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Schuknecht serves on an assistant superintendent task force for the Golf Course Superintendent Association of America, and from serving on that task force, he came up with the idea to get assistants more involved at the chapter level. He drafted a proposal that included an assistant serving on the board, but without voting privileges. The chapter accepted his proposal, and he became a board member who will serve two years.

"It's a great opportunity for assistants to get exposure to the board and to see what the board members go through," he says. "It's also a great networking opportunity and gives assistants a chance to see what issues the board deals with outside of their jobs. I've been exposed to conversation about sponsors, advertising, issues with vendors, planning a trade show and getting more people involved with the association."

Other chapters that have assistants serving on the board include:

- Metropolitan GCSA
- Quad State Turfgrass Association
- Western New York GCSA
- Mississippi Valley GCSA
- Northern Ohio GCSA
- Southern California GCSA
- Florida West Coast GCSA

- GCSA of New Jersey
- Connecticut GCSA
- Heart of America GCSA.

Serving on the board is a great opportunity for assistants to learn about what goes on behind the scenes at the chapter level, Schuknecht says. He encourages more assistant involvement, such as writing articles for the association newsletter and organizing the inaugural assistant superintendent golf tournament. He says that this fall there will be discussion to establish an assistant superintendent committee. He hasn't spoken to the president of the Iowa GCSA about it but has spoken to Jeff Wendell, CGCS, the association's executive director, who thinks members will support the idea.

Schuknecht helped to quicken the process of organizing the committee by getting a template from Kempf about the procedures of the Midwest Association's Class C Advisory Committee.

At an upcoming Iowa GCSA golf tournament for assistant golf course superintendents, Schuknecht says there will be more discussion about forming a Class C-type committee.

"If formed, I hope the committee will help us with our objectives – to get more assistants to become involved with the

golf tournament, write more articles for the newsletter and allow us to complete the tasks that superintendents and the association do for us now ourselves, such as all the details of putting together a tournament."

Hearn says there's a concern among assistants about moving up to superintendent positions because the industry isn't building as many golf courses as it did in the '90s and the industry is flooded with specialty positions such as spray and irrigation technicians, making it more difficult for assistants to learn every aspect of the industry.

"They are the best resource for the future, and the more experience and education they get, the better golf courses will be," he says.

The biggest thing for assistants is to have more opportunities in a tough market, Ekstrom says.

"It's tough to distinguish yourself because there are so many qualified guys out there," he says. "It can't hurt to have as much networking as possible. Having that opportunity can only make assistants better.

"However, without the support of superintendents, none of this would happen," he adds. "We're all very appreciative of the superintendents."

Changing course

Most of the Olivas Golf Course in Southern California is being regrassed with seashore paspalum, which is rare in the region. by Heather Wood

This is one of the warmest, most sultry summers Matt Mulvany remembers in Ventura, Calif., and for that, he feels blessed.

Mulvany, golf course superintendent at Olivas Golf Course, is regrassing most of the course, sprigging all fairways, rough and tees with seashore paspalum.

"We have reclaimed water high in salt, and we wanted something that was durable," he says. "About 85,000 rounds have been played here per year in the past. We wanted something that could stand up to that traffic and deal with salt as well."

Mulvany looked into other paspalum varieties but decided to plant Sea Isle 1.

"The paspalum has a finer leaf texture than kikuyugrass or some of the Bermuda varieties," he says. "It's an impressive-looking grass."

Mulvany, who has been a superintendent since 1991, has grow-in experience. He took a position at Buenaventura Golf Course, also in Ventura, in 2000

and oversaw the construction, complete renovation and grow-in of the course, which reopened in March 2005.

In 2001, he took the superintendent's position at Olivas as well, running both properties at the same time, which amounted to 36 holes. As the construction on Olivas approached at the end

of 2005, he decided to manage Olivas only so he could focus all his efforts on the construction and grow-in. Ed Easley, construction manager at Eagl Golf, is managing the project. Eagl Golf, which also employs Mulvany, operates the course.

"It's a collective effort between Ed, my-



Management chose to plant the Sea Isle 1 variety on the tees, fairways and rough. Photo: Olivas Golf Course

self, Nick Dunn, director of agronomy for Eagl, and Greg Gilner (golf operations manager for the city of Ventura)," Mulvany says.

"The golf course has, to some degree, a links-style design, and we wanted a turf that would follow that theme," he adds. "Paspalum is a turf that's lean and mean and doesn't need as much maintenance and pesticides as other turf. It's a pretty environmentally friendly turf, and that kind of goes along with the golf course."

There are 35 acres of native area on the course, including sensitive areas that meander through the golf course, Mulvany says.

The crew has been working on the task of grassing 90 acres for about two months. By the first week of this month, there was one hole left to sprig. All the fairways, roughs and tees were prepped, rocked and picked. Then the sprigging machine dropped sprigs at a rate of 260

bushels per acre. The tractor-drawn culti-packer unit was then run over the sprigged areas to push the sprigs into the soil. The newly sprigged areas then were watered as soon as possible. Sprigs were planted by hand in the small spaces where the machine didn't fit to ensure accuracy, Mulvany says.

All of the fairways, roughs and tees are being sprigged except for about two to five acres of sod around the greens, which remained bentgrass, to blend the greens into the green surrounds. Bunker slopes were sodded as well.

The humidity, which is uncharacteristic of Ventura's climate, has helped the stolons grow.

"It's amazing that the paspalum sprigs hold pretty well – there is no erosion," Mulvany says. "Sprigging the slopes gets difficult. You've got to be careful."

Mulvany noticed many of the seed-head sprouts above the 1.5-inch mowing height, which leads to interesting



Seashore paspalum stolons after two weeks of initial sprigging. Photo: Olivas Golf Course

contours around the greens.

"It's not that we don't like it, we're just kind of surprised," he says. "We weren't expecting it. It's just that turf at this time of year really shoots up."

Mulvany expects to use about two

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pounds of nitrogen per 1,000 square feet annually to fertilize the course.

Mulvany says Olivas is one of a few courses in the region to use paspalum to this extent. The grass is used mostly

in Florida, but not much in California. One course that grows it is nearby Fairbanks Ranch Country Club in Rancho Santa Fe. The club has had the grass on its fairways, roughs and tees since 1985.

But only during the past five or seven years has Mulvany seen a considerable amount written about paspalum.

So far, the results have exceeded Mulvany's expectations, which makes him wonder why he doesn't see the grass used more prevalently in the region.

"You'd think more people by now would have used it," he says. "I'm not sure why, but I bet it would open people's eyes seeing this course."

Mulvany is waiting to see how the warm-season grass will do during the winter months. The question is how much of it will go dormant.

"Maybe that's one of the reasons why more golf courses don't use paspalum - people don't want the brown, splotchy look along coast," he says.

Olivas has been closed during the re-grassing. Currently, four or five holes are at a playable height, but Mulvany says it will take several months before the entire course is ready to reopen.

"It won't be the same golf course that we closed," he says.

Mulvany anticipates that the number of rounds played will increase when the course reopens because curious golfers will want to play the course and check out the paspalum.

"That happens with a lot of new courses," he says. "We'll probably see 350 golfers a week for the first few months." GCN

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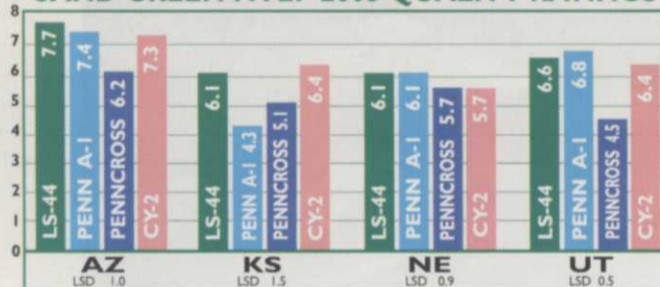
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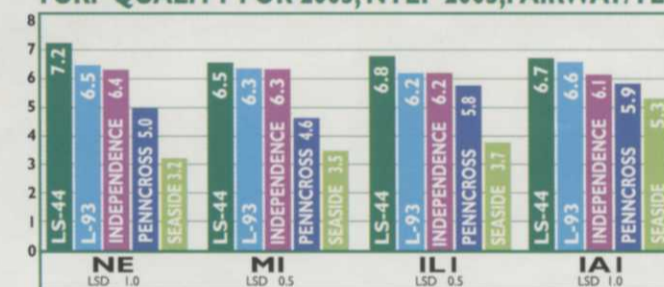
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New paspalum stolons.
Photo: Olivas Golf Course



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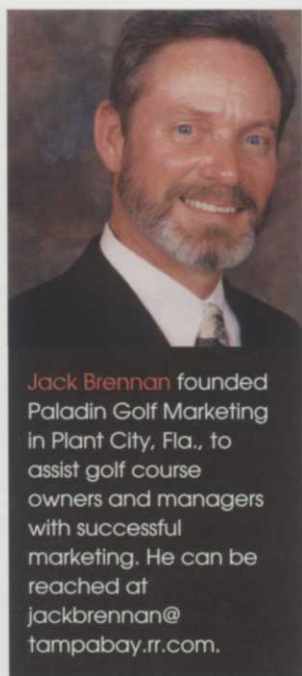
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Jack Brennan founded Paladin Golf Marketing in Plant City, Fla., to assist golf course owners and managers with successful marketing. He can be reached at jackbrennan@tampabay.rr.com.

Player development

I e-mailed a player development marketing suggestion to clients, former clients and industry insiders. The first response I received made me rethink what priorities should be placed on player development from a golf course marketing standpoint and my marketing position on the topic.

My marketing position is simple: Create a section for every client marketing plan that includes player development and provides the detail for beginning a program from scratch and continuing it. As I rethink my position, it's not my marketing section that's flawed, it's the time it takes to implement a successful player development program and the costs associated with it. Nowadays, everyone wants beginners to play but doesn't want to provide the time, instruction and personal encouragement. Beginner instruction is done on a timeline. Real player development has taken a back seat to other marketing initiatives that provide immediate revenue to the cash register.

The e-mail response seemed like a riddle: "We need a thousand more courses or get rid of 3,000. This business can't go on like this! Michael Kahn." I called Mike Kahn, principal of GolfMAK, and asked him what he meant. His response was sure:

"If I suggested there was room for a thousand more golf courses in the United States, you'd think I was nuts given the economic state of the industry. This business has gone so highbrow it has forgotten an entire segment of society: the group of Americans age 25 to 75 who haven't yet played golf. Most will never take up the game because there's really no place for them to start. Golf needs hundreds more low-cost, player-friendly courses if the industry wants a healthy economic future. This is where municipally owned golf facilities can make a contribution to citizens and the game.

"We need a thousand new player-friendly golf courses in the United States to save many of the other 15,000-plus golf facilities from going broke. We need threshold recreation courses people can learn to play and enjoy. The types of courses we need are the ones that caused the golf-participation boom in the '50s, '60s and '70s. These are golf courses people can afford to play. Golf courses they can walk. We need push-up greens, push-up tee boxes and centerline irrigation systems. No course needs to be longer than 6,300 yards. We need greens

with speeds of eight feet, fairways that roll and shallow bunkers. We need courses where people who can't, and never will, break 90 can play and enjoy. These golf courses will feed and rescue the industry.

"There are millions of Americans who don't play golf, and never have played, but would try the game if it was easier to get involved. There are millions of families that could afford to take an interest in golf, but have no way to get started. Golf associations such as the National Golf Foundation, U.S. Golf Association and Professional Golfers Association of America don't pay the sufficient attention to the millions of Americans in the 25- to 75-year age bracket who have yet to try the game. However, these potential golf participants need a starter golf course, much like an old starter set of golf clubs. Some U.S. markets still have them but most don't.

"I started in golf when a walking round was about \$1.25 in the 1950s. A membership to the course was about \$65 a year. The course was a dusty, 5,400 yard, par-70 that was packed every day. The tee sheet was set at five minutes. We had more than 100 sets of rentals clubs that often went out twice a day. I was the starter in the morning. I cleaned the 100 sets every evening. That era is long gone, and we need it back.

"Most professionals really don't want to teach beginners because they hate teaching them. Every golf school ad says, 'Improve your game.' I don't see many that say, 'Come and learn to play golf.' What's this got to do with adding another thousand golf courses? It's where a properly planned and implemented, municipal, recreational golf course program can serve the community and the golf course industry. These golf courses can be created on redundant land and should be designed to walk or ride, and have a construction budget that computes to low green and membership fees. These facilities need a decent practice range, plus a continual and ongoing program to teach and encourage people to enjoy playing golf. It must be a walking golf course with rental sets, rental pull carts and forward tees for women and junior golfers. If space allows, a nine-hole par-3 golf course opens the door for older men and women and handicapped people to enjoy golf.

"The recreational golf course I recommend needs only a small clubhouse with a pro shop and a simple grillroom no more

than 3,000 square feet. It's important to plan the clubhouse to be functional and easy to operate and manage. The entire project shouldn't cost the community a dime because it can be financed by bonding issues and leased back to a golf course operator for more than debt coverage.

"I've discussed this type of municipal golf course plan to several architects, golf construction companies and financial sources. There are thousands of acres available for this kind of project. If well planned, recreational golf courses might be built for less than \$2 million. The finished product would include infrastructures and a clubhouse and be fully equipped to operate.

"The current high-priced set of golf courses won't bring in enough new golf players to replace natural attrition. We need new adult golfers. In my experience, every new middle-age golfer will cause other nongolfers to take up the game. They'll encourage family members, co-workers and friends to take up golf.

"I brought thousands of new golfers into the game from 1963 to 1988 while operating an annual learn-to-play-golf program. The single qualifier to be eligible to join our golf school: Students must never have played golf. We supplied all the clubs, balls, tees, teaching, etc., and saw they played the course. On many occasions, I watched mom, dad or an employee from a local business take up golf in our classes. Next thing you know, they're bringing out more people to learn. Many of those new golfers graduated to the higher priced country clubs or played the higher-priced public golf courses.

"All that happened regularly back in the '50s through the '80s. It's not happening now, and it's not going to happen as long as the industry keeps building courses that are out of reach financially.

"Golf will get back to positive economic health in one of two ways: abandon 3,000 golf courses or build the game with affordable, player-friendly golf courses. That's where municipally owned golf courses can serve the community and the golf industry."

Thanks Mike. Maybe we all should rethink our industry's past successes and means to those successes. They could be the key to our future as a successful, thriving industry again. GCN

Practical tee design

Many courses are remodeling tees to improve them to the best condition possible, but they need to be practical and functional.

In the early days of golf, golfers simply teed up on greens. Golfers soon realized a separate tee, distant from the previous green, improved safety, speed of play and provided a level starting point. However, tee boxes in the early days were small and had little artistry or sophistication. They eventually became larger to reduce wear and elongated to provide shorter playing options. Multiple tee complexes evolved and put each player on a smaller tee with an old-time feeling. Tees also became style elements, varying from elevated to sunken surrounding earth forms, and were often integrated with surrounding landscape to assume artistic forms equal to greens and bunkers.

Currently, functional and easy-to-maintain tees are fashionable. Our clients ask for detailed tee designs to make tee maintenance easier. They want adequate size, but because every square foot of tee costs money to construct and maintain, we're rethinking the "bigger is better" mentality because smaller tees save mowing time.

How big?

Based on experience, we favor the higher end of the recommended standard of 150 to 200 square feet per 1,000 rounds for tee surfaces. In most cases, 4,000-square-foot tees for private clubs with limited play (20,000 rounds), and 6,000- to 8,000-square-foot tees on public courses with more play (40,000 rounds) work well. Facilities might need to accommodate the busiest month of play at one square foot of space for every 1,000 rounds. For example, if a Minnesota course generates 30,000 rounds annually, 7,500 of which are in its busiest month, it might need

7,500-square-foot tees rather than the suggested 4,500- to 6,000-square-foot tees.

We also adjust individual tees based on construction method, arrangement (multiple tees require more space than runway tees because there's unusable space at the ends of each tee) and microclimate. Starting holes, par 3s, short par 4s with a lot of iron use and holes with forced carries are increased to 250 square feet per 1,000 rounds.

Recently, I detailed how a trend toward longer courses was driven by a miniscule number of players and how that inadvertently might make courses too long (July issue, page 18). While improving tee conditions, take the opportunity to find additional back-tee length where possible and adjust middle- and front-tee length to adapt the course better to the majority of members. Generally, these yardages should be about 7,400 or longer; 6,700; 6,100; 5,500 and 4,500 yards.

However, achieving those lengths is just a partial answer to tee design. To minimize tee space, distribute tee size correctly among multiple tees to match play. Visit www.growingthegame.org to view research about course length preferences by Frank Thomas – former USGA technology guru who's currently an independent consultant. I've interpolated Thomas' data and others' to comprise the chart below.

Using the chart, a course that generates 20,000 rounds might end up with rectangular tees of the following dimensions:

Black tees: 15 feet by 15 to 20 feet. Championship tees generally generate light play and can be as small as you can mow, especially on a course that's 7,100 yards or longer.

Blue tees: 30 feet by 30 feet, with occasional use of the front for white tee markers.

White tees: 30 feet by 85 feet, 35 feet by

75 feet, 40 feet by 65 feet or 45 feet by 60 feet. The extra width helps with heavier play. Generally, for play and maintenance, extra length is more beneficial than extra width, allowing tee settings to match pin settings to keep length consistent daily.

Green tees: 30 feet by 30 to 40 feet, with occasional use of the back for white tee markers to reduce white tee size.

Red tees: 20 feet by 20 feet. We hesitate to undersize red tees because many women are sensitive to the size of tees and the number of women golfers is increasing. Experience shows forward tees don't need to be larger on par-3 holes because they don't cause as much damage.

Efficiencies

Rectangular and simple curvilinear tees can minimize tee size because they maximize useable area. Rectangular tees are useable side to side. The front and back areas of round tees are too narrow for tee markers, and round tees add 5 percent to the space needed. Free-form tees are attractive, but add even more space. The old runway tees reduce starts and stops and mowing time, but are less attractive to golfers.

Some dimensions are more maintenance efficient than others. Fifteen feet is the minimum tee-marker spacing, so one can achieve two tee settings side to side with 30-foot tees. Tee markers must move a yard daily for 30 days to recover. Using the minimum tee-marker space on weekdays (about 20 days) and full width on weekends (about 10 days) lets a 30-foot-wide tee be only 22 yards from front to back, whereas a 25-foot-wide tee must be 51 to 96 feet long – an increase of 12 percent to 15 percent in tee construction and maintenance costs.

Designing tee widths to match tee mowers (about 5-foot wide with overlap) minimizes mowing passes. If a 15-foot-wide championship tee can be mowed in three passes, why provide 17 feet? Because tees are often cross mowed, tee lengths in the next largest five-foot multiples than required might decrease mowing passes. Using an even number of passes might bring one back out in the same place he started, saving travel time.

Using the precise measurements outlined above might save construction and maintenance costs when rebuilding tees.

GCN



Jeffrey D. Brauer is a licensed golf course architect and president of GolfScapes, a golf course design firm in Arlington, Texas. Brauer, a past president of the American Society of Golf Course Architects, can be reached at jeff@jeffreymbrauer.com.

Course length preferences

Approximate course length	Play (in %)	Annual average rounds at a course		
		20,000	30,000	40,000
7,100+	3.5%	700	1,050	1,400
6,600	16%	3,200	4,800	6,400
6,100	57.5%	11,500	17,250	23,000
5,600	19%	3,800	5,700	7,600
4,900	4%	800	1,200	1,600

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The Heat & Drought Tolerance program includes many Hard Fescue varieties like Silverado II, Silverstar, Tar Heel II, and Wolf Pack, to name a few. Plus there are heat- and drought-tolerant Kentucky Bluegrasses such as Midnight and Midnight II, drought-tolerant blues like Unique and Brilliant, and heat-tolerant bluegrasses



**SHADE TOLERANCE
PROGRAM**

like Midnight Star and Longhorn Texas Bluegrass. There is also Sea Spray Seashore Paspalum, and seeded Bermudagrasses like Savannah, Sun Bird, and Transcontinental. All of these grasses are bred to withstand the heat and drought of summer, to help reduce stress, water use, and labor costs.

The Salt Tolerance program includes Tall Fescues like Tar Heel II and Pure Gold; Perennial Ryegrasses such as Brightstar SLT, Salinas, Citation Fore, Catalina II, and Saltese Blend; Kentucky Bluegrasses like Moonlight and Northstar; and Creeping Bentgrasses like Seaside II and Sea Spray Seashore Paspalum. All of these varieties are well suited for use near seashores and in desert climates, so they can help you maintain beautiful green turf even in high saline soils and where effluent water is used.

In our Shade Tolerant program, Tall Fescue species include Apache III, Coronado, Coronado Gold, Endeavor, and many more. There are also Fine Fescue varieties like Aurora Gold Hard Fescue, Aurora II Hard Fescue, Florentine Strong Creeping Red Fescue, Little Bighorn Blue Hard Fescue, plus many more. And there are other varieties like Shade Champ Tufted Hairgrass, Shade Star Crested Dogtail, and Winterlinks, Winterplay, and Winterstar Poa Trivialis. All of these Shade Tolerant program varieties provide a strong and healthy stand of turf in tough-to-maintain shaded areas.

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Architects' reverse roles



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Look anywhere in the free world, and you'll find within a client-service provider relationship that the party that pays fees and costs generally controls the agenda and makes final planning decisions.

Interestingly, this scenario often doesn't exist within the golf course architect-golf course developer relationship – where the golf course developer pays the standard design fee and construction costs but frequently surrenders control of planning decisions to the architect. Because this scenario tends to compromise one of the developer's key objectives – a comfortable playability factor – developers often are left with courses that are difficult to play and attract too few golfers.

The core problem is that many golf course architects tend to overreach and are somewhat blind to the degree of difficulty they design into their golf courses. Generally, architects believe they're complying with developers' wishes about comfortable playability when they provide five to six sets of tees for each hole. The assumption here is that because distance is presumed to be the primary culprit that increases most golfers' scores – the multiple tee sets on each hole mean everyone can play these courses comfortably.

This is a false premise. While multiple tee sets enhance playability, they aren't the primary determining factor of a player's score, which unquestionably is the scope and intensity of green defenses throughout the course.

Too many architects defend their greens as if each was Fort Knox with conditions that require high, soft-landing shots to hold the greens: overbunkering, deep bunkering, narrow green depths, tight water hazards and overcontouring of fast green surfaces. Because the vast majority of players can approach greens with only low trajectory shots, they're consistently being faced with having to get "up and down" at almost every green. While scores and handicaps increase accordingly, the enjoyment factor quickly dissipates with all the scrambling to hole out.

Inexperienced developers (about 70 percent of the golf course developer pool) generally are defenseless when it comes to protecting their courses against a high degree of design difficulty primarily be-

cause they can't read the architect's highly technical topographical construction plans before committing to final course development. Consequently, developers aren't able to prejudge the playability level of their golf courses before construction, and therefore, must trust the architect to deliver a fair golf course. Unfortunately, this trust is often misplaced because many architects believe they know what's best for their client developers and also what's necessary designwise to be top 25/100 course ranking eligible, i.e., increase course challenge, which translates into greater playing difficulty.

At first look, it would be easy to blame the golf course architect for this scenario. However, this wouldn't be an accurate assessment of the situation because (1) the architect community shouldn't be held accountable for inexperienced developers who can't understand/interpret golf course design planning, and (2) once developers default in this regard, the architects are left with no other choice but to fill the void and assume duties at both ends of the architect-developer spectrum. Thus, we see a role reversal with architects assuming the client role of calling the shots.

Some might argue that because the architect and developer are on the same team with a common agenda, it shouldn't matter when developers lack experience because the architect will cover for the developer. This is a problem because it's a myth that architects and developers always share a common agenda. The critical difference is that architects generally design their golf courses with course ranking potential and the additional business this brings forefront in their minds; while developers have balanced challenge and the playing enjoyment of their clientele forefront in their minds. While both parties are well intentioned, there couldn't be a greater strategic planning dichotomy – one where the golf course architect will consistently prevail.

Another part of the problem is that it isn't easy for an architect to design a golf course that offers both a fair challenge to the better players and everyone else. While it's relatively easy to design an overtly easy or difficult course, finding the delicate balance point between these two extremes within one course

design is one of the more difficult challenges in golf. The architect community will tell you itself that an architect only begins to achieve this level of expertise after completing about a dozen or so golf course designs. This clearly suggests developers curtail the often-used practice of selecting less experienced architects to save modest sums of design fees. This is a counterproductive measure that lends credence to the penny-wise pound-foolish cliché because this approach consistently will yield high-economic-risk golf courses that minimize enjoying this earth's most enjoyable game.

Corrective measures

1. The initial remedial thought that comes to mind is to suggest developers hire golf consultants to help address the problems they have interpreting construction plans. The concern, however, is there are too few experienced consultants available to get the job done and too many inexperienced consultants willing to take the money to try.

An innovative counterapproach would be to have developers hire a second golf course architect/draftsman to counsel them through the design planning of the primary architect – among other things.

2. Thankfully, today's software programs allow architects to prepare exact, 3-D, computer-generated hole-by-hole animations from construction plans *before* committing to developing the golf course. This is similar to hole animations network telecasts produce from video tapes *after* course construction is complete.

Each of these two corrective approaches will afford golf course development teams the guaranteed opportunity to judge the playability levels of their golf courses *before* committing to construction. Furthermore, implementation of these two measures will allow developers to reacquire quality control of their golf course development projects, and because of this, to generate unprecedented constructive dialogue with the architects that will lead to better golf course design.

No investor should allow a developer to commit to golf course construction without implementing these two quality assuring initiatives first. Money talks, or money walks. GCN

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