

Jacobsen Hardy breaks ground on third 18 at Suncadia, outside Seattle

ROSLYN, Wash. — Jacobsen Hardy Golf Course Design has broken ground on the third 18 at Suncadia Resort, a 6,000-acre development laid out along the Cle Elum River some 80 miles from Seattle. The Rope Rider Course, Jacobsen Hardy's first in Washington State, will take shape amid the vestiges of an abandoned coal-mining operation — including a hulking heap of jet-black coal tailings around which several striking holes have been routed.

“They call it Tipple Hill and it's going to blow people's minds when they see how we've integrated it into the golf course,” says Peter Jacobsen, PGA Tour veteran and partner with Jim Hardy in Houston-based Jacobsen Hardy Golf Course Designs (www.jacobsenhardy.com). “The old mining pits have been sealed off, of course, and don't really come into play. But this pile of old tailings, Tipple Hill, is massive 120 feet high, 200 yards wide and, as you'd imagine, black as coal. There's nothing like it on any golf course I've ever seen or heard of.”

Rope Rider was the nickname given to miners who balanced themselves on the coal carts that wound their way through miles and miles of darkened, underground shafts. In keeping with Suncadia's commitment to celebrate local history, the foundations and portal of mines #9 and #10, along with Tipple Hill itself, have been listed by the State Office of Historic Preservation as being culturally significant to the development of the state of Washington.

The Rope Rider layout is scheduled to open its first nine in spring 2006. When it does, The Rope Rider will join two existing 18-hole tracks at Suncadia, the Prospector (designed by Arnold Palmer) and Tumble Creek (Tom Doak).

With its design, Jacobsen Hardy has been specifically tasked with creating a family-friendly resort course.

“We've been given a unique charge and we feel we've responded with an extremely inventive routing scheme at Suncadia,” Jim Hardy explains. “There is a traditional 9-hole loop on the Rope Rider, but we've worked very hard to route the other nine to include both a 6-hole loop and a 3-hole loop. This will allow folks to play 18 holes, or nine holes, or six holes or just

three. When you're vacationing with family, you don't always have time to play 18 — or the kids aren't up for more than six or nine holes. This routing allows remarkable flexibility.”

Jacobsen Hardy's master plan also calls for a six-hole junior course located within the club's short-iron driving range itself. “Most ranges feature target greens,” Hardy continues, “and this one does, too. But we've also created teeing grounds that play to these target greens — together they form a pretty neat 6-hole loop. For clinics or junior days, the folks at Suncadia can simply shut down the range and let kids go to town out there.

“We're also designing what we call youth tees on all 18 holes of The Rope Rider Course. These are real tee boxes — positioned some 50 yards from the greens at par-3s, 160 yards away on par-5s — that provide kids their own holes to play. An entire 9-hole routing measures about 1,100 yards, the full 18 is 2,036 yards, par 54. We feel this is a great option for family golf — better than just dropping a ball in the fairway somewhere. It's more fun for the kids, too, who don't chew up the 'adult' tees and don't have to tackle holes that are way too much for them.”

The regulation Rope Rider layout will measure 7,203 yards from the tips, with five sets of “adult” tees, the most forward of which measures 4,968. All play to a par of 72.

Tipple Hill is clearly the terrain's most arresting feature (“There's vegetation growing in the steep, black hillsides; we'll use more tailings to create transitional waste areas,” Jacobsen said), but the landscape Suncadia has provided the architects a very diverse property. The Rope Rider is located just east of the Cascade Mountain range, at about 2,100 feet. “But it's not a high-desert environment,” Jacobsen adds. “It's more lush than that, and there's a great combination of open areas and wooded parcels featuring enormous ponderosa pines and a lovely mix of deciduous trees. Combined with the Tipple Hill holes, we've been able to create three completely different golfing environments.”

This will be our Jacobsen Hardy's first golf course in Washington State, following multiple projects in Jacobsen's native Oregon, including Oregon Golf Club [in West Linn], Stone Creek [in Oregon City] and Creekside in Salem. JH recently finished an acclaimed renovation of Salishan Golf Links

in Gleneden Beach and unveiled this summer an original golf course design project in Redmond called Brasada Ranch.

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[For more information on Jacobsen Hardy Golf Course Design, call 281-407-4176 or visit www.jacobsenhardy.com]