



DEACON'S LODGE is located about one mile north of Breezy Point Resort and 15 miles north of Brainerd. With approximately 4,800 square feet on each floor, it offers a well-appointed lounge, dining area, pro shop, offices and a downstairs area for cart storage.

To get there go seven-tenths of a mile north of the Breezy Point Resort entrance on Highway 4 to Weaver Point Road, turn right and continue to golf course entrance at left.

Environmentally and Player Friendly, Deacon's Lodge Opens for Public Play in Brainerd Lakes Area

Arnold Palmer Course Finished a Month Ahead of Time

By **RALPH TURTINEN**

Those involved in the design and construction of Deacon's Lodge, the new Arnold Palmer Signature golf course named after his late father, a former Pennsylvania golf superintendent, have good reason to be proud.



DEVELOPER JOHN HANKINSON enjoys successful grand opening of Deacon's Lodge with celebrity guests Jesse Ventura and Arnold Palmer.

Not only did the resulting product take advantage of the spectacular Northwoods beauty on this 499-acre site in Breezy Point, about 15 miles north of Brainerd, but it also provides an appealing 18 holes that are both environmentally and player friendly.

Moreover, the project — developed by Sienna Corp. of Edina — was finished a month ahead of time to become a significant addition to Minnesota's golf image and the Brainerd Lakes well-earned reputation as a destination golf market.

As golf course superintendent, Scott Schunter was responsible for all aspects of the construction process, insuring quality control and assisting in decision-making while working closely with Erik Larsen, project architect for the Arnold Palmer design team, and Peter Loyd, project manager for Sienna Worldgolf, developer of Deacon's Lodge as well as Bearpath in Edina and the Tradition in LaQuinta, Calif.

"The main problem with a project of this size is dealing with the weather," said Schunter. "We had 16 inches of rain in June when we started to seed last year and, as a

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result, we ended up seeding three fairways four or five times. As a preventive measure, we installed approximately 3,000 hay bales along with silt fence to prevent future major erosions."

"Things never go as smoothly as you desire, so you have to be patient and do everything you possibly can when the weather is good," he said.

Considering the fact that clearing and grubbing didn't begin until September 23, 1997 and periodic spurts of rainfall periodically slowed the shaping of the course, the first rounds of golf were played by the owners exactly one year after preliminary construction had begun. In addition, the grand opening was conducted on May 31 this year, one month ahead of the original target date, and the course opened for full-time play on June 18.

"Basically, 1998 was a good growing season with the exception of that month of June," said Schunter, "and the Spring of 1999 wasn't so hot either. We had a cold, wet May — a month in which we had more than 11 inches with fairly cool temperatures."

Schunter's previous grow-in experience at Bearpath, as well as at Blackwolf Run in Sheboygan, Wis., naturally was helpful at Deacon's Lodge.

"In ways Deacon's Lodge was easier," Schunter said, "but in other ways, it was more difficult due to the soil conditions and environment. At Deacon's the soil is basically pure sand to depths of approximately 170 feet, so this made

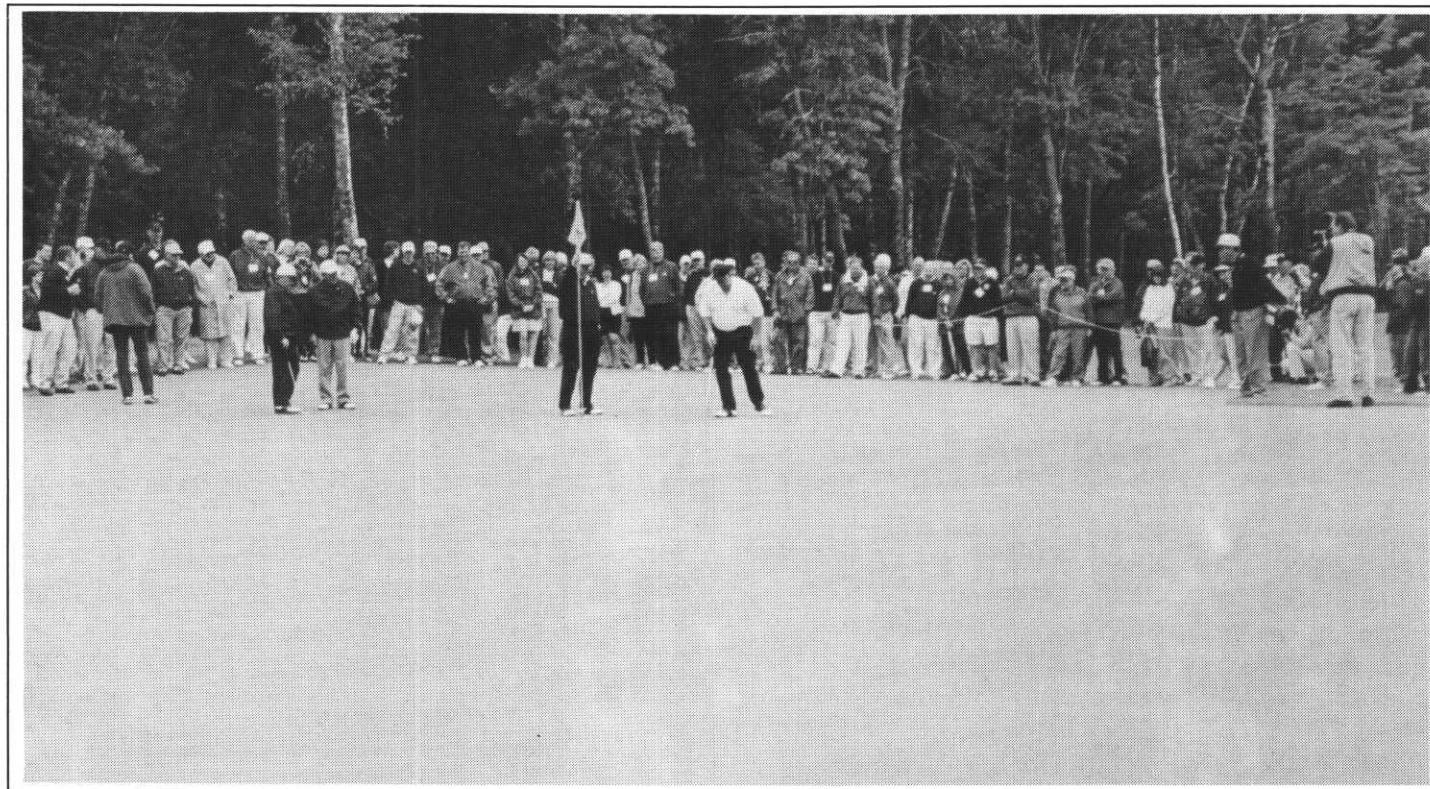


LANDING AREAS OF FAIRWAYS range from 45 to 75 yards in width. Waste bunkers are positioned to collect errant shots and protect balls from rolling into the trees or wetlands.

the construction aspects easier because all we did was clear the trees and brush, then shape the sand. With the drainage of the sand, we were able to shape and install irrigation with little or no delays due to weather.

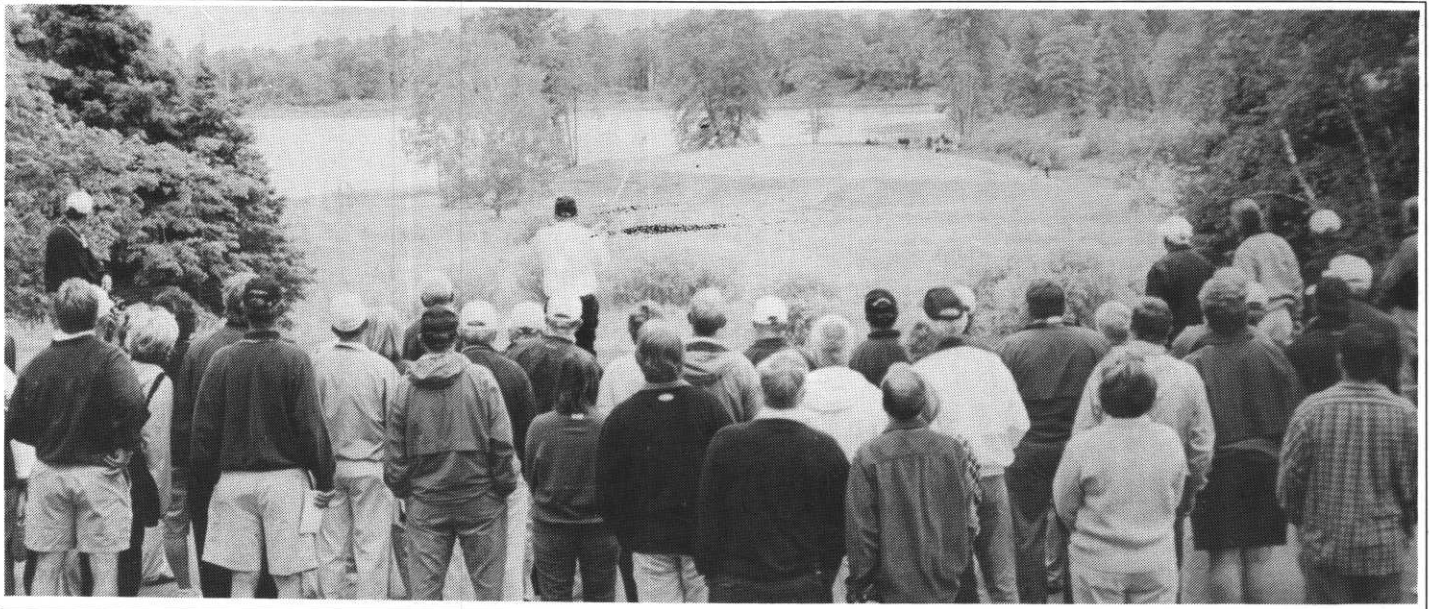
"At the same time, the soil structure made the seeding process more difficult in the fairways and rough because it was much tougher to move around with the tractors and seeders. The most difficult aspect was the two "100-year

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HUGE GREENS, which average 7,000 square feet, provide plenty of locations for hole placement. Above, the Grand Opening crowd

watches Gov. Jesse Ventura at right while course designer Arnold Palmer waits his turn to putt.



The attractive par 3 17th offers wetlands as a challenge, scenic water in the background for Gov. Ventura's tee shot.

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events" with the terrain and soil structure. These intense rains caused major washouts and re-seeding three holes up to five times."

APPEALING DESIGN

The design of Deacon's Lodge, both for a player and a turf manager, appeals to Schunter for several reasons.

"Playability is enhanced by the fact that the course was built to contain a player's ball in the fairway as well as around the green," Schunter said. "The greens are built to give all levels of players a chance to run the ball onto the green, and the fairways are very generous, from 45 to 75 yards wide in the landing zones, and five sets of tee markers — again, for all levels of players."

From a superintendent's standpoint, proper maintenance is assisted by the use of waste areas to minimize turfed areas, large greens which allow many pin positions, very

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PETER LOYD, project manager for Sienna Corp., developer of Deacon's Lodge, noted with pride that Deacon's Lodge was completed one month ahead of schedule.

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large tee surfaces to help the staff maintain good tees and the large fairways that minimize rough.

With its five sets of tees, Deacon's Lodge plays to 6,964 yards from the King (back) tees to 4,766 from the forward tees, named Winnie after Arnold's wife. In between are Palmer, 6,541 yards; Deacon, 6,067, and Lodge, 5,364. The course ratings and slopes range from 67.6/114 to 73.8/128. Par is 72.

Three natural lakes are on the property and several deep wilderness wetlands are on a 170-foot deep layer of glacial sand. Norway and White Pines, Birch, Oak, Basswood and Aspen are found throughout the terrain which offers a variety of elevation changes that provide panoramic views across the large wetlands and lakes. The property is off the Northwest shore of Big Pelican Lake, approximately midway between Gull Lake and the Whitefish Chain about 145 miles north of the Twin Cities.

Designed to be environmentally friendly, the golf course does not disturb any wetlands or lakes. Natural elevations were used to minimize earthmoving and to utilize the sand subsurface to create vast natural areas. In addition, care was taken to carry the terrain of the tree lines into the playing area to create a natural flow to the golf course.

By utilizing the entire 499 acres, each hole has its own identity and isolation. The majority of teeing areas are on the elevated ridges, and many of the landing areas are designed with slopes to provide 30 to 40 yards of additional roll. Greens average 7,000 square feet and blend into the existing terrain, many bordering lakes and wetlands with sculptured white, sand-flashed bunkers.

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Arnie and Scott

U.S. Open, Working On Nicklaus and Palmer Courses Made Decade Of '90s Interesting For Scott Schunter

The final decade of the 20th Century certainly has provided some interesting experiences for Scott Schunter, 36-year-old golf superintendent at the new Deacon's Lodge course in Breezy Point Township north of Brainerd.

Among them was helping to prepare Hazeltine National for the 1991 U.S. Open in Chaska, getting the opportunity to grow-in Bearpath, a Jack Nicklaus course in Edina, and overseeing all aspects of the construction process at Deacon's Lodge, designed by Arnold Palmer.

Scott began playing the game as a 16-year-old in De Witt, Iowa, where his dad was an avid golfer and had a family membership in a local club. He played both high school and community college golf, was active in the Future Farmers of America and then earned his Bachelor of Science degree at Iowa State University, a school well-noted for its agronomy program and its emphasis on turf management.

Scott became interested in golf course work "when I was about 20. It was as close as I could get to farming and, at the same time, still be able to make a living."

From 1985 to 1988 he worked as a laborer and did general maintenance work as well as pesticide and fertilizer applications at Cedar Rapids Country Club in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

In 1989 he became a foreman at Blackwolf Run in Sheboygan, Wis., then was an assistant superintendent from 1990-94 at Hazeltine where he supervised crews and helped prepare the course for the 1991 Open.

The next four years were at Bearpath, the Jack Nicklaus course in Edina, where he assisted in construction of the course and routine maintenance.

Then Scott officially started in March, 1998 at Deacon's Lodge, developed by Sienna Corp. which also developed Bearpath, although he was involved at the Breezy Point course in the fall of 1997 during the clearing and rough shaping as well as irrigation design and decision.



PREPARING THE WALKWAY to the front of the clubhouse before the application of asphalt, a workman smooths the path with his front-end loader.

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WASTE BUNKERS COLLECT ERRANT SHOTS

Several large waste bunkers are positioned to collect errant shots and protect balls from rolling into the trees or wetlands. The grassing strategy has fast-running bent grass where the slope helps the player and Kentucky bluegrass to hold the ball up where the slope penalizes the player.

Although Deacon's Lodge is now open for play, it should get even better with the maturing and grooming of the playing surfaces. More plantings and more work in the evolution of the natural "waste" areas also are planned.

Said Schunter: "Our golf course is not even one year old, but it will be like a fine wine, getting better with age."



EMPHASIZING MINNESOTA-MADE PRODUCTS and a Northwoods feeling in the clubhouse at Deacon's Lodge, Bonnie Hankinson, wife of developer John Hankinson, spent countless hours planning, hunting for and buying items that would provide a comfortable gathering place, one to which golfers would want to return.

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