

Designing from middle tees provides fair test for all golfers

by LESLEE JAQUETTE

In the early days of golf course design, the process usually started from the tournament tees and worked forward. Consequently, shots from the forward tees were more prone to crossing hazards and forced carries. Hitting from a hastily-added women's tee was indeed a trying feat.

The new LPGA International course in Daytona Beach, Fla., breaks with that design tradition. It has been designed completely from the middle tees, and has proven to be a fair test for the best women players. All tee areas, from front

to back, have been carefully designed and placed. Strategically-placed bail-out areas and greens give golfers of every level a challenging and fun golfing experience.

Dr. Jones on call

The LPGA course was designed by Rees Jones, and opened in July of 1994.

Known as "The Open Doctor," Jones has rehabilitated several courses for U.S. Open play, and was recently chosen to remodel Pinehurst No.2—the Donald Ross masterpiece—for the 1999 Open.

The most highly regarded Ross works are his original designs at Haig Point on Daufuskie

Island, S.C. ("Best New Private Course, 1992) and Sandpines in Florence, Ore. (Best New Public Course, 1993).

Pam Phipps, director of golf for the LPGA, says Jones was chosen not only for his expertise, but because he listens. According to Phipps, Jones sought the opinion of several women professionals before he finalized the design.

"What we have created at LPGA International," says Jones, "is a true tournament-caliber course that can also be enjoyed by less-than tournament-caliber players."

Tee area to spare

The intent and scope of the course is evident. Jones uses elevated tees for all five levels to allow for a huge range of player ability, allowing the course to be played from 5,134 to 7,088 yards. Increasingly, the tees are placed in directions and at distances appropriate with the average golfer at each level of play. For example, on No.5, the back tees are raised high enough to permit the better golfers to carry over a wetlands trap. The ladies' pro tee exacts the ability to carry 100 yards over the perimeter of the wetlands. The golf tee forces minimal water contact, and the red tee has no forward water hazard, only wetlands to the sides of the fairway.

"With this method of placement, we find the ladies can hit the same area as the guys off the longer tees," says Phipps. "It's fair—the way it should be."

Every hole allows for a pitch and roll to the green. This spares ground players the threat of landing in Jones's signature bunkers on each side of the greens.

Jones-style bunkers add interest and aesthetics to the course, and make it a great spectator course. Each green has five target areas. If you miss your first putt, the bowls and undulations of



Superintendent Mark Heater says it takes 12 man-hours a day to rake all the traps.

Dormant seeding sprouts quick results in spring

Dormant seeding is the process of planting turfgrass seed when soil temperatures are too low for germination.

Kevin J. Ross, superintendent at Falmouth (Maine) Country Club, has tried dormant seeding and likes the speed of springtime establishment.

"The first step in the seed germinating process is when water is absorbed by the seed," he notes. "The second step is when the seed undergoes a swelling which initiates several biochemical and morphological events. These steps ultimately result in the development of a seedling turfgrass plant.

Because the seed is partially germinated in the fall, it is four to six weeks ahead of spring-planted seed.

Ross suggests dormant seeding might be used in the following areas:

- on divots in tees and fairways at the end of the season. In Ross' part of the country, that is done between November 8-12, based on a test plot experiment he conducted.

- greens and other areas subject to winter kill.

- clubs on a bentgrass fairway conversion program might want to experiment with dormant seeding, suggests Ross.

"The *Poa annua* is at its weakest stage in the spring (if it survives the winter) and dormant-seeded bentgrass can compete very successfully with injured or stunted *Poa annua*," Ross says.

"We have also experimented with spraying Roundup in areas of *poa* infestation just prior to turfgrass dormancy, then dormant slice seeding bentgrass in these areas and had remarkable success.

Dormant seeding helps Ross out in an area which has a short growing season.

But he cautions superintendents to experiment before using it on a large area of turf. Timing, he says, is essential. □

—Adapted from Seed Research of Oregon's Seed Researcher.



'Water stops' around the course include water jugs, paper cups, trash bins and ice.

the green can wreak havoc with a putt.

Due to the acres of wetlands around the course, most holes are fairly straightforward.

A second 18 holes designed by Arthur Hills will be built starting in January and playable the following year. In contrast to Jones's links style, Hills' design includes more doglegs and large pine trees. Without the dramatic elevated greens and tees and mounds, the Hills course will be contoured but flatter looking.

Managing the LPGA

The new LPGA International is big, beautiful and demanding. Not only for golfers, but also for its superintendent, Mark Heater. With 250 acres of expansive wetlands, 16 miles of curbed cement cartpaths, and bunkers the size of Rhode Island, the course is a maintenance challenge.

Heater's biggest headaches are caused by the weather. Florida's infamous thunderstorms and gusty winds can greatly disrupt the 115 sand traps. The largest sand bunker on the course is 30,000 sq. ft.

Edging the bunkers is a nightmare in itself, Heater notes. Keeping the entire course edged in medium shape requires 100 man-hours a week; the cartpaths require 250 man-hours to edge. A crew

of 25 is divided into thirds, and each third works a 40-hour, five-day shift. Shifts run Tuesday through Saturday; Sunday through Thursday; and Monday through Friday.

An unexpected problem is damage caused by armadillos burrowing for mole crickets. "They wear us out," Heater says. All he can do is chase the critters away and fill in the holes.

Two of Heater's favorite pieces of equipment are a Jacobsen 3810 four-wheel drive mower for mounded areas, and a Soil Reliever deep-tine aerifier that can take whatever punishment the operator can dish out.

A former superintendent at Grand Cypress Resort in Orlando, Heater manages the largest irrigation system in Florida. Using a Toro LTC system, the LPGA course has 2,400 sprinkler heads. In the summer, the system distributes one million gallons of water per night; in the winter, 600,000 gallons a night. Located adjacent to the city's new water treatment facility, the course uses reclaimed water for irrigation. □