

"Does the club have a name?"

"St. Andrews at Spark Plug Mall! We broke concrete this week."

— Dan Jenkins in *"Designers and Developers"*

The recent boom in golf course construction means hundreds of new tracks have arrived in the past few years. With the new crop of layouts comes a dire shortage of names.

I concede the world of golf doesn't need another Hillcrest or Riverside. But has anyone taken notice of how lame, moronic and embarrassing golf course names have become in the past 20 years? Am I the only one who blushes for the honest, hard-working folks who have to work at these places?

At least the names are easy to break down into categories:

• **Futile attempts to make a name "looke elegante"** — You know these names. Someone takes a simple word like Bay, Point or Old and tacks on an "e" in a feeble attempt to convince people that the course has ties to old(e) money.

• **Dial 911** — Fire marshals must cringe when hearing all the variations on "Burning." Oaks, ridges, bushes and even sands are ablaze at one golf course.

• **The links tie-in** — It's a fascinating thing when tree-lined American inland golf courses become links. If you award a winner for "Best Performance by an Oxymoron in a Golf Course Title," this is your category. Just run an Internet search on links and tree names, and you'll get a kick out of all the so-called links that also have tall woody plants. And in case you don't understand my point, well, how do I put this gently: There are no trees on authentic links courses!

• **Animals doing strange things** — Golf courses have quails and blackwolves running, rabbits dancing, eagles doubled, puppies in creeks and raccoons doing things we can't put in print. You could populate a very odd zoo with these wacky creatures.

• **Strange pines** — Again, there are plenty of ways to use pines in a pleasant, simple way that stands up over time — Pine Tree, Pine Valley, Pinehurst, etc.

But why the desire to treat pines like a con-

Let's Stop Giving Golf a Bad Name

BY GEOFF SHACKELFORD



THE BOOM IN GOLF
HAS MEANT MORE
COURSES — AND
MORE LAME NAMES

ortionist? We've got golf courses with pines that are bent, circled, coos'd, dodgered, moody, quiet and knotted.

Talk about brutal material for the logo people to work with.

• **The (choose Lakes, Links Quarry, Experience, Challenge, Tradition) at the (fill in course locale here)** — These are the names that will eventually (if not already) earn the "what were they thinking award?" Fifteen years from now, golfers will look at this plethora of long-winded designations like we look at bell-bottoms today. You know the ones: The names always have a rather nauseous "Golf in the Kingdomesque" resonance. Things like, "The Soulful Challenge at Chicken Soup Beach."

• **The "National" Disease** — This is my personal favorite. Inserting "National" in the title usually indicates a course desperate to host a national event while remaining ultra-exclusive the other 51 weeks of the year. Such courses take a location, slap on "National" after the area (even if it sounds wretched) and think they have the Augusta National of their regions. Do any of these places actually have national memberships?

The title of your golf course (or should I plug in upscale daily fee here) says everything about your facility. If you want to sound like some cheesy Disneyland franchisee, go ahead.

But if you want golfers to respect the course or you want your staff to take pride in the place, give it a simple and creditable name that pays respect to your region or something native to the terrain your course is built on.

The name of this game is simple: Don't overdo it.

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