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## SPORTS

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### Tamarack loaded with potential

Nine holes of mountain course will open soon

By Chadd Cripe  
*The Idaho Statesman*

**T**AMARACK RESORT — Alfredo Miguel wanted me to see his golf course through his eyes.

If everyone does, the course should be a hit.

Miguel took me on a playing tour this week, and excitedly pointed out every subtlety of Tamarack Resort's new Robert Trent Jones II golf course.

The abundant wetlands. The ever-present wildlife. The aging pines. The rise and fall of the land.

He wants to call the course Osprey Meadows, a salute to the "hard-working" birds and the meadow the course calls home.

"This is imagination," said Miguel, chairman of the

#### Want to play at Tamarack?

The Tamarack Resort golf course will open nine holes to the public Labor Day weekend, probably Sept. 2. The cost will be \$69.99 with a cart.

The resort plans to open all 18 holes in May 2006. Rates will range from \$69.99 to \$119, depend-

ing on time of year and time of day.

The course will give members preferred tee times, but the public will have plenty of access.

"We want it to be known that this is a very public resort," superintendent Tom Altmann said.



Alfredo Miguel



Jose "Pepe" Miguel

board of directors for Tamarack Resort and a strong influence on course construction. "This is a piece of art."

Right now, it's an unfinished canvas. Only nine of the 18 holes are suitable for

play and they won't open to the public until Labor Day weekend. The other nine won't open until May 2006.

But Tamarack's potential is obvious. Nearly every hole is a photo op, and most feature a little surprise. Drive up to the ninth tee, and you'll find a downhill, dogleg-right par-5 surrounded by pines with the blue water of Lake Cascade peeking through the trees.

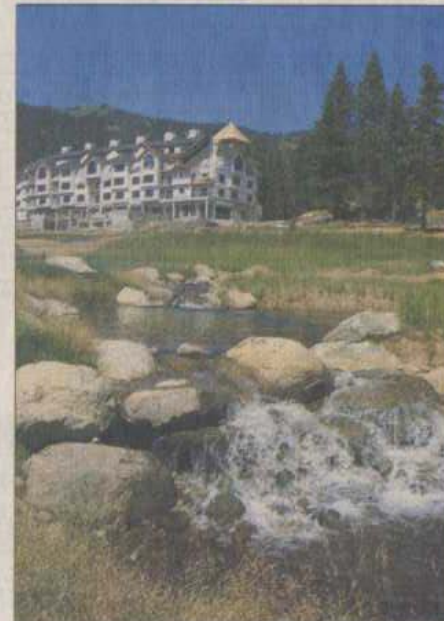
Hit your tee shot up the hill on the par-4 15th, and you'll figure it's a simple hole. At the crest of the hill, it

#### Golf Plus on page 6

> Talking Golf With ... the course superintendent at Tamarack Resort.

> Teeing Off: Girls showed they are the future of LPGA at Banbury last week.

> Wie, Sorenstam ready to tee it up in another major tournament.



Chadd Cripe / The Idaho Statesman

A creek runs by the green at the second hole at Tamarack Resort with a nice view of the member's lodge in the background. Tamarack offers golfers plenty of scenic surprises.

See Tamarack on page 6

**Online course guide**

Our golf course guide is available all season long at [IdahoStatesman.com/golfplus](http://IdahoStatesman.com/golfplus)

# GOLF PLUS



Photos by **Chadd Cripe** / The Idaho Statesman

Spectacular views, such as the one pictured above, are the norm at the new Tamarack Resort golf course, located about 8 miles southwest of Donnelly. The full 18-hole course is scheduled to be open to the public in May of 2006, but nine holes will be available for public play starting Labor Day weekend.

## Tamarack

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At Tamarack, which doubles as a ski resort, the tips are aptly labeled with two black diamonds — and they mean it.

The par-72 course measures more than 7,300 yards from there, and the 4,900-foot elevation doesn't seem to help.

The other tees are the black diamond (6,865 yards), blue square (6,265) and green circle (5,215) — just like ski slopes. Those tees present less-challenging angles in addition to the shorter yardage.

"I really believe a big part of the strategy at this golf course is going to be hitting from the right tee," course superintendent Tom Altmann said. "There's definitely something out there for every ability."

The course begins in a wide-open meadow. The fairways slice through waist-high native grasses and a series of creeks, including a man-made waterfall that guards the green on the 485-yard par-4 second hole.

The course forces you to hit uphill and downhill, right and left. If the tee shot is uphill, the second shot usually is downhill.

"(Jones) is always playing with the curves," Miguel said. "It's very harmonic with nature.... You never see flat things."

The par-3 sixth might be the coolest — and flattest — hole on the course.

The championship tee and the green are separated by about 200 yards of wetlands area. The green looks like a speck in the distance, with a maximum yardage of 220 — but the green actually is 40 yards deep.

The lake and mountains form a backdrop, and Jones didn't even need to use one of his 80-plus bunkers to give the hole definition.

"For me, I love this hole," Pepe said. "It has all the elements, you know?"

The course changes on No. 7. Suddenly, you enter the forest. Even the air feels different — cooler, crisper.

And by No. 9, you are overwhelmed by pine trees — the wetlands' partner in punishment.

Miguel points out an old tree



Alfredo Miguel hits out of one of the many bunkers at the Tamarack Resort golf course. There are more than 80 bunkers on the layout.

### Tamarack golf facts

**Location:** About 8 miles southwest of Donnelly, adjacent to Lake Cascade

**Course stats:** 7,300 yards, par-72

**Turf:** Bent grass greens and tees; bluegrass fairways and rough

**Bunkers:** More than 80

**Greens:** Average 7,000 square feet

**Elevation:** 4,900 feet

**Web site:** [www.tamarackidaho.com](http://www.tamarackidaho.com)

that's split at the top. It's protected as habitat for eagles.

"Look at the ponderosas — their age," he says of the pines. "They're beautiful."

The layout moves back into the meadow for Nos. 10-12, and the wetlands return. The par-5 12th features a pine in the middle of the fairway and the second fairway of the day split by wetlands (No. 4, another par-5, has a split fairway, too).

It's back into the forest for No. 13, a par-3 Miguel calls "tres pinos." That's "three pines" in English, or "Oh no!" in golfspeak.

Three pine trees snuggle up to the tee box to create a frighteningly small gap for a tee shot from the

championship tees to escape.

Jones finally grants golfers a break on the par-4 16th, a mere 380 yards. The fairway doglegs right, but a straight shot to the green is available if you have the power to carry the eight bunkers that are in the way.

The 17th is another nightmarish par-3 with wetlands galore, and the 18th is an intriguing par-5 of strategy and beauty.

The finishing hole doesn't look like much from the tee, but provides one of Miguel's "surprises."

Reach the corner in the dogleg, and you see a tree-lined fairway split into three pieces by wetlands. You can lay up to a tiny island fairway in the middle, or take out the 3-wood and go for broke.

The member's lodge, scheduled for completion in December, stands behind the massive 10,000-square-foot green.

All told, the course has 100 acres of maintained turf and more than 200 acres of natural wetlands and forest. It will have houses on just three holes.

"Here, you get the experience of the mountains," Miguel said. "You know you're not in Vegas playing golf."

To offer story ideas or comments, contact reporter Chadd Cripe at [ccripe@idahostatesman.com](mailto:ccripe@idahostatesman.com) or 377-6398.

## TALKING GOLF WITH ...

**Tom Altmann: 'One day it can be a moose or an elk ...'**

Tom Altmann, 36, is the golf course superintendent at Tamarack Resort. The Calgary native has worked at mountain courses his entire career, including a stint at Coeur d'Alene Resort and most recently as superintendent at Greywolf Golf Course in Panorama Mountain Village, British Columbia. He started at Tamarack in June 2004.

**What do you like about being a super at a mountain course?** "Probably the biggest thing for me is that not one day is ever the same.

Fifteen years ago, when I first started with mountain golf, I tried to be a planner and plan two weeks out. But with mountain golf, the different climate changes that can happen every day, you really become reactive. Every morning you get up and you look outside and that really is what determines what you are going to do that day.... One day it can be a moose or an elk trampling a green, the next it can be a creek flooding, the next it could be snow."

**What is the biggest challenge?** "Probably the biggest challenge is putting the golf course to bed in the fall, because the way you put it to bed each fall really is what's dictating the condition of your course for next season."

**What are you like in the winter? Are you nervous all winter about how the course will come out?** "I'm

pretty proactive on that. At least every second or third day I don my snowshoes and spend a lot of time in the wintertime looking underneath the snow, especially if there's different climatic things happening — if there's rain or really warm weather or big snowfalls. I get out there with my scoop shovel and go out and will keep a very close eye so I can be reactive.... That's one really nice thing about working at a ski hill with machines like groomers on site. If I have to take all the snow off the greens, I can do it in pretty short order."

**What is the biggest fear of a mountain super?** "One is ice, the other is water — wet turf — and the third is snow mold. And actually there's four — the big one we had this year was voles. They're like a little mouse. They burrow in the grass and they just make a hell of a mess. The wetlands are just full of voles. The best-case scenario when you put it to bed in the fall is to have frozen ground, a good 6 to 12 inches of frost in the ground, and then nice dry snow and an abundance of it. If it's nice dry snow, it's a great insulating blanket to frozen turf underneath."

**You've been at mountain courses your whole career ... That's the only way I think I'd ever want it. ... It's the lifestyle I prefer to live, with the four seasons, with the skiing."**

