

BRIEFS

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT GARRITY JOINS FORMA

IRVINE, Calif. — FORMA, a planning and landscape architecture firm based here, has hired Mark Garrity as a director and landscape architect. Garrity is a licensed landscape architect with more than 15 years of experience in golf course and hotel/resort landscape architectural design. His range of experience also includes management of an overseas office in Bangkok, where he completed numerous large-scale resort and golf course projects in Indonesia and Thailand. They include Blue Lagoon, a master-planned resort community in Pattaya, Thailand, and Emerald One, a golf resort and clubhouse complex in Jakarta.



Mark Garrity

RYANGOLF ADDS TWO IN FLORIDA

DEERFIELD BEACH, Fla. — RyanGolf has landed two new construction projects, both in Florida. U.S. Home Corp. has selected RyanGolf to build an 18-hole Arthur Hills-designed layout in Bradenton, to be called The Harborage Golf Club. Completion is scheduled for late summer of this year. In addition, developer Gulf Bay Group has awarded RyanGolf the construction contract for The Creek Course, also designed by the Hills firm. The Creek layout, unfolding in Naples, will feature 16 lakes, rock bridges and nature preserves. It is expected to be finished by October.

FIRST TEE PROJECT UNDER WAY IN KANSAS

BONNER SPRINGS, Kan. — Kansas City junior golfers will be the beneficiaries of a new First Tee facility being developed adjacent to the 18-hole Sunflower Hills Golf Course, west of Kansas City. Joe Louis Barrow, Jr., national director of the First Tee program, presented a check for \$135,000 to Tom Watson and the Junior Golf Foundation of Greater Kansas City toward development of the facility at the TD Waterhouse Championship, a Senior PGA Tour event. Kansas City-based architect Craig Schreiner is donating his design services for the facility, which will feature extensive teaching and practice areas.

Dramatic Doonbeg takes shape on Irish coast

By JAY FINEGAN

DOONBEG, Ireland — Set hard by the Atlantic Ocean on the rugged, windswept coast of southwestern Ireland, Greg Norman's new Doonbeg Golf Club appears destined to match up well to its two fabled neighbors, Ballybunion and Lahinch.

The links layout, sprawling over a mile and a half of beachfront, is unfolding amid a dramatic combination of huge dunes, crashing surf, and a landscape of extravagant gorse and greenery.

Doonbeg is a joint development of Landmark National, of Upper Marlboro, Md., and Kiawah Resort Associates, of Kiawah Island, S.C. The two companies have previously collaborated on high-profile courses. As the major financial partner, the Kiawah group will hold title to the property.

Norman, winner of two British Open titles, is the lead designer, although the design was basically a matter of blazing an 18-hole trail through a nearly perfect linksland. "On the majority of fairways, we literally mapped out where we wanted to go and just brought out lawn mowers," said Bill Norton, public relations director



The first hole at Greg Norman's Doonbeg is framed by the dunes.

for Kiawah Resort Associates.

A soft opening is planned for the fall, with regular play slated to begin in spring 2002.

SUPERLATIVES FLYING

Superlatives start to fly when anyone associated with Doonbeg talks about the project.

"It's like the Grand Canyon," said Charlie Arrington, Kiawah's director of design and planning. "You can see all the pictures you want, but you can't really experience the depth and emotion until you see it. Doonbeg is that type of site. It

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New 'laboratory course' under way in Nebraska

By GARY BURCHFIELD

NEBRASKA CITY, Neb. — The National Arbor Day Foundation has teamed up with golf course builder Landscapes Unlimited and Arnold Palmer Golf Course Design to build a "laboratory-type" course adjoining Arbor Day Farm on the outskirts of Nebraska City.

According to Landscapes Unlimited's CEO Bill Kubly, the new ArborLinks Golf Course will truly be a practical testing laboratory for golf course design and construction. "We want to demonstrate that you can build a great golf course at reasonable cost, so that more people can afford to play, and incorporate sound environmental features in the process," Kubly said.

While there has been a lot of discussion about golf course contributions to the natural environment, little hard data has ever been collected. The partners involved in ArborLinks aim to change that. Even before construction started last fall, Landscapes Unlimited specialists were taking soil samples across the 300-acre course area and water samples from Table Creek, which runs through the course. Soil and water samples will be taken periodically throughout the construction process and after the layout is completed. Samples will be analyzed at the University of Nebraska's turfgrass laboratory in Lincoln.



Arnold Palmer on site with Landscapes Unlimited's vice president of operations, Brad Schmidt

A LIVING LABORATORY

A variety of turf and landscape plantings are being incorporated into the course, ranging from native species to some exotic plants not native to the Plains environment. "We will actually have different 'plant communities' around the golf course," said Kubly. "Not like a patchwork quilt, but aesthetically designed to

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The 7th hole at The Tribute, a 466-yard par-4, is called 'Fin Me Oot'

Tripp Davis puts wee bit o' Scotland in Texas

By JAY FINEGAN

THE COLONY, Texas — Golf course architect Tripp Davis is a huge fan of Scottish golf. He's logged lots of time not only playing Scotland's courses but studying their design. So when American Golf Corp. asked him to build a Scottish links-style course here at The Colony, Davis was more than ready.

"They wanted me to take my 18 favorite Scottish holes and build a course that reflects their influence," Davis said. "The idea was to use it as a marketing tool, and that's where they've gone with it. For me, as an architect, it was a dream project."

The recently opened final product, called The Tribute Golf Club — a tribute to Scottish golf — is challenging but plenty of fun. It checks in at just over 7,000 yards from the tips and 5,352 from short pegs, and it features holes inspired by some of Scotland's most storied courses: St. Andrews, Carnoustie, Royal Troon, Nairn, Prestwick and six others. The Old Course at St. Andrews rates four "appearances," and Carnoustie and Prestwick two apiece.

BAR MOVED FROM SCOTLAND

To enhance the linksland look on this one-time cotton

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Doonbeg

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is one of nature's most stunning gifts.

"Everybody we bring up here, as soon as they come over the hill and see the crescent beach and the view, they just gasp," added Arrington, a landscape architect who is assisting Norman. "It's a question of how

do you set a golf course in there gently and not disturb any of the magnificent beauty. And in that regard, I think Greg has done a great job."

Norman, for his part, doesn't hold back on his enthusiasm for Doonbeg. "Greg says this will be the course he'll hang his hat on," Arrington said. "He has stated publicly that he doubts he'll ever again see a golf course site of the

quality of this one."

PATH FOR SURFERS

The wonder is that no one ever put a course here before. As far back as 1892, the fathers of Lahinch selected this stretch of coastline on Doughmore Bay as their first choice. But while Lahinch was close to transportation and rail service, Doonbeg was truly remote.

Thus, the 400-acre site re-



The treacherous 14th hole at Doonbeg sits on Doughmore Bay.

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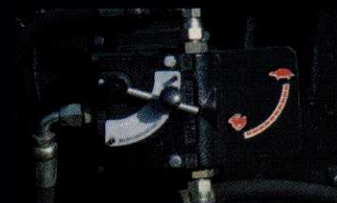
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maintained untouched, save for the local farmers and surfers of County Clare. "The water is beautiful, the waves are much bigger than ours and the wind is much stronger," Arrington said. "We've left a path through the course for the local surfers, because the waves are just phenomenal."

MINIMAL EARTHMOVING

Greg Norman Design is handling the construction, which is unusual in itself.

"Greg doesn't normally work that way," Arrington said. "But on this particular project he felt it needed special attention. He wanted specific shapers and project directors working on this. His concept from the beginning was to build this by finding the green sites and tee sites instead of moving a lot of dirt, and with the exception of holes two and three he has accomplished that. It's a very hilly site, with many spectacular holes and awesome views."

Six holes run alongside the ocean or play right to the ocean, and the water is visible from six or seven other holes. "The site has a lot of drama," Arrington said. "The dunes are immense. You start off the first tee through the dunes and some of the pasture land, and the ninth hole ends at the other end of the property, going again into the dunes."

The largest dunes, nearly 100 feet tall, will be fenced off and protected under a deal struck with Ireland's National Heritage Service.

THE HARROWING 14TH

Doonbeg will play at 6,800 yards, and the wind will make it seem longer. One of the most intimidating shots, for example, will confront golfers on the 14th tee of a treacherous 100-yard par-3. There are days, Arrington said, when it requires a six-iron, such is the force of the wind.

Danger is everywhere on the 14th. "The green is sort of hanging on the side of a dune," Arrington explained. "They put a shelf there and a green, and there is no relief on that little hole. If you miss it right or go over, you will be on the beach – a 30-foot drop – or in the ocean at high tide. If you miss it left, you're on top of a dune. And if you miss it short, you're down in a deep hollow. It's about the size of number seven at Pebble Beach. The green is a little big-

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GOLF COURSE NEWS

Elkington's first design debuts near Houston

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — Troon Golf has announced the opening of Fish Creek Golf Club, the newest daily-fee facility in the Houston area.

As part owner of the golf club, veteran PGA Tour professional Steve Elkington designed the 27-hole layout in his first venture into golf course architecture. Elkington was involved in every detail, right down to the rocking chairs on the clubhouse veranda and the color of the carpet.

Eighteen holes are complete, measuring 6,834 yards, with the third nine under construction and slated to open this summer. The course stretches through a heavily wooded area, with Fish Creek meandering through the property and coming into play on a number of holes.

Heritage Links handled the construction.

With wide sweeping fairway undulations, Elkington's layout plays to the natural architecture of the land. Construction required the bare minimum of earthmoving, allowing the course to flow to large, well-bal-

anced green complexes.

"I wanted to see if I could envision the entire project," said Elkington. "It has been a labor of love for the past two years. My plan was to keep everything simple and well-rooted in traditional, classic touches. We chose Troon Golf because they share our appreciation for the tradi-

tions of the game by providing the finest golf experiences available, from the conditioning of the golf course to the service in the clubhouse."

CHALLENGING, NOT RIDICULOUS

Elkington, a native of Australia, drew from years of experience by playing the world's finest golf courses, recalling the

most comfortable aspects of each one he has visited in a style he loosely describes as "country golf."

"I wanted the golf course to be challenging but not ridiculous, and nothing in the look and feel of Fish Creek to be overpowering," he said. "Except for the wafting aroma of barbecue smoking in the cooker between the ninth green and 10th tee, golf at Fish Creek is about relaxing and

enjoying yourself."

The superintendent, John Williams, came here from Troon North, in Scottsdale. His first assistant, Gary Livingston, transferred in from another Troon property in Palm Desert, Calif.



roots® 2001 TURF AWARDS PROGRAM

Norman

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ger than that, but there are no bunkers to save you. You have to hit the green or else."

The next hole is no cakewalk, either. "The 11th hole at Ballybunion is one of the great golf holes of the world, and our 15th will compare to that," Arrington said. "It plays along the ocean and the tee is up high. You hit to a plateau, and the green sits down low, completely surrounded by dunes, like an amphitheater. There's a little opening that you can see into. It's a terrific golf hole — a 420-yard par-4 into a prevailing wind."

SHORT HOP TO SHANNON

Doonbeg Golf Club will be a daily-fee facility with some private elements, similar to Ballybunion and Lahinch. The clubhouse will feature some hotel-like rooms, along with a restaurant and pub. Four-bedroom golf cottages will also be built.

"This is a rural area with not many accommodations," said Arrington. "We see an opportunity to provide that housing. From here you can easily travel to Ballybunion and Lahinch, and Shannon International Airport is only 35 miles away."

"It's going to be great for this part of Ireland," he added, "because it will give it more quality courses. There will be wonderful competition and draws from Ballybunion, Lahinch and Tralee, who will send people to us and vice versa." ■

GOLF COURSE NEWS

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