

BOB CUPP

(1939 -)

BACKGROUND

Native of Pennsylvania. Graduated in 1961 from the University of Miami with a degree in art. Served in the military, during which he obtained a Masters in Fine Arts from the University of Alaska. Returned to Florida, worked for a time in advertising, then as a pro shop manager. Was soon involved in rebuilding portions of the course. Quickly sought an associate degree in agronomy from Broward Jr. College, then obtained his first contract as a course architect in 1968.

After several solo designs, joined Jack Nicklaus' new design firm in 1974. Worked on all Nicklaus projects in the East and Europe for over a decade. Also collaborated with Jay Morrish, the other Nicklaus designer, on designs under the corporate name Golfforce, Inc. Left Nicklaus in 1985 and established his own design firm.

Acknowledged as a creative force behind many of the Nicklaus experimentations. Continued to push the envelope after opening his own firm: One course had no bunkers. Another was a geometric layout designed strictly by computer. Another was a southern version of an old English heathland design. Another duplicated famous holes. His mainstream work involved homages to early American layouts, drawing upon features from Ross, Tillinghast, Flynn and other old designers.

Felt more comfortable than most architects working with a variety of PGA Tour pros on design jobs. Did a series of highly regarded courses with 1976 Open champion Jerry Pate. Also teamed with 1977 Open champion Hubert Green on several projects, with 1984 Open champion Fuzzy Zoeller on a few, and formed a partnership with 1992 Open champ Tom Kite. Was so impressed with the talent of 1977 Amateur champion John Fought that he put him in charge of his Oregon office. Also on his team was design associate Mike Riley. Former Augusta National superintendent Billy Fuller served as the design firm's full-time agronomist.

DESIGN PHILOSOPHY

Bob Cupp - often analyzed his own work by using three criteria - Strategy, Aesthetics and Conditioning, in descending order of importance. Not surprisingly, the strategy of his courses paralleled that of Jack Nicklaus, offering several heroic opportunities in every round. He balanced such risks by offering generous alternate routes for average players. Aesthetics, he felt, was the sizzle of a course, but created more by subtleties of texture and composition than by overt artificial features.

IDENTIFYING CHARACTERISTICS

The absence of a trademark bunkering style. Uses different styles even on side-by-side courses. The absence of blind shots. Old-fashioned rectangular tee boxes. Grasstraps protecting many greens.