

A COURSE DESIGNED FOR 'affordable' golf

Superintendent Greg McDaniel is eager to open golf course development in Arkansas for middle-class American golfer.

By GARY BURCHFIELD

Golf developments typically appeal to people with lots of money. A Jonesboro, Arkansas, development, though, is targeting the "average" person. This new approach is being embraced by Jonesboro-area golfers.

Homes are already being built as Phase I of the new Sage Meadows Golf Club, an 18-hole course aiming for a March opening. The project could grow to as large as 500 building lots.

Sage Meadows is "semi-private" but will be open

to the public on a daily fee basis. Home owners in the development can join the golf club for a one-time initiation fee of \$1,000 and a monthly fee of \$125 per individual or \$145 for a family.

Fees for public golfers are reasonable, \$25 on Fridays, weekends and holidays, plus \$10 cart fees. Weekday rates are \$22. Junior rates are \$18 on weekdays and \$22 on weekends, after 2 p.m.

Golf Course Superintendent Greg McDaniel, who has been on the job since last April, says he can't wait to get the new course open.

"We've got a new course, close to a half million dollars worth of new equipment, and some new ideas," McDaniel says. "I'm just anxious to get it open and see it busy."

Last spring, the developers planned for a November opening, but a six-inch rain in September washed out most of the seeded greens, forcing McDaniel to replant. "It actually worked out okay, because we were able to improve some of the edges when we re-seeded," he says.

The course features sodded Meyer zoysia fairways, a variety of zoysia that can stand up to winter. Greens are bentgrass, seeded with Dominant bentgrass mixture. Tees, roughs and surrounds are Tifway 419 hybrid bermuda. Secondary areas are seeded to native grasses and wildflowers, with some common bermuda to help hold soil until the native plants take hold.

Sage Meadows' 13-acre driving range has large berms on each side to contain golf balls, and protect players on holes 1 and 10. Target greens are zoysia. Approaches were sprigged with 419 hybrid bermuda. Two chipping greens near the club house and a putting green at the pro shop offer several alternatives for private lessons and practice.

"We designed large tees with up to five tee positions each to give us more room to rotate markers and reduce wear on the tees," says McDaniel.

He says the course is designed with a minimum



Sage Meadows is semi-private, with daily fee play available to the general public. Holes on the course are described as 'beautiful,' 'demanding,' 'tough,' and 'one to remember.'

Md. oceanfront course to reopen

Berlin, Md.— The Newport Bay Golf Course at Ocean City Golf & Yacht Club in Berlin, Md.—previously known as the Bayside Course—has been completely redesigned and rebuilt, and will reopen for play in Spring of 1998.

It's been nominated as one of *Golf Digest's* "Best New Courses" for 1998. Golf Course Architect Lester George, of Colonial Golf Design, Inc., Richmond, Va., completed the design and has been overseeing the project since it started in January, 1996.

"It's a totally new course, with all new tees, greens, bunkers, irrigation and cart paths," says George. "I have redesigned or renovated every hole and the practice range."

The construction was handled by Quality Grassing of Lithia, Fla. Ocean City is a 36-hole private club, which is open to the public for resort daily fee play.

number of "parallel" holes and more of a "play around" layout. "It's pretty hard to hit into a fairway other than the hole you're playing."

Sage Meadows also has a top-of-the-line Rainbird Nimbus irrigation system with the "Freedom System" radio control. The system, when complete, will have about 950 sprinkler heads.

Developers provided a good budget for both equipment and maintenance, says McDaniel. His equipment line-up is heavily Jacobsen and includes two triplex greens mowers, two midweight fairway mowers, two heavyweight rough mowers, three walk-behind aerators, a Verti-Drain aerator, and 10 utility vehicles. Most of the equipment package was leased through Textron and the Bob Ladd Company, Memphis.

McDaniel had been assistant superintendent at Old Waverly Golf Club, West Point, Mississippi. (*Golf Digest* has recognized Old Waverly as one of the "Top 100" courses in the U.S., and the course has been selected to host the 1999 U.S. Women's

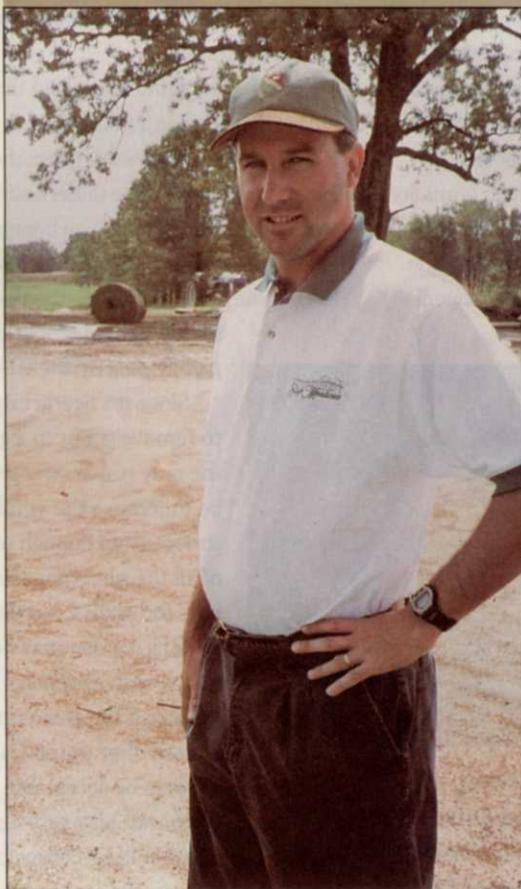
Sage Meadows particulars

Sage Meadows Golf Club is being developed by three local Jonesboro, Arkansas, businessmen: Bob and Ed Trout, who own the local *Jonesboro SUN* newspaper, and Kent Arnold. The trio is developing a similar project in Florida.

Home sites on the Sage Meadows course will range from condominium to estate size, and range in price from \$30,000 to \$100,000 per lot. The club includes a pool and racquet club with three tennis courts. Pool and tennis facilities are available only to property owners and guests.

The new 5,000 sq.ft. clubhouse includes a pro shop, grill and snack bar, and a private lounge. The lounge will be available to the general public on a membership basis and nominal fee.

The Tommy Bolt Signature golf course was designed by Kevin Tucker, Nashville, Tennessee, and built by Sajo Construction of Houston, Texas. Distances range from 166 yards on the par 3 hole number 5 to 605 yards on the par 5 number 15.



McDaniel: Five position tees give more room to rotate markers, reduce wear.

Open.) He and Mike Donoghue, assistant superintendent, operated out of a mobile home office during construction of the Sage Meadows course. McDaniel says Donoghue has been a great help in getting the course ready.