

Poppy Hills pushes for major renovation plan

By **JERRY STEWART**

Herald Correspondent

The process regarding the potential renovation of Poppy Hills Golf Course continues.

Recently, officials from the Northern California Golf Association, which owns Poppy Hills, announced that the permit is on schedule to be filed in May. The permit cannot be submitted until an environmental impact study, which is contingent on whether or not protected foliage and wildlife is visible after the winter dormancy period, is completed.

Once the permit is submitted, approval could

Local aces

- ▶ Jack Cordier on the 245-yard fourth hole at Monterey Pines, using a driver.
- ▶ John Robinson on the 139-yard 11th hole at Monterey Pines, using an 8-iron.
- ▶ Nikolas Shaffer on the 95-yard 11th hole at Monterey Pines, using a 9-iron.
- ▶ Nick Simmons on the 80-yard eighth hole, using a wedge.
- ▶ Dan Burns, of Salinas, on the 169-yard third hole at Rancho Canada Golf Club's East Course, using a 5-iron.

come as early as this fall. The project, which includes renovation of the golf course, practice facilities

and clubhouse including Porter's Grill and Bar, is anticipated to begin in March 2013.

"We are excited about the prospect of improving Poppy Hills," said NCGA/Poppy Holding CEO Lyn Nelson. "We take pride in our golf course and feel this is a wonderful opportunity to enhance the layout and playing conditions."

NCGA officials have said a driving force behind the renovation of the course is the conservation of water. Established in 1986, the course already has a stellar environmental track record through its 100 percent utilization of recycled water for

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irrigation, but the overhaul further addresses water consumption by reducing irrigated areas of turf. The reduced areas of turf would give Poppy Hills more of a natural look, a la Pine Valley GC in New Jersey.

The course renovation, which would be done by original Poppy Hills designer Robert Trent Jones Jr., would include the installation of a new irrigation system, sand capping of the entire layout to provide superior drainage and better winter playability and the construction of new green complexes. Overall, 13 holes would be "modestly" modified, while five holes would be "significantly" modified. The changes would result in the course growing several hundred yards to more than 7,000 while par would drop from 72 to 71.

"The new course would be a whole different experience," Nelson said.

Should the permit be approved, the holes on the clubhouse side of Lopez Road (Nos. 1-9, 17 and 18) would remain open for the first several months and then close once renovations on the back-nine are completed. At that time, the entire course would close. Once the course re-opened, it is expected that NCGA member rates (currently as low as \$55) would remain close to the same. Guest and public fees may rise.

According to officials, NCGA events that are currently held at Poppy Hills would move to Poppy Ridge and other local courses during the renovation.

In other NCGA happenings, the Association, which is the largest regional golf association in the nation, announced a new logo and branding. There, the new NCGA logo includes an enhancement of its iconic poppy, the unifying symbol of the NCGA family. The branding anchors to the Association's rich tradition with the year of the NCGA's inception (1901) as part of the logo. The Northern California Golf Association name is no longer present since most golfers refer to the Association by its NCGA monogram.

While paying tribute to NCGA history, the new identity also ties in with programs to attract younger golfers including the thriving NCGA Foundation and its groundbreaking Youth on Course program, which among many amenities offers kids the chance to play for as low as \$2.

Harigae watch

Monterey native Mina Harigae notched her second best LPGA finish at last weekend's LPGA Founders Cup, finishing tied for 13th at 4-under 212 (68-70-74). Now in her second season on tour, the Stevenson alum entered the final round in a tie for 5th. She posted a career best T-8 in last year's Safeway Classic, helping her finish the season at No.77 on the money list.