

Issue 7 | Summer 2011

BY DESIGN



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Getting better

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through course renovation

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The focus on alternative golf facilities that we started in the last issue of *By Design* and continue in this has demonstrated that the industry is assertively looking for new ways to grow the game. Golf's increasing focus on enhanced practice areas, short courses, putting courses and the like is providing easier routes into the game for new players, and ways of revitalizing participation among those who have given it up for reasons of cost, difficulty or time.

The conclusive proof that the global golf industry is serious about embracing alternative facilities is found in the French federation's successful bid for the 2018 Ryder Cup, highlighted in this issue. The federation's commitment, as part of its bid, to build 100 new golf facilities, mostly in the form of six or nine hole urban golf courses, in advance of 2018, is perhaps the most impressive demonstration yet of belief in such facilities to grow the game. Despite France's long history of golf and impressive selection of full-scale courses, ranging from resorts aimed at tourists to exclusive clubs like the very grand Morfontaine, the game remains the preserve of a minority in the country; this initiative has the potential to transform French golf into a true peoples' pastime.

As I take over as ASGCA President from Erik Larsen, it is my aim to remind everyone in the golf business of the importance of smaller scale facilities, or just as importantly perhaps, smaller facilities within bigger existing facilities. Over seventy percent of US golf rounds are played on public courses with a median green fee of \$28; we should not be shy of promoting this fact!



Yours sincerely,

Rick Phelps
President
American Society of Golf Course Architects

BY DESIGN

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Palmares Golf Resort, Portugal, renovated by Robert Trent Jones Jr, ASGCA Past President and Mark Voss, ASGCA Associate.

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China | Adam Lawrence

China golf growth to continue

China's golf market will continue to grow, despite fears of a bubble and government disquiet about the game, according to one of the country's leading golf figures.

Speaking at the ASGCA annual meeting in Denver in May, Ernie Wang, publisher of *Golf* and *Golfweek* magazines in China said that 52 new golf facilities, equivalent to 60 eighteen hole courses, opened in the country during 2010, a 13.5 percent increase in China's golfing stock. Wang told the meeting that, although the data is incomplete, he has evidence of 172 golf projects under construction in China, with another 291 in planning. South China, he said, was the main boom area.

For golf architects hoping to work in China, Wang said that the second and third tier cities, which are currently underserved

Photo: Ryan Farrow, Schmidt-Curley



Stone Forest, one of China's many recent golfing additions

for golf, offered the best possibilities. "There are over 100 cities with more than a million inhabitants in China, and over 400,000 millionaires," he said, adding that, to succeed in the country, outsiders need to commit themselves to China, rather than expecting to make a short visit and immediately pick up work.

"China is overpopulated and short of water," he said. "Making better use of water and protecting arable and

forest land will improve the prospects for golf. We need to make golf courses on barren hills and desert lands. Land is expensive, so most courses have been built on sites leased for between 40-70 years. This drives short-termism. Don't expect to get naturally good sites. If they are available, they will be remote, with no market for golf. You will be supported and acclaimed for turning bad land into good and increasing its value."

Brazil | Sam Ballard

Rio resort wins planning consent

A major new golf and leisure development in Brazil has been granted planning permits.

The developers behind the Rio de Janeiro International Golf Resort, UK firm International Golf & Resort Management and the Rio-based company JCN, have been given the go-ahead to start construction.

Set on a 1,100 hectare site, the resort will include a hotel, an eighteen hole golf course, designed by Nick Faldo's company in association with Florida-based architect Steve Smyers, ASGCA, and a nine hole par three course. Another eighteen hole course

is planned. Conceived in 2007, the project is located 16km from the ancient city of Petropolis.

Smyers said: "The plan is to commence detail design within the next month so construction can start in September." The resort's phased opening is expected to start in early 2014.

Valued at 500m Brazilian reals (US\$306m), the developers say the resort will generate 2,000 direct and 4,000 indirect jobs and will increase the available accommodation in Rio state in the run-up to the 2016 Olympics.

'Thirteen new courses' for Morocco

Thirteen new golf courses are set to open in Morocco in the next three years, according to the country's authorities.

The country currently has 27 courses, but its Vision 2010 and Vision 2020 strategies call for rapid expansion.

Figures released by the Moroccan National Tourist Office show that golf tourism has increased by 40 percent in the last three years.

The office has named 2011 as the Year of Golf in Agadir. The city has already hosted two professional tournaments this year, the European Tour's Hassan II Golf Trophy and the Lalla Meryem Cup on the Ladies European Tour.

ASGCA 'Secrets' book available

The tales about and stories behind some of the world's most memorable golf courses are available in one place from the American Society of Golf Course Architects.

Secrets of the Great Golf Course Architects includes Bill Coore, ASGCA confronted by naked, blowgun-wielding tribesmen in Indonesia and Pete Dye, ASGCA Fellow, who was not hired to build the second nine at the first course he ever designed. Also, more than one ASGCA member has been threatened with arrest without cause, all while innocently designing golf courses.

Stories like these are only part of the moving and inspirational experiences of golf course architects published in the book. The book—co-authored by Michael Patrick Shiels—is available at www.asgca.org.

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ASGCA | Adam Lawrence

Amick honored by ASGCA

Florida-based golf architect Bill Amick was honored with the ASGCA's Distinguished Service Award at the organization's recent annual meeting. Amick, a past president of ASGCA, is just the fifth person in the society's history to receive this award.

Long at the forefront of promoting affordable golf, 2011 is the 52nd year of Amick's Daytona Beach-based architectural practice. During his career, he has designed more than 75 courses in the US and around the world.



Amick (left) receives the Distinguished Service Award from ASGCA Past President Erik Larsen

"ASGCA founder Bill Diddel first hired me as his assistant and allowed me to design bunkers and tees," Amick said. "I watched him and saw he designed a golf course for people who would actually play it. He thought there should be smaller courses.

Even today, we need more smaller courses. They are easier to maintain, faster, less expensive and easier to play for beginners and families. The idea came home to me when I designed in Europe and watched people beginning on these smaller courses."

Maldives | Sam Ballard

Troon plans Maldives floating course

Troon Golf has been appointed as technical advisor to the proposed \$500 million floating golf course project in the Maldives.

Developed by the Dutch Docklands company, the project is slated for completion by 2015. The Maldivian government has leased five areas around Male Atoll, close to the islands' international airport, for a fifty year period, and proposes

to build a series of five floating islands that will incorporate a convention centre, hotels and golf course. Troon says that the project will be 'scarless' and include opportunities for sustainable development such as watercooling, salt water collection and the use of floating solar blanket fields. Dutch architect Koen Olhuis of Waterstudio is leading the design.

The Maldives, whose highest point is only two metres above sea level, has committed to becoming the world's first carbon neutral country by 2020. The nation already includes one artificial island, Hulhumale, which was completed in 2004, and covers an area of 445 acres. The island was built to reduce overcrowding on Male, which has over 100,000 people living in only one square mile.

The potential scale of the proposed golf course is not yet clear, although government minister Mahmood Razee has previously admitted it may not be a full sized eighteen holes. No golf design firm has yet been appointed to the project.



New Vietnam course

Vietnamese developer Trung Nam Group has started construction work on a new 400 hectare complex in Da Nang, planned to include a golf course. The Golden Hills project is budgeted at \$1.7 billion.

Swedish renovation

ASGCA Past President Steve Forrest has begun work on a major renovation of the Old course at Vasatorps Golf Club in Helsingborg, Sweden. Forrest previously designed the club's new Tournament course.

PGA for Bellerive

Bellerive Country Club in St Louis is to host the centennial PGA Championship in 2018, plus the 2013 Senior PGA. The course, originally designed by ASGCA founder Robert Trent Jones Sr, was remodeled by his son, Rees, an ASGCA Past President, in 2005.

Kellogg upgrade

The city of Peoria, Ill., has announced a renovation of its Kellogg Golf Course. The work, which will begin in August, should cost around \$850,000 and will be completed in 2012. ASGCA Past President Bob Lohmann is leading the design work.

Madrid opening

The new El Encin course in Madrid, Spain, designed by Rick Baril, ASGCA, has officially opened, and will host the European Tour's Madrid Masters from 6-9 October. Environmental issues, including solar energy capture and the use of recycled waste water for irrigation were paramount in design and construction.

Getting better

Renovation | Adam Lawrence

Golf clubs around the world are realizing the need to keep working on their courses, and ASGCA members are helping them do so.



Nothing stands still in golf. However carefully we maintain our courses, Mother Nature always wins out: trees grow, then die, grasses we didn't plant and don't want invade our fairways and greens, bunkers change their shape.

The best golf courses are planned in the full knowledge that they will change. Architects create elasticity, allowing for new tees to be built. Bunkers are added or removed—take a look at some of the writing of past architects like Harry Colt, who would often advise clubs that they should wait and see how courses played before adding more bunkers.

Every now and again, though, it's necessary to create a new paradigm. Maybe the evolution of a course has taken it in a direction that, eventually, has made it less interesting, and the club wants to go back to something close to what they had before. Maybe a new course has opened down the street, drawing players away, and more bells and whistles are needed to compete. Or maybe the course has changed hands, the new owners have a different business model in mind, and need to make it fit their goals.

This last imperative is a particularly strong trend in the current golf market. "I think a key trend in the US for the next few years will be repositioning," says architect Steve Smyers, ASGCA. "There are a lot of properties that have closed down and been picked up by new owners at very good prices. As they were built, these courses aren't always suitable for the business models the new owners have in mind, and so they'll need to rebuild them to a greater or lesser extent. We are involved in a number of such projects at the moment—in some cases, building an entirely new course on top of the old infrastructure, as we did at Isleworth."



Recapturing the Colt style at Old Elm (above). Vasatorps Old course, before (top right) and after renovation

Another large-scale repurposing project opened recently in Portugal. Originally designed by Anglo-Dutch architect Frank Pennink and located near the city of Lagos in the west of the Algarve, Palmares opened in 1975. The course was best known for the stretch of five holes set right next to the Atlantic Ocean, the nearest thing to links golf that existed in the Algarve.

Onyria, owned by the Pinto Coelho family which developed Quinta da Marinha in the 1980s in association with Robert Trent Jones Sr, bought Palmares back in 2003. To bring about its desired transformation at Palmares, the company chose the design practice of Robert Trent Jones II, continuing its 30 year association with the Jones family. ASGCA Past President Robert Trent Jones Jr himself, and Mark Voss, ASGCA Associate, led the project.

The new-look Palmares resort—which will include a hotel, currently in the early stages of construction

and planned for a 2012 opening, and associated real estate—has 27 holes, divided into three nines, named Lagos, Alvor and Praia.

The Praia, or beach, nine includes four holes on the seafront land always occupied by the course. On the inland side of the Tunes to Lagos railway line, though, several holes, including two clever short par fours, occupy newly-purchased land, which has been shaped to resemble a links. This part of the site incorporates a double green modelled after the seventh and eleventh on the Old course at St Andrews, including an interesting replica of the famous Eden par three.

The Alvor nine is mostly inland, and includes some steeper terrain, along with the course's most severe greens. The first three Alvor holes occupy the least interesting land on the property (although the third green is excellent) but after a road crossing, the course enters a beautiful natural valley, the location for three holes. A pretty par

three near the water is the highlight of this nine, which concludes with a stiff climb up the eighth and ninth back to the clubhouse.

Other courses want to make the most of their historic legacy. At the famous Old Elm club in Chicago, originally designed by the legendary Harry Colt in 1913 and constructed on his behalf by ASGCA founder Donald Ross, architect Drew Rogers, ASGCA has been working to return the golf course to something that more closely resembles Colt's work. "The seventh at Old Elm is a par three with a subtle ridge between the tees and the green," says Rogers. "The green was nearly obscured due to a long, trench-like cross bunker that was cropped up along the ridge, running completely across the hole. At some point, the cross bunker had been removed, and the green had become wholly visible. In addressing the desire by the club here and on other holes, we restored the original cross bunker designed by Colt and



constructed by Ross. The green is still visible, particularly on the left side, and also opens to allow play from a modern forward tee on the left side on the ridge. This is a case where we can restore original design intent while adapting to modern day member desires and needs.”

At Vasatorps Golfklubb in Sweden, the opening of the new Tournament course, designed by ASGCA Past President Steve Forrest a few years ago, meant the club’s Old course had been relegated to secondary status. “The Old course at Vasatorps has a wonderful history, but it had clearly become the ‘members’ course since the opening of our Tournament course,” Forrest says. “The members have seen all these new courses in Sweden—they’ve seen one at their own club! They understand better than anyone perhaps that the Old course was lacking in several respects. Naturally they wanted to restore it to a position of prominence and respect.”

So Forrest is launching a major

renovation of the Old course. Several holes will be repositioned or rerouted, and virtually every green will be moved. The layout’s bunkering scheme will be totally reimagined (Forrest foresees a style that is flat-bottomed, grass-faced and rough-hewn around the edges). Plans also call for a major increase in the size, impact and visibility of the layout’s water hazards.

“Nearly every green on the Old course will be brand new and has been re-sited,” said Forrest. “If we’re going to renovate, we may as well put the greens and bunkers where they should be, to maximize strategy, challenge, aesthetic interest, safety and playability.”

Many design improvements stem from the effort to improve drainage: the course occupies a very flat piece of terrain that always drained poorly. “When you expand water features, it generates dirt—dirt you can employ to raise up and better contour fairways,” Forrest explained. “We’ve done this strategically on the Old course, so fairways surface drain more efficiently

into the ponds. And, of course, when you replace soggy land with ponds, you don’t have to drain that land. What’s more, by expanding water features, we create more visible hazards that can be deployed more strategically.”

He cites the mid-length par four third as one example. The dogleg left hole is so flat that a small water hazard on the left is invisible from the tee. Forrest will expand the pond’s footprint fivefold and use the fill to recontour the fairway, then move the tees forward to improve safety relationships and create a driveable par four with water guarding the entire left side.

An ownership change was at the heart of the need for renovation at the Ironwood Golf Course in Gainesville, Fla., although only after an extended period. The city bought the course, originally built in the 1960s, out of bankruptcy in 1992, and, by 2008, had realized it was tired and needed a makeover. Michael Beebe, ASGCA, was employed to manage a renovation project that included tree removal, new greens, tees, bunkers, cart paths, irrigation and extensive fairway drainage. “The city formed a visioning team in 2008 to make recommendations on the golf course,” says Beebe. “The visioning team recognized the important role that Ironwood played in the local golfing community and recommended a \$1.3 million capital improvement program to be implemented in 2010. Following a fast-track design process, we closed the course on April 1 so that the construction work could be completed in time for a November re-opening. The immediate response following the re-opening has been outstanding with revenues for both November and December being double the revenues from the same months in 2008 and 2009. Although the course has only been open for six months, early indications are the renovation has been a huge success with increased play, golfer satisfaction and great publicity for the city.” ●

To contact any of the ASGCA members mentioned here or for a complete membership list, visit www.asgca.org/members.

“ France has committed to create 100 new golf facilities, mostly in urban areas

Alternative golf facilities | Sam Ballard

How golf has changed its spots

Golf, as even its enemies would concede, is aspirational and promotes honour and loyalty. These are great virtues for the game, and not ones to be easily abandoned. But, as the golf industry has realized, the game does need to become more attractive to younger players.

Two new approaches to golf that have gained hundreds of column inches in recent months are the Powerplay format and the new Flogton concept promoted by former Sun Microsystems chief executive Scott McNealy. The Alternative Golf Association launched its Project Flogton in January and got the golf world abuzz.

Flogton, seemingly, is mainly aimed at addressing the difficulty of golf to beginners. Potential Flogton players are told to embrace any technological innovations that will make the game easier, to the extent of applying coatings to the face of drivers in the hope it will make the ball fly straighter. Third putts are automatically good, inventors are urged to submit ideas for balls or clubs that will aid players, mulligans are available on every hole, and so forth. At the recent ASGCA

Annual Meeting in Denver, members discussed how architects could help lead the way in designing facilities for this new format.

Powerplay, by contrast, aims to create a new form of golf game that will be quicker and more exciting. Originally created in the UK some five years ago, the format has recently been given a bump as a result of a major investment from US firm Colorado Sports Ventures. CSV's funds paid for a special event at Celtic Manor in Wales that went out live on TVs around the world, and featured names like Colin Montgomerie and Ian Poulter.

A modified Stableford format, Powerplay competitions take place over nine holes, and, crucially, use two hole locations on every green. Shooting for the regular flag earns normal points, but aiming for the black flag, set in a more difficult position, and successfully making a birdie, earns the player a significant bonus (naturally the player must choose his flag before hitting his approach shot!).

From a golf architecture perspective, the Powerplay format is interesting. Obviously, for the black flag concept

to have any meaning, greens must have sufficient defenses, in the way of either contour or surrounding hazards, to provide worthwhile variety in the hole locations. It is hard to imagine a Powerplay game working well on flat, ill-defended greens. It may well find a niche as a made-for-TV professional golf format. But as a basis for everyday golf, it has clear limitations. How often does the average eighteen handicapper make a birdie at any time, let alone when, before hitting his approach shot he must nominate and fire for a specially tough hole location? The progenitors of Powerplay must be aware of this fact, though, and will doubtless be considering ways to make their format—which is undoubtedly innovative and interesting—more appealing to non-expert golfers.

Taped-up drivers and black flags aside, the growth of interest in alternative golf formats around the world is easy to see. Take the successful French bid for the 2018 Ryder Cup. France has a long history of golf, and a substantial number of golf courses, including some of the best in Europe. It has a solid golfing



Gill Hanse, ASGCA built the ten hole Horse course at the Prairie Club in Nebraska

population that is growing, albeit relatively slowly. But golf in France remains a minority interest, especially when one compares the country to other more dynamic golf nations such as Sweden, where aggressive development programs aimed primarily at young people, made golf one of the most popular sports within a period of twenty years.

The French golf authorities, to their credit, realize this. Basing their bid for the Ryder Cup on the existing Golf National course outside Paris, rather than proposing a brand new, inevitably expensive development, gave them headroom to put forward a bold scheme to transform the nature of golf in France. In the run-up to the 2018 matches, France has committed to create 100 new golf facilities, which will mostly be in urban areas, thus providing access to golf for millions of people.

Some commentators, interpreting the commitment as 100 new eighteen hole, full length courses, have scoffed. But that is not what the French authorities plan. Rather, the new facilities will be a mix of driving ranges, academies, short courses, nine hole courses, and so on. Such developments offer the potential

to bring golf to parts of France, and to French communities that have no contact with the game right now. It is a bold plan, and one that deserves much praise if it comes to fruition.

Elsewhere in the world, schemes that may be less grandiose, but that on a smaller scale, help to widen golf's appeal, are continuing to be planned, built and used. Most people that have been to St Andrews will, hopefully, have enjoyed a game on the Ladies' Putting Course, more popularly known as the Himalayas. Similar-style putting courses are springing up in many other locations around the globe, in country clubs as a means for post-round, post-dinner relaxation or at public venues to give otherwise non-golfers a reason to visit the facilities. Such courses are a brilliant way to introduce people, especially kids, to golf: a venue on which power is basically irrelevant and where little Jimmy might just beat his Dad—and thus be hooked on golf for life. The ten-hole Horse course at the new Prairie Club in Nebraska, designed by Gil Hanse, ASGCA, has proved a major success for the club, to the extent that Hanse is now working on the club's third full-length eighteen hole golf course.

From a commercial developer's perspective, smaller scale facilities such as putting courses or par threes, or pitch and putts, are a great way to test the water before committing to a bigger project. Like many ASGCA members, Past President Tom Clark says he sees many property owners looking to develop their properties as alternate golf facilities until market conditions improve, whether that be for tax write-offs or short-term revenue producers. "In Myrtle Beach, we built two short courses, Midway and Cane Patch, that were so successful they outperformed their eighteen hole championship equivalents," Clark says. "The courses did so well the owners opted to add an additional nine at each facility, a driving range and light them for night play. At one point, Cane Patch was generating over 1000 rounds per day (and night) in peak season. The Midway complex was finally closed a few years back and converted to high-density development, but Cane Patch is still going strong." ●

Visit asgca.org to see how ASGCA members are responding to changes in the game. The French development initiatives will be covered in more depth in a future issue.

Hydraulic mulches extend growing seasons

From the moment a golf course construction is given the green light, it's a race to establish vegetation and make the course playable. Only then can the course owner sell rounds and generate revenue. While many variables can ultimately determine the outcome of the race, weather remains a universal constant no matter where on the globe the build is taking place.

"Depending on where you are in the world, the conditions you're working with are going to be different," said Thad Layton, architect with Arnold Palmer Design, who currently works primarily on projects outside of the United States, including Mexico and China. "Those conditions directly influence what type of products you go with on the course."

Builders may not always have ideal growing conditions for golf course development. But architects can play a key role in specifying products to help accelerate turf establishment and control erosion—even during the monsoon rains. If builders can work up to the start of the rainy season without worrying about erosion issues, a significant amount of additional work can be accomplished.

Using the newest generation of hydraulic mulches is an effective and cost-effective way to establish turf, protect the soil and extend the work season in less-than-perfect conditions.

Installing sod is the quickest way to get turf established on site, but installation costs can quickly bust the budget. From product costs to shipping and installation, sod is the most expensive option and can be an unattractive solution to a project's

bottom line. Yet, it's still critical to protect exposed soil and grow grass as quickly as possible.

A typical practice to replace sod has been the use of erosion control blankets. With blankets, smooth soil preparation is critical to their success. Metal staples are needed to hold blankets down and must be collected before mowing. Netting on the blankets can cause environmental issues by trapping animals and adding plastic to the land, and it can get trapped in mowers.

Soil can also wash out from under mats in a downpour. "Not only do heavier rains wash the soil out from underneath the mat, but they can take the whole blanket down the river in a really bad storm event," Layton said.

Covering seed or sprigs with hydraulically applied mulch is a much less labor-intensive and more cost-effective option.

There are a variety of hydraulic mulches available. Mulches can contain cellulose, wood fiber, man-made synthetic fibers, plant byproducts including cotton fibers, and straw. The most highly advanced engineered hydraulic mulches contain the finest wood fibers, man-made fibers and other ingredients as is the case with Flexible Growth Medium (FGM) and High Performance-Flexible Growth Medium (HP-FGM) products. FGM mulch bonds directly to the contours of the soil with minimal soil preparation required.

First introduced in 2004, FGM was the most advanced in the spectrum of hydraulic mulches until the second-generation FGM known as HP-FGM was introduced in 2010. HP-FGM quickly established itself as

the pinnacle of the hydraulic mulch category with its ability to immediately control erosion and establish turf faster than any other class.

According to Esie O'Mahoney, Project Director of Sol Golf Construction, Flexterra HP-FGM by Profile Products performs well under the most challenging circumstances. "The site for the Trump course in Scotland is spectacular but not without its construction and grow-in challenges. Moving dunes and strong winds meant that we had to find a solution to stabilize the site as well as guarantee establishment of hand sprigged marram grass. We trialed a number of mulches on the sand dunes in February, including Flexterra HP-FGM. The paper mulches disintegrated within a week but the Flexterra HP held the dunes in place and continues to protect the hand sprigged grasses. We are delighted that we found a product so perfect for the site."

HP-FGM utilizes technology that combines both chemical and mechanical bonding techniques to keep soil in place while retaining more water for faster germination. Thermally refined wood fibers, crimped man-made fibers and other additives form a lofty, interlocking matrix that bonds directly to the soil surface, so time-consuming soil preparation isn't needed. By using 100 percent sterilized recycled wood fibers, man-made fibers that are 100 percent biodegradable, and natural components, HP-FGM is tested to be non-toxic to fish and wildlife. HP-FGM is not only the most effective erosion control option, it's also the most environmentally friendly option available.



Joe Betulius

Joe Betulius is the vice president of marketing for Profile Products. He has worked with golf course architects around the world, most recently focusing his efforts on Europe and the Middle East.

HP-FGM protects soil right away, but also protects it longer than other hydraulically applied mulches. Dormant seeding on prepared soils to protect over the winter months or in arid regions when you are relying only on infrequent natural rain, can be done with confidence using HP-FGM hydraulic mulches. The moisture retention of HP-FGMs greatly reduces watering requirements to establish turf. They have a documented functional longevity of 18 months—more than bonded fiber matrices, wood mulches and straw/cotton mulches—as tested to ASTM D5338.

According to testing conducted at one of the most respected research laboratories in the United States, the Utah Water Research Laboratory, HP-FGM kept 99 percent of soil on site, substantially more effective than a double-net excelsior blanket, bonded fiber matrix, double-net straw blanket or straw/cotton hydraulic mulch.

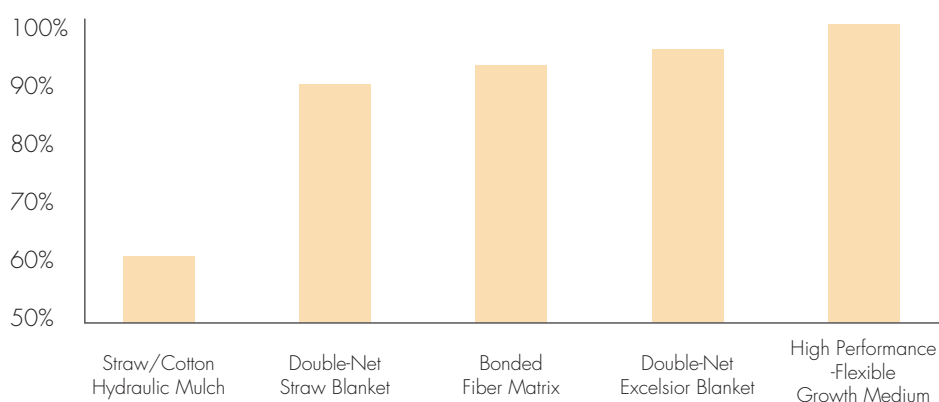
Layton said he believes specifying the right hydraulic mulch can be a benefit when dealing with a build in a rainy region or time of year.

“To make hay while the sun is shining, you have to get the soil stabilized immediately, especially if there’s high potential for rain. If you don’t, you can set yourself back on schedule and you could conceivably compromise your golf course.”

Establishing turf quickly can mean the difference between finishing on time and waiting until the next season to complete the job. According to independent lab testing using standard test method ASTM D7322, nothing establishes turf faster or more completely than HP-FGM.

Erosion Control Performance

Average percent effectiveness



Hydraulic mulch in use

Moisture management plays a critical role in establishing turf fast. HP-FGM fiber matrices have the highest water-holding capacity of any category, according to ASTM D7367. The water-absorbing cavities and organic polymers in HP-FGM create a continuous, porous, absorbent and flexible erosion-resistant blanket that

allows for rapid germination and accelerated plant growth.

Layton said FGMs can be a great choice when a builder is establishing turf in the hot and dry months of the summer, as FGMs save water during grow-ins. “Even when it gets dry, it traps that moisture you need and speeds up the germination process.” ●

“ Golfers can potentially speed up play and have more fun by using tees that provide the greatest playability

Jim Hyler, USGA President

Tee locations | Marc Whitney

Tee it Forward for greater enjoyment

The ongoing efforts of the American Society of Golf Course Architects (ASGCA) and its members to provide fun, challenging, rewarding experiences at the golf course for players of all ages is being championed by golf's allied associations, including the United States Golf Association (USGA), the Professional Golfers Association (PGA) and Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA). Golf's allied groups are promoting 'Tee it Forward,' a campaign announced at the 2011 U.S. Open encouraging players to compete from the tees which match their ability.

“Golfers can potentially speed up play and have more fun by using tees that provide the greatest playability and enjoyment,” said USGA President Jim Hyler. “It’s about changing the mindset of golfers in a positive way by encouraging people to consider setting aside that desire to play from 6,500 to 6,700 yards and move up and play a course around 6,000 to 6,200 yards. I’ve been ‘Teeing it Forward’ for several months, I play faster, and I’m definitely having more fun.

“‘Tee it Forward’ can add a new layer of fun we believe can be healthy for the future of the game.”

ASGCA members have helped course owners and developers for years by designing multiple tee options to serve players of all skill levels. The drive remains to play a course to a length which maintains the challenge of a good design while always being fun for the golfer. And where necessary, ASGCA members will work with clients to create new or additional tee boxes to meet player needs.

The views of industry officials match nicely to the formal and informal discussions of ASGCA members at the 65th ASGCA Annual Meeting in Denver. There, members spoke about the need for shorter courses designed to address the

changing needs of current and future players.

“ASGCA applauds the efforts of the allied associations and the ‘Tee it Forward’ campaign,” said ASGCA President Rick Phelps. “It is natural for a player’s eyes to get big when they step out on a course and want to play from the longest tees. In reality it is far more fun—and better for the scorecard—to play from tees where you are comfortable but still experience the challenge of a well-designed course. I was pleased to see the attention this initiative received at the U.S. Open. ASGCA looks forward to being a part of the effort’s further promotion.” ●



“Professional golf isn’t where the game’s true history lies

Golf history | Philip Young

Understanding golf’s history

April has come and gone and with it that rite of spring we know as the Masters. With each edition comes a new triumph of history made as well another piece of its storied past that is celebrated anew. This year was the 25th anniversary of Nicklaus’ amazing triumphant win for the ages at 46, while the tournament itself crowned a relatively unknown, to the American viewer anyway, Charl Schwartzel.

Young Schwartzel became the first victor to birdie the final four holes on this glorious Sunday afternoon as one contender after another fell tragically short. As each contender fell, history’s triumph became ever more assured.

For the average golfer the history of the game is inextricably bound with professional golf. Yet this isn’t where golf’s true history resides.

I am having a hard time coming to grips with the fact that in just a few more years it will be the fiftieth anniversary of the very first time I teed up a ball up on a golf course. I was raised in a lower middle-class family where both parents had a passion for the game that the income simply couldn’t match. All six children were taught to play and given hand-me-down sets of already over-used clubs from which to hit plastic golf balls in our back yard. As we each grew

older that special day came when we were taken to a driving range where we could finally feel that ‘click’ as we strove with all our youthful might to hit the striped ball with negligible compression out past the 150 yard post, and if we hadn’t already been, now we were hooked.

It was as glorious an April Sunday as any that has ever been seen in the eastern corner of Augusta when my parents brought me with them and my older brother to the Merrick Road Park golf course. There was a nearly four hour wait to tee off on this nine-hole municipal which had been built on the site of reclaimed land that had once served as a garbage dump on Long Island. I had never seen that many sea gulls floating overhead nor experienced a smell so ripe in the odor wafting up from the ground and nearby inlet, yet it didn’t matter because I was about to play golf for the very first time.

Even at that age the course inspired the delusions of grandeur that every first-time player feels as visions of Arnold Palmer kept appearing in my head. My parents played here every Sunday and so knew many of those also awaiting their tee-off time’s arrival. Quietly they learned that the gangly red-head with the large ears and far too many freckles was to be holding them up as he was a ‘first-timer.’



Philip Young

In addition to being an author and the historian for the Tillinghast Association, Philip also provides research services to golf clubs and architects through his company, Golden Age Research.

Nearly 50 years later and I can still distinctly remember four things. The feel of the ball as I struck it with my Pederson 2&1/2 wood and watching it fly high, far, true and straight, carrying the bunker placed at the left corner of this short par five more than 200 yards away. I can remember being stunned by a spontaneous outburst of applause from those standing there watching. I will never forget the look of absolute pride on my father’s face as I walked over to my golf bag, heart beating furiously within my chest. And I will never forget how I proceeded to top my next three attempts at moving the ball further down the fairway. The grandest of delusions come crashing down the hardest of all.

It is for those memories that every golf architect working countless lonely hours walking overgrown land to route a course, riding a tractor to shape it to meet his vision or standing there bent over a drawing board putting that vision to paper, that they should be thanked. For those who create the Merrick Road Park golf courses of the world provide the playing fields of the game where the true history of this wonderful game is to be found, even if it is on land that once served as a garbage dump. After all, isn’t that the sort of fact of which the history of golf is made? ●

“ One thing which has endured is the leadership, innovation and adaptability of ASGCA members

Closing Thoughts | Marc Whitney

Adjusting to new realities

The story is known within golf design circles: Donald Ross, Robert Trent Jones, Sr. and 12 others gathered 65 years ago to form the American Society of Golf Course Architects. Those who met in 1947 could not have predicted everything which has happened in golf over the years (16 under at the U.S. Open?!), but one thing which has endured is the leadership, innovation and adaptability of ASGCA members.

Look around and see the positive impression made by ASGCA members as you read about those shaping the game, adjusting to ‘new realities’ while respecting past traditions and spearheading the movement toward greater inclusion, enhanced playability and greater sustainability for all golf courses, regardless of a player’s skill level.

Examples of architects adjusting were noticeable at the Golf Industry Show in Orlando, Fla., in February. Business opportunities afforded through master planning, renovations, 12-hole course designs and more populated conversations. ASGCA Immediate Past President Erik Larsen’s Value of the Golf Course message was enthusiastically received by industry leaders and national and international media, cited several times as the right

message for the right time in promoting the economic, social and environmental benefits a golf course brings to its community.

The positive direction continued at the 65th ASGCA Annual Meeting in Denver in May, where a packed three-day education schedule included presentations from international leaders both inside and outside of golf. Members working around the globe came together again to embrace the game, their profession and the responsibilities which come from being leaders in an industry still in the state of flux. The presentation of ASGCA’s Distinguished Service Award to Past President Bill Amick (p. 7) recognized the work of a man who has long designed and promoted shorter, affordable courses.

ASGCA President Rick Phelps’ decision to have members play three public facilities was an example of ‘walking the talk’ about the importance of the 95% of golf courses which receive little to no publicity, but are the backbone of the game.

Examples of ASGCA’s leadership role are evident throughout this issue of *By Design*:

- Impacting the changing landscape of golf in China (p. 5), where it



Marc Whitney

Marc is Director of External Communications at ASGCA. He has 20 years spent more than 20 years in sports public relations and marketing. He currently also serves as an adjunct professor in the College of Communications at Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wis.

is estimated the majority of all new golf developments are being designed by ASGCA members.

- Renovations which continue to serve players, owners and the environment (p. 8), from local public facilities to some of the most famous courses in golf.
- An openness to new approaches to golf (p. 12), where ASGCA member-designed facilities can help attract the next generation of players.

The allied associations’ message to ‘Tee it Forward’ (p. 16) reminds that ASGCA members’ respect for players of diverse skill levels is illustrated by designs which challenge while remaining fun. For decades, members have repositioned courses or designed various tees to accommodate broad groups of players, work which will continue as ASGCA members help clients adapt to future marketplaces.

What will ASGCA members be discussing in another 65 years at the 2076 Annual Meeting? We can be certain ASGCA and its members will be a part of golf’s continuing evolution, which would leave the founders quite pleased indeed.

Look for more on the 2011 ASGCA Annual Meeting in Denver in the next issue of *By Design*. ●



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