

PGA TOUR HEATS UP WITH FLORIDA SWING

# GOLF WEEK

MARCH 8, 2013

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## Tap-ins & lipouts

**>> Friendly face:** Given all the glitz in Palm Beach, it was hardly a surprise to The Man Out Front when he spotted familiar faces in the crowd at the Honda Classic. Nick Price. Serena Williams. Why, there's Kenny G in the parking lot for a barbecue. Some meetings, like the one with Michelle McGann, brought news. Turns out the one-time LPGA star will try to qualify for the upcoming RR Donnelley LPGA Founders Cup (March 14-17). She has been hitting balls and recently met with longtime coach Dave Stockton, who encouraged her to give it a shot. At 43, she figures, Why not? Since McGann last played an LPGA tournament in 2010, she has married Jonathan Satter, spent her summers in Maine and become passionately involved with junior golf and young children with diabetes. "The kids are actually why I'm going to give it a shot," said McGann, who also will try to qualify for the U.S. Women's Open, too. "They inspire me."

**>> Aches and pains:** The Forecaddie has seen surprise storylines when the LPGA goes overseas, but this last week in Singapore was especially strange. Butch Harmon tweeted that he'd heard Natalie Gulbis, a pupil of his, and Se Ri Pak had contracted malaria. The LPGA sent out a clarification later that morning stating that though both players had been hospitalized, neither had malaria, a mosquito-borne infectious disease. Pak was back in South Korea by then, resting at her parents' home. Her agent said she suffered from "cold and body ache." Gulbis told The Forecaddie that whatever she had, she caught it in Thailand; doctors said she'd be fine in a week. That episode followed an early-week, five-car pileup in Thailand that involved Paula Creamer, Suzann Pettersen and Ai Miyazato, who were on their way to the airport. Miyazato withdrew from the tournament as a precaution. Creamer, who skipped the pro-am round to rest a sore neck and right shoulder, finished third.



In progress

Renovation work by Bill Coore and Ben Crenshaw aims to give Old Town Club its old feel again.

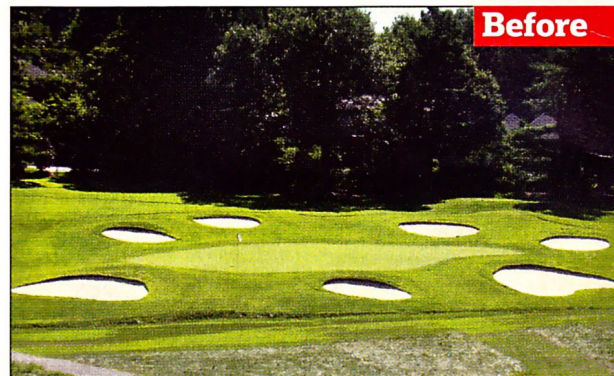
# Old Town's 'old' work in progress

The Forecaddie, an arm-chair golf architecture buff, enjoys viewing "before" and "after" photos that demonstrate effective restoration work. They're cleaner than looking at a mess in progress. At times, The Man Out Front even comes across "before" and "during" photographs that show the promise of things to come.

Take the case of storied Old Town Club in Winston-Salem, N.C., a course that sits at No. 72 on the Golfweek's Best Classic list. The folks running this Perry Maxwell design from 1939 have engaged the team of Bill Coore-Ben Crenshaw to bring the course back to the raw, scruffy, traditionally wispy look that Maxwell loved.

Case in point: Old Town's par-3 second hole, 166 yards, where the work in progress shows a reduction in bunkers from seven to the original five. Bunkers have been reshaped from uniform geometric circles to more diversely sized naturalistic forms and brought closer to the putting surface. Also, there has been a move from a green face/flash-white sand look to a more rustic, natural look of native creekbed sand.

Coore grew up 24 miles away in



Before

Thomasville, N.C., and became enamored with Old Town Club in the late 1960s, when he was a student at nearby Wake Forest. Small wonder that he spends considerable time on site. Day-to-day supervision is in the hands of veteran designer/builder Dave Axland, who helped build Sand Hills in Mullen, Neb. The chief shaper is Keith Rhebb, who was project manager at Streamsong's Red Course, another Coore-Crenshaw design that recently opened in Florida.

Bunker work at Old Town began in December and is slated to finish in May, with a summer grow-back scheduled to lead to a full reopening of the course in August. Based on the in progress photo, the inconvenience will be worth the wait.