

Sebonack Golf Club gets introduced to the press

Story and Photos by Denis & Christine Sheahan

In what must be called the greatest promotion for the opening of a golf course anywhere, the East End of Long Island had some 100 print and TV journalists from the metropolitan area attending THE press conference to introduce the Sebonack Golf Club in Southampton.

Owned by a group of wealthy private investors led by multi-millionaire Mike Pascucci, Sebonack is located next to the National Golf Links and near the Shinnecock Hills Golf Club. It overlooks Great Peconic Bay and its design is attributed to Hall of Fame golfer Jack Nicklaus and golf course designer Tom Doak.

Both men have definite ideas of how a golf course should be laid out and apparently at the end of the press conference neither Nicklaus or Doak wanted to take all the credit and said it is more of a combined effort.

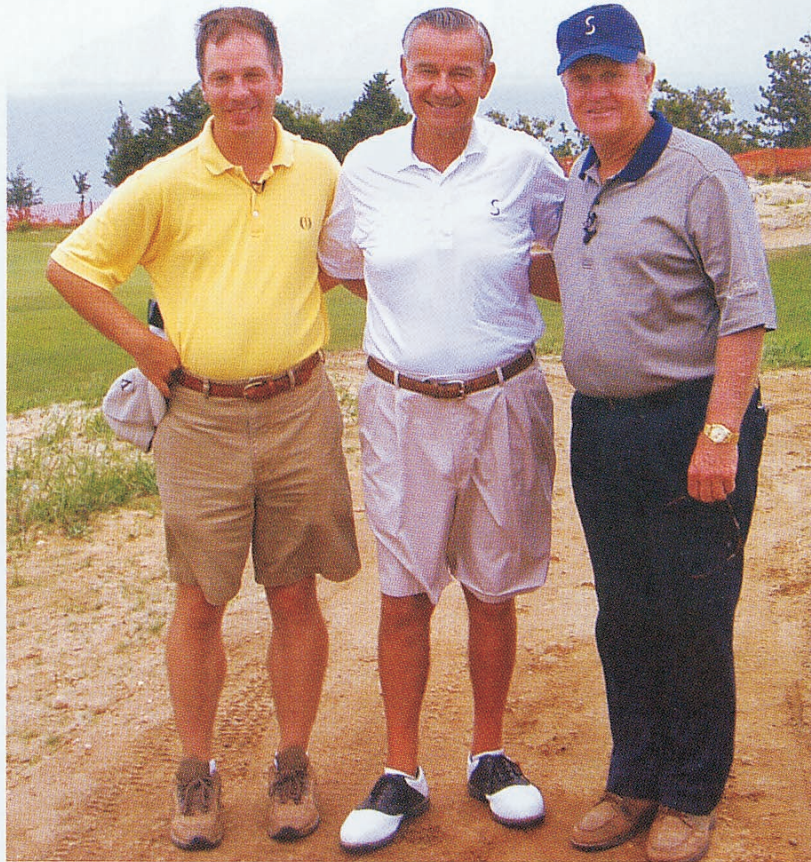
Other than members of the press, the luncheon that preceded the conference was attended by prominent businessmen and women from all sectors of the Long Island economy.

Throughout the press meeting, Nicklaus made several humorous references that if there was a dispute between himself and Doak, Pascucci would be asked to decide.

"But that didn't happen," according to Nicklaus.

On only one occasion did Pascucci enjoy his input and that was in rating the 18th Hole. Nicklaus and Doak wanted it be a Par 4, but Pascucci used his power and insisted it should be a Par 5. It is.

At the start of the conference Msgr. Tom Hartman and Rabbi Marc Gellman provided words of a more spiritual meaning, but Rabbi Gellman seemed to sum up the day by referring to the



Tom Doak, Mike Pascucci and Jack Nicklaus

golf course as "the greatest golf course in the world."

Although Pascucci declined to discuss any of the financial arrangements involved in the purchase of the land, the cost of designing the 18 holes or the club house that is to be built for the opening in 2006, speculation on the overall cost was estimated in excess of \$100 million. The property originally was used as a retreat for the electrical workers union who sold it to Pascucci. Pascucci also declined to discuss the membership but an informed source said a membership was the "priciest" in the nation. Aside from the journalists, those who attended the ceremonies were a very select group.

Prior to the press confer-

ence, Pascucci, Nicklaus and Doak led the scores of journalists through sections of the course via golf carts. On the hour long trip, Nicklaus and Doak explained how the course was laid out, why bunkers were strategically placed and how the wind coming off Peconic could play havoc with players. The course covered some 220 acres with 95 acres being cleared for greens and fairways.

At the end of the press conference Jack Nicklaus received accolades from the audience, from Pascucci and others who praised him and his career, especially referring to the poignant moment at the British Open when he retired and walked off the course with fellow golfer Tom Watson. ■

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