

# Opposing styles mark golf course design

Nicklaus, Jones Jr. treat each course as an artistic challenge

By BRAD EWART  
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Imagine your assignment: To build a great golf course that will challenge every kind of golfer from the weekend warrior to the top professionals in the game.

The terrain is a combination of rolling hills, deep ravines, lakes and marshland spread over 200 acres of a natural forest. Now, you have to work within the budget the owner has allotted, don't upset the environmentalists and finish the project in two years.

That's quite a task and one that really should be left up to the experts.

Jack Nicklaus and Robert Trent Jones Jr. are two such experts who have been designing and building golf courses around the world for the past two decades. To these two master craftsmen, the challenge is one they constantly face and they consistently produce some of the finest tests of golf in the world.

Who is a better golf course designer? Jack Nicklaus or Robert Trent Jones Jr.?

That's like asking which is better — red or white wine. It becomes a matter of taste and preference to choose between the two. The same goes for Nicklaus and Jones Jr. courses; some Nicklaus courses are better than Jones' and vice-versa.

## Reputations for greatness

They both have reputations to live up to. Nicklaus, probably the finest golfer in the history of the game, is expected to create a magnificent, championship course every time. Meanwhile, Jones Jr. has had to grow out of the shadow of his father Robert Trent Jones Sr., who has been building great courses around the world for 50 years.

## Swede Forsbrand tops earnings list

VIRGINIA WATER, England (AP) England's two-time U.S. Masters winner Nick Faldo rejoined the top ten European Golf Tour money earners after his second place in the May 14-17 Spanish Open, while Sweden's Anders Forsbrand retained his number one spot.

According to figures released by the Tour Tuesday, Faldo's \$77,770 second prize in Spain gave him a total of \$162,304 from the 16 tourna-



JACK NICKLAUS (second from right) meets with other course planners and owners last November. The 'Golden Bear' is now gaining recognition as a top-rank designer as well as player.

Nicklaus' design company now has 82 courses in play around the world, 20 more under construction and many more on the drawing boards.

"Our first and most important consideration is to make sure we protect an area environmentally. To me, it's exciting to put something on the ground that will endure long after my career, my life, is over. A golf course will be there 100 years from now and people will be able to see what my idea of a course was."

Often an architect designs for himself, and, as in his style of play — Nicklaus' concept of a golf course is unique to other designers.

The fairways on his Palm Springs course at PGA West are like plateaus. If you don't hit the fairway you roll off the plateau into the rough or one of the hundreds of fairway bunkers. Muirfield Village G.C. requires exactly the kind of shots Jack hits well — high and floating to small, very fast targets.

Glen Abbey G.C., home of the Canadian Open, is ranked as one of the toughest courses on the PGA Tour. As a result some of the top names skip

ments played this year.

Forsbrand, who did not play in Spain, leads the list with \$357,175, ahead of Spain's Jose Rivero with \$283,335 and Jose Maria Olazabal with \$258,849. Australia's Peter Senior retains fourth place with \$240,450.

England's Andrew Sherborne jumped 55 places in the Tour rankings to 11th with his \$114,655 Spanish Open first prize.

the event because they claim "it doesn't suit their game." The reason Glen Abbey G.C. is so difficult is that the course measures over 7,200 yards, numerous lakes and creeks crisscross the fairways and a mishit shot often spells disaster. The greens are also hard and lightning fast.

## 'Heroic' proportions

Critics say his courses are "too tough" and sometimes "too tricky." Some people say that only Nicklaus can play his courses. Jones Jr. describes Nicklaus-designed courses as "too heroic."

"Often my courses are what people call 'target golf.' What that means is that I design most of my holes with the intention that golfers can bite off as much as they think they can chew," explained Nicklaus.

Nicklaus courses will often have four and sometimes five tees per hole which can make the length of a hole vary by as much as 120 yards. This gives golfers the option to play a more relaxing game from the regular tees or flex his muscles and test his skill from the championship tees.

"The Golden Bear" is a master at maximizing natural features in his design work. His course in Tucson, Arizona, La Paloma G.C., is built into the desert among huge boulders and deep canyons. He utilizes the desert sand, foliage and cactus plants to enhance the natural beauty, while at the same time adding to the degree of difficulty for each hole.

## Jones Jr.: On the move

Over the past 10 years Jones Jr. has been one of the

busiest course architects in the business. He has personally designed and supervised the construction of more than 150 courses around the world. In Japan alone, he has completed 11 courses while 17 more are under construction or in the planning stages.

Jones Jr. is a modest man. When asked what is the best course he has designed he replied, "I like them all to play and can't really choose one as being better than another. It all depends on the course, the day, the people and so many things. Every time I play a course I designed I can see so many ways to make it better."

A graduate of Yale University, Jones Jr. is an intellectual. He mixes his conversation with quotes from Shelley and Camus and carries himself as would a refined English gentleman. However, he is also humble and is often extremely witty and humorous.

After 15 years of negotiations, Jones Jr. was finally awarded the contract to design the Russian course at Nahabino, about 18 miles from the Kremlin. With the recent political and financial difficulties, in what is now the Commonwealth of Independent States, construction of this course is temporarily on hold.

"We managed to complete eight holes last year. During the days of the coup d'etat everyone worked so hard because they didn't know who the next boss was going to be," said Jones Jr., with a hint of sarcasm. "It's like when the ball stops on the lip of the cup — before it can fall, it needs one more revolution."

## Hawaiian links honored

In 1991, the Jones Jr.-designed Prince Course on the north coast of Kauai was named the Top-Resort Course in the USA. This magnificent course can be stretched out to more than 7,300 yards where many holes command a sweeping view of the Pacific Ocean. Others plunge from high ridges into tropical jungles with numerous rushing creeks and waterfalls to capture any errant shots.

"When designing a golf course, each hole has to have its own character. The holes become like a piece of jewelry with pearls all strung together to make a necklace. A good golf course is one that people remember after they have



Robert Trent Jones Jr.

played it. They remember the character of each hole and want to come back and play it again."

Jones Jr.'s theory of course design is for a golfer to have fun on a golf course where he should have a whole variety of shots. He explains that all holes are really par-threes. First you hit your driver to a place where you can then hit an iron into the green. "Precision shotmaking is what golf is really all about."

## Pros hop on bandwagon

With the recent boom in golf course construction, many famous professionals have ventured into the design business. One of the first player-designers before the turn of the century was Old Tom Morris in Scotland. In more recent times other notables such as Australian Peter Thomson, Japan's own Hideyo Sugimoto and Arnold Palmer have designed numerous great courses.

Now Greg Norman, Tom Weiskopf, Tom Watson, Lee Trevino, Hale Irwin, Nick Faldo and Severiano Ballesteros are all in the golf course design business. Of all these great player-designers, the only player-designers who are actually involved from the start-to-finish are Nicklaus and Watson. With the exception of Weiskopf, the others are too busy with their playing careers and often just sign their name to the finished product.

Other great names who have built golf courses around the world include Donald Ross, Tom Fazio, Ted Robinson, James Braid and Allistair McKenzie. To say who is the best designer of them all becomes a matter of choice.

Without a doubt, Nicklaus and Trent Jones Jr. are among the best course architects in the game. However, the best designer of them all may still be Mother Nature. It was Mother Nature who designed the famous links course of St. Andrews.

And nobody wants to argue with Mother Nature.