did a lot of the grading on the course," he said.

Starting with a fairly flat piece of ground – open pastures separated by hedgerows of mature

trees and brush – work crews moved between 600,000 and 700,000 yards of earth, in the process creating some additional lakes and ponds on the course. Everything eventually drains back into Lake Lonely.

"The tricky part was dealing with the wetlands, which are scattered throughout the site," Rulewich said. "There are some optional carries across the wetlands that are going to give you

a feeling of being somewhere else rather than in the Adirondacks."

'ISLAND' GREEN ON 14TH

Indeed, with wetlands at every turn, against the backdrop of a large lake, the layout and setting of this course take on a coastal marshland character. "We thought Lake Lonely would be a major feature of the course," Rulewich explained. "But it was buffered by a major, wooded

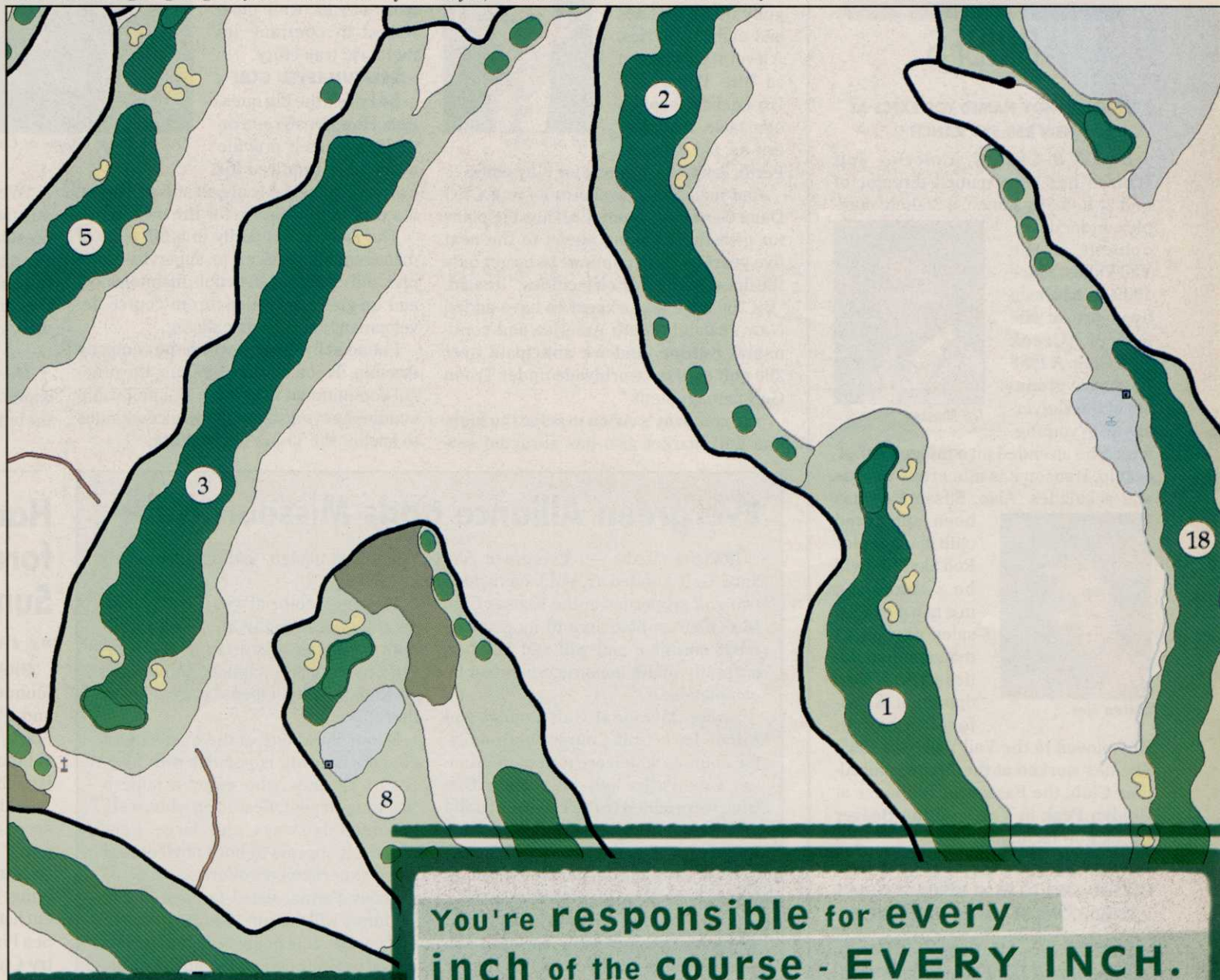
wetland area, which we were not allowed to go into.

"We brought a couple of holes up to the edge, but we made very limited intrusion into that shoreline," he said. "The 14th hole plays right at the lake, and the 15th is a ponded par-3 that almost looks like an island green. You have to bridge across to it, and the cart path runs behind the green, and you bridge back across what is really a wetland

but at times looks like part of the lake.

"We tried to figure out how to bulkhead the 15th green itself, and ended up using some large, very blocky stone," he said. "It has a stone edge all the way around—it's a pretty hole. You're looking at water running around both sides, so it really is, in effect, an island green."

The superintendent at Saratoga National is Joe Lucas. ■



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Tullymore

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healthy and great, but it happens to be young, carts will knock it down pretty fast," he said. "I think the sod will pay for itself many times over, just by keeping conditions good, cutting down on erosion, and keeping cart traffic at a manageable wear level."

RBI Golf out of Denver, which also built Engh's The Golf Club at Redlands Mesa, handled the construction, and Engh had high praise for the firm. "Wayne Metcalf was the on-site supervisor for RBI, and he did a great job," he said.

Superintendent Alex Greenacre will have his hands full keeping this environmentally sensitive site in good trim. Head professional Kevin O'Brien will oversee Tullymore as well as St. Ives. ■

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