

G O L F

Jacobsen's Other Career: Course Design

WACO, Tex., Jan. 20 (AP) — Peter Jacobsen is considered the leading wit to play on the PGA Tour. And he is probably underrated.

Jacobsen and a business partner, Jim Hardy, were here this month to break ground on their new design project, Baylor University's Bear Ridge Golf Course.

After listening to others tout Bear Ridge's clubhouse, pro shop, locker rooms and tournament pavilion, Jacobsen took the microphone to talk about the course itself.

But first he took a gentle poke at golf's but-toned-down image, even though it sailed over some of the assembled heads like a bladed 7-iron.

"I'm actually looking forward to that pavilion," he said, "so we can have some Eminem concerts up here."

Safe to say that America's pre-eminent rapper will not be performing at Bear Ridge anytime soon. But if the course is as good as the developers and designers hope, maybe Jake Trout and the Flounders, the band Jacobsen formed with his golfing buddies Mark Lye, Larry Rinker and Payne Stewart, will entertain at Tour events.

Jacobsen, 46, loves being in the spotlight. He is the Tour's best mimic, sings lead vocals for the Flounders and has won almost \$6 million since turning pro in 1976. As a designer, however, he prefers being the invisible man.

Some courses are so distinctive that it is obvious who the architect was. Not so with Jacobsen and Hardy.

"We want to build courses where land is the hero," said Jacobsen, who has completed 6 projects and is working on 14 others. "We're quite proud of the fact that people show up and say, 'Who did this course? And when you tell them Jacobsen-Hardy, they say, 'Oh, I played one of theirs over here and it was nothing like this.'"

Bear Ridge may be nothing like it, but Jacobsen-Hardy's 36 holes at BlackHorse, northwest of Houston in Cypress, have won rave reviews. BlackHorse's North Course opened last year and soon earned a reputation as a well-conditioned track with several "wow" holes, though perhaps too demanding for mid-to-high handicappers.

Jacobsen figures his job in building a daily-fee course is to make sure it challenges scratch players without overpowering lesser ones.

"Success for me would be playing with my mother, who's not a very good golfer," he said. "I'm playing a par-4 from the back tees at 474 yards, she's playing from the front at 300. I hit driver, 3-iron, she tops a driver and tops a 3-iron, and we end up side-by-side on the green putting



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Peter Jacobsen still plays but has also completed six golf courses and is working on 14 others.

for birdie."

To that end, Bear Ridge will play anywhere from 5,000 yards long at the forward tees to almost 7,400 from the Big Jake tees. And the designers intend to leave room to stretch the course even farther in the not-so-distant future.

"For the collegiate player and the golfer who's dumb enough we're going to test him," said Hardy, a former Oklahoma State star and PGA Tour pro.

But that does not mean they are going to trick up the design or make high handicappers play target golf. Hardy is a classicist who grew up on the Prairie Dunes Golf Course in Kansas and began his second career as a member of Tom Fazio's design team.

"The golf ball is round," Hardy said. "It's meant to roll. Most of the greens will be open in

front. There'll be as few forced carries off the tee as possible. And we never penalize anyone who can hit it straight. The trouble is left and right."

Bear Ridge, in other words, will not be Pine Valley South. Instead, it will feature rolling terrain, natural streams and large oaks.

The course, situated on the ridges above the Middle and South Bosque Rivers, plays through both meadows and trees, with water in play on almost half the holes. Players who draw the ball may have a slight advantage over faders (six dogleg-lefts, four right), although tilting the greens could negate that edge. Six holes play directly into the prevailing south wind, including the water-guarded greens on Nos. 4 and 6.

Contractors began moving dirt two weeks ago. The grass goes down in July, and Bear Ridge is slated to open in October.