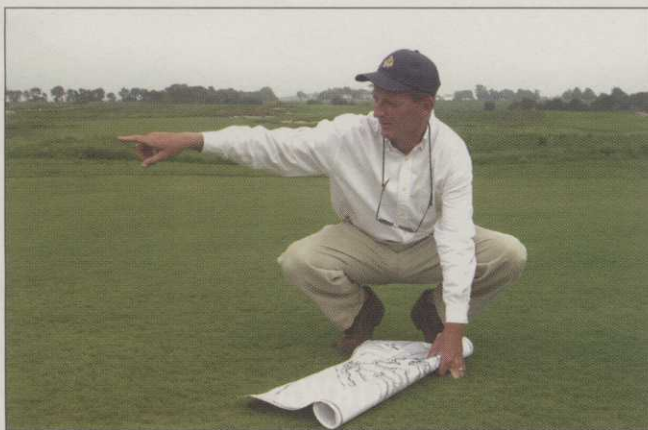


Esler's first nearing completion at the all-male Black Sheep GC

SUGAR GROVE, Ill. — Preparations are nearing completion here on the new 285-acre Black Sheep Golf Club. The 27-hole, all-male facility is founded on the "golf-only" principal established centuries ago — and still alive today — in England, Scotland and Ireland.

"We are a golf club, pure and simple,"



Esler makes adjustments in the field at Black Sheep GC

said Vincent Solano, Sr., a founding club member and president of the Robin Hill Development Company, in Lisle, which is managing the project. "You come here, you play golf, you have something to eat and drink, you talk about your golf game — or not — and you go home. Or you can stay overnight in one of our [four] guestrooms."

Located some 40 miles west of downtown Chicago, the club will be the first of its kind to open in the area since Butler National GC in Oakbrook in 1974. Bob O'Link GC and Old Elm GC, both in Highland Park, are the two other Chicago area male-only clubs.

Workers broke ground on Black Sheep in the autumn of 2000 and the club is scheduled to open in Spring 2002. As of October, construction is complete. The

layout marks golf course architect David Esler's debut. Esler designed all 27-holes as well as the driving range, a short game practice area and a large, two-acre putting green.

NATIVE LANDSCAPE

The lack of tree protection on the links-style course means that the notorious Chicago-area winds are sure to be a factor during most rounds. "The natural contours and elevation of the property meant that we didn't have to move very much dirt during the construction process," said Esler. "The grand scale of the land we had to work with enabled us to incorporate a great deal of strategy into the design."

Each of the three nines will play a par 36 and be between 3,300- to 3,800-yards long. There will be no real estate development around the club as the Kane County property is surrounded by farmland zoned for agricultural use. "It's going to be an eye-opening place," Esler said. "It is a course that is very much married to the native Illinois landscape."

Wadsworth Construction in Plainfield, Ill., was brought in to handle the building of the course. The club will plant 140 acres of native prairie grasses and create 15 acres of wetlands in an effort to restore the property to the pre-settlement landscape of Native Americans.

MEN ONLY, NO DISTRACTIONS

An equity membership at Black Sheep is priced at \$85,000 and is by invitation

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ClubCorp creates accessibility guidelines

By ANDREW OVERBECK

DALLAS — ClubCorp has created a set of guidelines in an effort to improve communication between all levels of golf course management on the issues of accessibility and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Michael Quimbey, ClubCorp's vice president for environmental affairs, developed the guidelines with cooperation from leading industry and disabled golfer organizations.

"I delivered the guidelines at the sixth National Forum on Accessible Golf in April," said Quimbey. "The guidelines are meant to bring all the industry efforts together."

"The Golf Course Superintendents Association of America was speaking to the superintendents, the PGA was speaking to the golf pros, and the American Society of Golf Course Architects was speaking to the architects," he continued. "No effort was being made to include everyone in the process."

According to Quimbey, the guidelines are a tool for the golf industry, for golfers with disabilities, and the organizations representing them. He hopes that the guidelines will encourage recreational play by golfers with disabilities as well as encourage the golf industry to embrace these golfers.

The guidelines closely follow the ex-

pected path of accessibility guidance that will be put in place by the U.S. Department of Justice in the next 18 to 24 months.

Among some of the issues covered in the guidelines:

- A disability is defined as a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities of such individual. There are an estimated four to five million disabled golfers in the United States.

- Accessible routes for golf cars would be required throughout the course. All new golf courses and those undergoing alterations would have to comply with these new standards. However, access to bunkers is not specifically required.

- Existing courses would have to meet ADA requirements by removing architectural barriers throughout the course "where it is readily achievable."

- Courses need to develop unified and consistent rules and regulations for situations when access by golf cars would be limited.

For a full copy of the "Golfers with Disabilities: Recreational Golf Guidelines," contact Michael Quimbey at michael.quimbey@clubcorp.com.

Arcadia Bluffs saga continues

By ANDREW OVERBECK

MANISTEE, Mich. — One of the court battles surrounding the 1998 landslide damage at Arcadia Bluffs Golf Club came to a close, for now, in late August.

The club's developers, RVP, sued golf course builder Furness Golf Construction for breach of contract and was seeking more than \$4 million in repair costs and lost profits as a result of the Sept. 1998 storm that triggered massive landslides, damaging the course and dumping dirt and sand into Lake Michigan.

The seven-week trial wrapped up Aug. 24, with the jury rejecting RVP's claim that Furness was responsible for the damage. Additionally, the jury ordered RVP to pay the more than \$500,000 that it still owes Furness. However, according to RVP's lawyer Craig Lubben, an appeal by the company is likely.

BREACH OF CONTRACT?

During the trial, RVP asserted that Furness breached its contract by covering all drainage inlets with silt covers during construction, thereby preventing the installed drainage system from handling storm runoff.

Both golf course architect Warren Henderson, formerly of Rick Smith Golf Course Design, and former golf course builder Paul Clute testified against Furness.

Henderson testified that he had approved of the inlet treatment, but that in hindsight he thought Furness' negligence caused the damage. Clute testified that if Furness covered the inlet pipes during construction he should have also armored the back side of drainage swale berms with plastic sheeting or concrete.

Furness' lawyer, Mark Verwys contended that Furness followed standard construction procedures by covering the inlet pipes and that the drainage system designed by Exxel Engineering was deficient.



Following the damage, the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) forced RVP to make improvements to the existing system.

"We did what we were told to do in the field by the engineer and the architect," said Timothy Furness. "The jury decided that the blame fell on RVP and it's engineer and architect."

Furness believes the jury's decision exonerates his company. "If this had gone against us it would have put us out of business," he said. "But we were always confident that we had done nothing wrong."

AN APPEAL IN THE WORKS?

RVP's lawyer Craig Lubben is planning to file a post trial motion to have the jury's finding set aside by the judge.

"The act of God is an affirmative defense which means it has to be plead and proved by the party asserting it," said Lubben. "In this case, they did not plead that act of God was one of their defenses."

According to Lubben, the next step will be to go back to the judge and ask him to correct mistakes made by the jury. "I anticipate that we will be doing that," he said. "First the judgement has to be entered and then we will file a motion to set it aside. As of now, however, the judgement has not been filed and a hearing date has not been set."

Lubben said RVP is still intent in recovering repair costs and that it has no intention of paying Furness' outstanding fees.

YET ANOTHER LAWSUIT

RVP is also being sued by the MDEQ. The department originally alleged that RVP violated its soil erosion and control permit, but is now seeking damages under a Michigan law that forbids the dumping of toxic substances into Lake Michigan.

Lubben said that case is now in the discovery phase and is scheduled for trial later in the year.

Foster puts final touches on River Marsh

CAMBRIDGE, Md. — Architect Keith Foster is putting the finishing touches on The Golf Club at River Marsh, a public course that will be the centerpiece of the new Hyatt resort property at Chesapeake Bay, located halfway between Annapolis and Ocean City.

"The site embraces a traditional Mid-Atlantic, almost low-country ambience," said Foster. "Vegetation is lush, with oaks and marsh grasses edging the playable areas. Most notable is a lagoon system that winds its way through the entire course."

BRITISH FLAVOR

The par-72 layout will measure 6,950 yards from the back tees. With five to six separate tee locations on every hole, River Marsh will accommodate all classes of players. The tees, fairways and greens will be bentgrass and the



Keith Foster makes final touches at River Marsh.

roughs will be bluegrass.

Classic styling characterizes both the greens and the course's 65 bunkers. Foster shaped the greens to allow for a wide variety of pin placements, yet they are accessible enough for the resort golfer. The bunkers add a British links-like flavor to the layout.