

TRAVEL: FUN IN THE PHOENIX SUN **INTERVIEW:** JOSEPH BRAMLETT

JANUARY 2011

GOLF NEWS

California | Nevada | Arizona

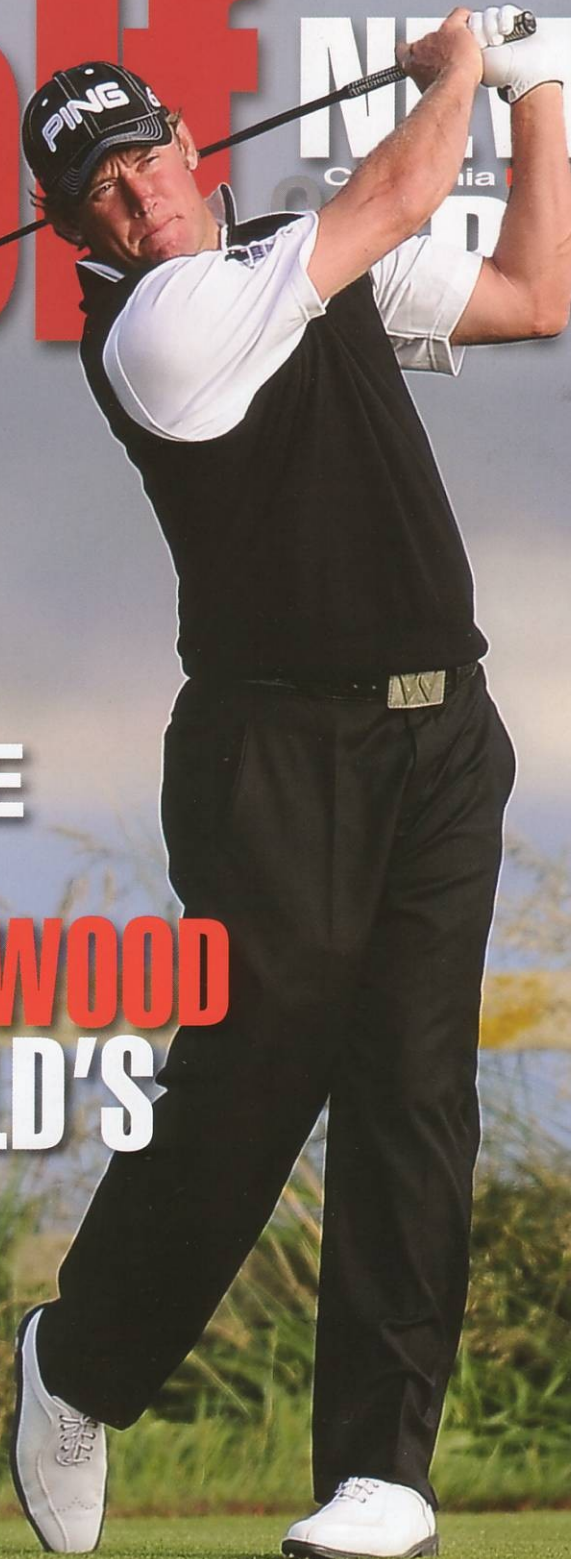
TRAVEL

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COURSE REVIEW



WE-KO-PA GOLF CLUB

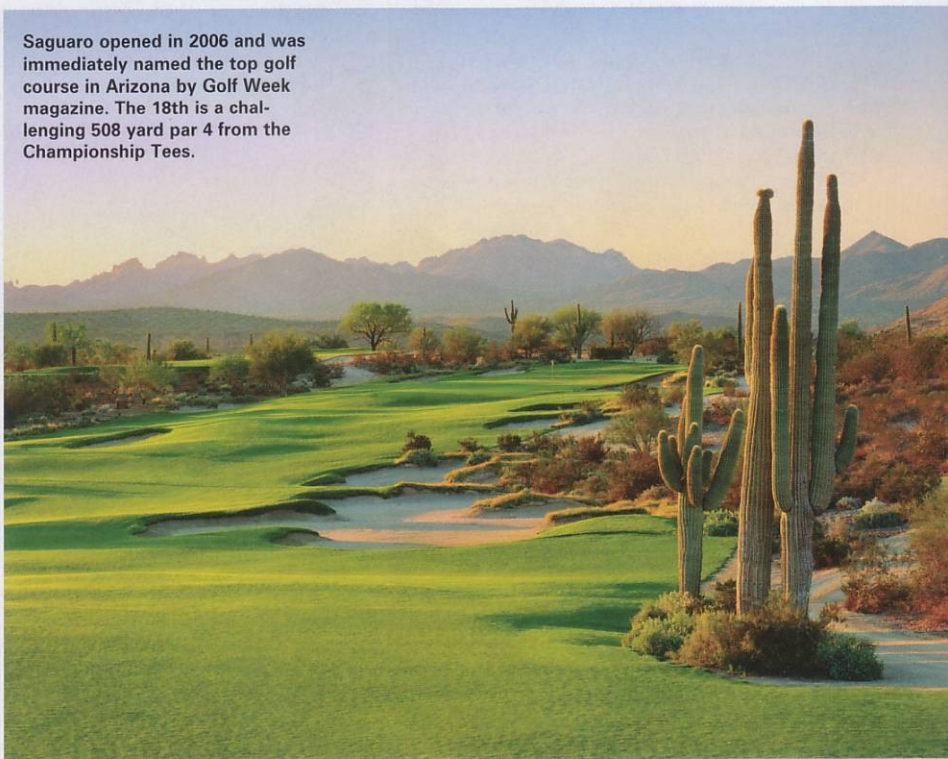
Hole 2 on the Cholla Course is a difficult par 5 carved through desert washes and features a double dogleg. Red Mountain looms large behind Cholla's 2nd green.

Nearly five years to the day since We-Ko-Pa Golf Club opened its first golf course – Cholla – the Golf Club debuted its Bill Coore and Ben Crenshaw-designed Saguaro Course on December 16th, 2006. Named after the iconic symbol of Arizona and the Sonoran Desert, the saguaro cactus, We-Ko-Pa's Saguaro (pronounced sa-war-o) is a desert golf experience unlike any other in the state.

Architects Coore and Crenshaw integrated design elements into the 6,912-yard, par-71 golf course not commonly seen in the desert Southwest. Saguaro is much like the older, more traditional courses, where greens are close to tees and the course follows the natural movement of the land to make walking easy and enjoyable (walking carts are available for golfers choosing to walk). The course also features stabilized decomposed granite cart paths, so it blends seamlessly into the surrounding desert.

In Saguaro, Coore and Crenshaw re-

Saguaro opened in 2006 and was immediately named the top golf course in Arizona by Golf Week magazine. The 18th is a challenging 508 yard par 4 from the Championship Tees.





(Above) We-Ko-Pa Golf Club hole 9 on the Cholla Course. The 9th hole on the Cholla Course is a 460-yard par 4 that is as picturesque as it is challenging.



(Left) The 17th on the Scott Miller-designed Cholla Course is a 530-yard par 5.

introduced the all-important art form of tying the entrances to the greens into the greens themselves. The majority of the greens are open in front to allow for run-up shots. It is the subtle pitch and roll of the terrain on the approach to the greens that give each hole much of its unique playing characteristics.

When playing Saguaro, you may notice the boney ground and natural slopes adds an element of “sting” to the course, as the golf ball will bounce and roll along the native terrain. This is by design and is a strategic element on which both Coore and Crenshaw placed great emphasis.

In 2001, the Scott Miller-designed Cholla Course vaulted onto many golfers’ must-play lists when Sports Illustrated named it one of the Top 10 New Golf Courses in the World just two days after the course

opened. As the course matured, other impressive awards followed, including one from a well-respected golf trade publication, which named it Golf Course Development of the Year. More recently, Golf Magazine named the club to its 2010 list of Top 100 Courses You Can Play in the United States. Oftentimes such lofty accolades are difficult to live up to. We-Ko-Pa, however, seems to have lived up to the hype.

Miller’s Cholla routing is dramatic to say the least, as it plays across desert washes, atop ridges then flows flawlessly into greens tucked into hillsides and desert arroyos. Each hole is imbued with its separate strategic flavor yet flows in rhythm with the holes before and those to follow—seamless to the point that Number 18 crops up almost unexpectedly.

Threading through an open expanse

overlooking the Verde and Salt River Valleys, Red Mountain, and the Superstition Mountains, We-Ko-Pa preserves the essence and purity of desert-style golf. In fact, there is as much talk of the setting and the sensational views from the golf courses as there is of the challenges at hand.

Whether you play the Cholla Course or the Saguaro Course, at We-Ko-Pa you’re in for an award-winning desert golf experience unlike any other in Arizona.

We-Ko-Pa is owned by the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation and is managed by Scottsdale-based EF Golf and OB Sports. For more information on We-Ko-Pa or for tee times, visit them online at www.wekopa.com, or call (480) 836-9000.