Edgewood alters course layout for celebrity tournament

By Dan Hinxman, Reno Gazette-Journal

The Reno-Tahoe Open isn't the only prominent local golf tournament making changes to its course this year.

The 22nd annual American Century Championship celebrity tournament, which starts today at Edgewood Tahoe Golf Course, has switched its first and second holes with Nos. 10 and 11 in an effort to create more drama, just as the RTO will do by switching the nines for its PGA Tour event, Aug. 4-7 at Montreux.



Edgewood Tahoe has tweaked the course for the ACC tourney. Photo/LTN file

"The original No. 2 (now No. 11) is going to play 315 yards," ACC spokesman Phil Weidinger said. "(Tournament organizers) wanted to switch it to the back nine because it's a drivable par-4 that can create more drama on the back nine."

Edgewood constructed a tee box on the new No. 11 to create the drivable opportunity, though some of the big hitters in the field of about 85 celebrities will probably have to go with

something other than a driver.

The change also adds a little more pressure to the start of the round. Both No. 1 and No. 10 have water guarding the left side of the fairway, but water comes into play much more with the new No. 1. Players tee off the front and back all three rounds of this 54-hole tournament, and it will be the lead half of the field that goes off No. 1 on Saturday and Sunday.

“I really like it,” former NFL quarterback Trent Dilfer said of the changes. “This start is much harder than the other start, the old 1 and 2. Driving the ball early in rounds is a challenge many times.”

Read the whole story

Tournament pairs golf with plenty of food for players, fans

By Kathryn Reed

Oh, to dine like a celebrity.

It’s possible at the American Century Celebrity Golf Tournament.

Although not everything that is available to the players is available to their admirers, some of it is.



The American Century credentialed-only tent two days before the start of the 2011 tournament. Photos/Kathryn Reed

During the six-day event that begins today at Edgewood Tahoe in Stateline, a lot of food is consumed. In stock at the golf course for just this event are:

• 2,400 hamburgers

• 4,000 hot dogs

• 1,200 pounds of chicken

• 400 pounds of tomatoes

• 250 pounds of onions

• 400 pounds of a variety of seafood

• 50 kegs of beer.

The Edgewood restaurant is closed during the tournament, but Brooks' Bar & Deck is open to the public.

"We always get one midweek Michael Jordan visit," Bryan Davis of Edgewood told *Lake Tahoe News*. "He comes in for an hour or

two. It’s a nice surprise for the guests.”

Other players come by the sports bar as well.

Players mostly dine in the clubhouse – which is off-limits to the public. Each day something different is served. It could be fajitas one day, burgers the next and usually a more elaborate seafood spread on the final day.



Views of Lake Tahoe and the links can be had from Brooks'.

Most of the players are eating at the American Century tent the first three days because the clubhouse is not open until Thursday.

The public can get a taste of what the celebs are chowing on by going to the Soroptimist International South Lake Tahoe booth. Edgewood provides the burgers, dogs and sandwiches, while the women provide the labor. Proceeds are split 50-50.

The snack bar between the 9th green and 10th tee is open. It has a grill, but not the caliber of food of Brooks’.

New this year is a concession on the 17th hole, where the party crowd tends to gather along the sandy beach. Food and alcohol will be served there.

Guy Fieri is coming back – but just for a few hours on Saturday. The Food Network star was creating pork sandwiches

in 2009. Pizza is what he will be assembling this year on the 17th hole.

If eating at the golf course is on your itinerary, be warned Thursday and Saturday are usually the two most crowded days. Thursday because of the family and friends tagging along during the celebrity-amateur event; Saturday with the public out en masse.

Over at Harveys and Harrah's, the host hotels for the 22-year-old tournament for the past handful of years, various events involving food are geared toward the celebs with no one from the public invited.

A big dinner is put on Thursday to recognize the celebrity-amateur winners. NBC and American Century Investments, which own and sponsor the tournament, respectively, also put on a pairings dinner for everyone.

These events are elaborate buffets with food stations featuring cuisine from around the world.

John Packer, spokesman for the casinos, would not divulge names of players who request gluten-free food, vegetarian fare or other dietary requests.

There is no mandate they must stay in the casino corridor, but many do because of the convenience.

"A lot of times celebrities like to go out on their own. For instance, Marcus Allen likes 19 (Kitchen-Bar)," Packer said.

For the players partaking in casino games, food is always available in the Diamond Lounge.

"I don't think any of them are underfed. There is plenty of opportunity for them to have great food," Packer said.

Test scores up, while education funding dips in California

By Diana Lambert and Phillip Reese, Sacramento Bee

It’s a trend that would seem to defy conventional wisdom: As public school spending has declined in California in recent years, student achievement test scores have gone up.

Statewide, school districts spent 6 percent less from 2008 to 2010, but the percentage of second- to seventh-grade students scoring proficient on the state’s standardized English test rose from 48 percent to 55 percent.

In the Sacramento region, the same held true. School districts in the four-county region cut annual spending by about $120 million, or 4.4 percent, from 2008 to 2010, hampered by the lousy economy and state funding cuts. That translates to a 1 percent cut per student. But during that same period, their state achievement test scores improved – a lot.

The percentage of area second- through seventh-graders, for instance, scoring proficient or advanced in English jumped from 53 percent to 59 percent, while the portion scoring proficient or above in math went from 57 percent to 62 percent.

So, are educators finding ways to do more with less? Has student learning been largely unaffected by the spending cuts? The reviews are mixed.

Read the whole story

Opinion: Thankful for help bringing arts to students

To the community,

The Bringing Art to Schools (BATS) program would like to thank all the supporters and volunteers who contributed to a successful and stimulating art instruction program in all the South Lake Tahoe elementary schools this past school year.

We would like to thank the following organizations for their financial support; Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority, Tahoe Art League, Soroptimist International South Lake Tahoe, Soroptimist International Tahoe Sierra, and El Dorado Community Foundation.

We would also like to give special recognition to our tireless lead volunteers at each elementary school: Joy Rogers (Bijou), Rachel Kallas (Sierra House), Linda Mueller/Amber Salmon (Magnet School), Kelly Pedigo/Alison Green (Tahoe Valley) and Becky Alcon (St. Theresa).

Lynne Brosch, BATS assistant director

Contractors blast Nevada officials for not funding

roads

By Sean Whaley, Nevada News Bureau

CARSON CITY – A contractors representative told the state Transportation Board today that officials missed out on opportunities to increase road funding in the 2011 legislative session, and that failing to act promptly on the issue could cost Northern Nevada a competitive bid for the 2022 Winter Olympics.

John Madole, executive director of the Nevada Chapter of the Associated General Contractors, said that while a number of bills introduced last session, "would have addressed highway funding and other infrastructure investment that would have begun restoring our state's economic health, none were processed out of an apparent fear of 'political incorrectness' and concern of endangering the political careers of elected officials that must stand for re-election."

Madole, who noted Nevada's gas tax has not been increased since the early 1990s, asked the board to "take the lead in immediately planning for the future needs of our state, helping restore the economic growth that will return Nevadans to work."

The Nevada Legislature would have to act to increase the state gas tax rate.

Rather than find a way to increase investment in transportation, the 2011 session took a step backward, diverting $52 million in highway funds over the coming two years to the operation of the Department of Motor Vehicles and "putting another 1,500 Nevadans, who would have been employed on highway projects out of work," he said.

Nevada has the highest unemployment in the construction industry among the 50 states, with more than 90,000

construction workers losing their jobs since 2006, he said.The seven-member Transportation Board includes Gov. Brian Sandoval, Lt. Gov. Brian Krolicki, Attorney General Catherine Cortez Masto and state Controller Kim Wallin. There are three public members as well.

Madole said Assembly Bill 152 from the 2011 session proposed to establish a group of citizens to address the state's long term transportation needs in Nevada and place an advisory issue before the voters in November 2012.

Sandoval vetoed the bill.

In an interview after delivering his statement, Madole said time is of the essence if the state is going to bid on the Winter Olympics.

"If we're going to do something about these Olympics, or anything else, we need to get moving," Madole said. "The presentation I heard said they might quadruple the air traffic out of Vegas where people are staying in Vegas, flying up here for the Olympics. They are going to get on Interstate 580 and head straight to the Spaghetti Bowl and probably wait 30 minutes to get through it."

Sandoval, who has directed the state Department of Transportation to look at the infrastructure implications of an Olympic bid, said Nevada is doing all it can to ensure it gets every road dollar available.

Krolick is chair of the committee to bring the Games to Tahoe-Reno.

DA, state senator team up to change parole system

State Sen. Ted Gaines, R-Roseville, and El Dorado County District Attorney Vern Pierson today launched a joint effort to strengthen California's public safety protection in light of the circumstances surrounding Jaycee Lee Dugard's kidnapping and captivity.

Gaines and Pierson have scheduled a public meeting Aug. 3 at the Capitol with law enforcement leaders and victims' rights organizations to explore deficiencies in state law and identify potential legislative solutions to prevent these kinds of tragedies from occurring again.

"Jaycee's kidnapping and her 18 years spent in captivity were beyond reprehensible," Gaines said in a statement. "That's why I'm working with the El Dorado County District Attorney to examine what went wrong in the Dugard case, identify reforms to the system and introduce legislation to better protect our citizens from becoming the next victim."

The public hearing will include an analysis of the many shortcomings in federal and state parole supervision, as well as the initial investigation. The hearing will in part be informed by California Inspector General David R. Shaw's 2009 report on the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation's supervision of registered sex-offender and lifetime parolee Phillip Garrido. The report uncovered a number of mistakes that let Dugard's rapist and kidnapper remain free and keep her in captivity.

Parole visited Garrido's home 60 times – failing to ever notice Dugard of the tent-shack compound out back where she lived with her two daughters fathered by Garrido.

The report noted that the CDCR also failed to train parole

agents to conduct home visits.

“If the system had worked the way it should have, Ms. Dugard and her two daughters would have been discovered merely 30-feet away,” Gaines said. “It’s hard to fathom that the backyard encampment where they were held captive went completely unnoticed for nearly two decades.”

On July 8, 2011, the United States District Court for the Northern District of California released a previously confidential report which characterizes Garrido’s federal parole supervision as “clearly substandard.”

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Academy trains people for disaster preparedness

El Dorado County Sheriff’s Office of Emergency Services CERT Program began in 2007 with overwhelming success. To date, more than 150 individuals have received training.

The CERT concept is based on increasing disaster preparedness awareness within El Dorado County by having a group of trained individuals capable of assisting themselves, their families and their neighbors in the event of a disaster.

CERT training promotes a partnering effort between local emergency services and the people they serve. The goal is for emergency personnel to train members of neighborhoods, community organizations, or workplaces in basic response skills.

CERT members are then integrated into the emergency response

capability for their area. If a disastrous event overwhelms or delays the community's professional response, CERT members can assist others by applying the basic response and organizational skills that they learned during training. These skills can help save and sustain lives following a disaster until help arrives.

Upon successfully completing the training and application process, people will be registered as a CERT volunteer with the El Dorado County Sheriff's Office. Registered volunteers are required to participate in monthly disaster preparedness training activities to maintain their volunteer status.

2011 training schedule for CERT Academy:

Sept. 16, 6-10:00pm, Emergency Preparedness and CERT Organization

Sept. 17, 8am-5pm, Fire Safety, Medical Operations

Sept. 23, 6-10pm, Light Search and Rescue, Disaster Psychology

Sept. 24, 8am-5pm, Terrorism, Course Review, Disaster Simulation

Training is at the El Dorado County Sheriff's Office Training Room, 330 Fair Lane, Bldg A., Placerville.

If interested in attending the CERT Academy, contact Bob Todd at (530) 644.6955 or tcharles_2@netzero.net.

Casino revenues rise on both

shores of Lake Tahoe

By Bill O’Driscoll, Reno Gazette-Journal

Washoe County gaming revenues fell for a seventh straight month in May, the state reported Monday, as the region continues to struggle with recession and competition for gamblers’ dollars.

“Some day we’ll get to the bottom of this, and it will stabilize at some point and we’ll see minor growth,” said Ken Adams, a Reno gaming analyst. “The question is, when will that be?”

Washoe’s gaming revenues have fallen since last November, most recently a 6.6 percent drop in May compared with May 2010, according to the Nevada Gaming Control Board report.

Casinos in Reno carried the brunt of the downturn with revenues declining 7.7 percent. The report showed revenue rose slightly in Sparks by 2.1 percent and among north Lake Tahoe casinos by 2.8 percent, but those increases compared against double-digit declines in May 2010.

“It’s the economy and it’s competition,” Adams said, citing tribal casinos in California’s Sierra foothills that continue to siphon off motorists from Bay Area markets that are key to the Reno-Sparks gaming community.

Read the whole story

LTN gives away final pairs of celeb golf tickets

Lake Tahoe News is sending more people to the American Century Celebrity Golf Tournament this week.

The latest people to win a pair of tickets to one day of the July 12-17 event at Edgewood Tahoe in Stateline are: Amin Aminian, Richard Matera, Julia Nold and Rich Thurow.



Crews erect tents July 10 for the celebrity golf tournament. Photo/LTN

Final preparations for the tournament were being put into place Sunday, with tents being erected, barriers being hauled to the correct place and bartenders at Brooks' Bar & Deck practicing their mojito-making skills.

If you did not win one of the multiple pairs of tickets *Lake Tahoe News* gave away in the past few days, tickets are on sale each day of the tournament.

Fundraiser helps South Shore animals

The Animal Coalition of Tahoe has been working hard since the Mutt Strut in October – raising funds raffling several snowboards during the long winter, issuing more than 40 spay-neuter vouchers to bring the total in the past seven years to more than 1,500.

The next fundraiser (dinner and drinks) is July 19 from 6-9pm at the Flight Deck restaurant at the Lake Tahoe Airport.

A portion of the proceeds will benefit ACT's spay-neuter program and the El Dorado County Animal Shelter. There will also be a raffle.

The Animal Coalition of Tahoe is an all-volunteer nonprofit organization that raises funds to help local residents spay and neuter their dogs and cats in an effort to reduce the population of unwanted pets. Ten percent of all funds raised go to the animal shelter in Meyers. Call (530) 400.4766 or email info@tahoeanimals.org for more information.