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Is it to be or not to be Tobiano?

It's tough in spots, but Kamloops Lake course gets Score Golf's nod

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That spectacular Tobiano was chosen as Score Golf's best new course for 2008 will not come as any huge surprise as this simply confirms what many who've played it expected.

Included in that number are owner and developer Mike Grenier, who has been jumping through hoops for various government agencies -- all the while leaking dollars since the mid-1990s on the spectacular site above Kamloops Lake, on the Vancouver side of Kamloops.

Grenier was visiting his brother in Ontario a week ago Sunday, while director of golf Miles Mortensen and superintendent Terry Smith were home watching the TSN announcement with varying degrees of confidence.

"When we were taking a pasting about how much money we spent to get the word out, I said, 'Oh, oh, what's going on here?' But then when they announced we'd won, we were delighted," Grenier said on Tuesday.

You can debate the courses in the running and which ones are better, but what is irrefutable is the golf enthusiasts who have been attracted to Kamloops, all the other courses in the area, hotel stays and restaurant meals just because of Tobiano.

Grenier should get the keys to the city or a parade for the new interest he's brought to the area.

"I don't think we have been spending more than anywhere else," he said, "but we have been well-received."

So well-received that they put through 170 rounds last Saturday and another 150 on Monday.

Grenier wondered if it was because of the TSN announcement or simply past good press and word of mouth. One thing is certain: the magazine with its top 100 list and best new courses issue hasn't hit the streets yet.

Whatever. It's good news for Tobiano, the development's real estate arm and the Kamloops region in general.

A New York Times piece on Tobiano left a Connecticut group looking to open negotiations on a hotel, which has been part of the long-range plan for the site.

Not everyone has liked the Thomas McBroom design, of course. The major complaint is that it is too difficult and has too many forced carries.

Grenier admitted "we have to tweak some things" following Thanksgiving weekend.

There may be more good news ahead as Golf Digest's new course rating comes out in January.

- Volunteers are needed by the B.C. Golf Museum and Hall of Fame for a variety of tasks related to the original clubhouse of the University Golf Club and its collection of artifacts, trophies and 2,000 books.

Researching the books, magazines and Internet files to complete different history files could prove fascinating work. Other tasks include conducting contests for students on the putting green or representing the museum at hickory shaft club events. Call 604-222-4653 or e-mail mashie@uniserve.com for details of an upcoming open house. The goal is 15-20 volunteers.

- The Canadian Senior Women's championship at Bally Haly in St. John's, Nfld., looked much like the B.C. championship after the first round.

Jackie Little of Port Alberni shot a five-over 75 to lead Vancouver's Phyllis Laschuk by two and Alyson Martin by three.

Holly Horwood of Vancouver and Lynda Palahniuk of Kelowna were tied for seventh. B.C. led the four-woman team competition by 12 over Ontario.

- A few spots for teams in the IGA MarketPlace Vancouver Golf Tour's summer pro-am at Kings Links on Thursday are still open.

- Dave Bunker (what a name!) of Woodbridge, Ont., finished five-under 283 at Pheasant Glen in Qualicum Beach to win the RCGA's Canadian mid-am title by four shots over Gareg Koster of Courtenay.

- Matthew Hamilton of West Vancouver and Soo Bin Kim of Port Coquitlam won the B.C. boys and girls juvenile titles at Shannon Lake in Westbank. He led wire-to-wire and she beat Christine Wong.

- Samantha Richdale of Kelowna won \$14,000 and her first Futures Tour event with a five-under 211 three-round total in the Gettysburg, Pa., Championship. Yes, that is the Gettysburg of American Civil War fame.

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