

Blair

Continued from B1

the course.

Before 2020, Blair looked at several sites in Utah. He brought in King-Colins, a well-known golf architect company, into the project. It helped build Sweetens Cove, which is billed as one of the more entertaining and unique courses in the country.

He zeroed in on land in Morgan, about 45 minutes north of Salt Lake City. It already had a golf course on it called Round Valley, but Blair would build over it.

"We'd do site visits, and worked on some routings and different things like that," Blair said. "Obviously the sale just never happened. I think there were some differing opinions on how much the property was worth and what we could get it for. And if they wanted to help and be involved."

"There were a lot of moving parts to really get any traction on it at that time. It was obviously just going to be challenging and expensive. There was still so much they kind of had to get lined up and figured out. Just never got to that point."

Blair pivoted and bought land in Aiken, South Carolina, in 2020. He turned the forested land into a golf course that is now fully functioning. He is the president of the club and raised money for memberships, hired staff and at one point was booking guests to come before his own PGA Tour events.

He thought about taking The Buck Club architectural plans and simply building it in South Carolina, but he held off.

"We didn't know what [the Carolina course] was going to be," he said. "If that was going to be The Buck Club, or if it was going to be something different. I still kind of held on to hope that we'll be able to do something in Utah for TBC."

The Tree Farm now is entirely different. It is built into the topography of the land, which shares some of the extreme undulations of Augusta National rather than the more unique elements of Utah. Blair also pulled some styles from different courses he liked. He went to Rye, England, and noticed how the greens were protected by wood. If you miss the green, you can't putt onto it. The fifth hole at The Tree Farm has some bricks around the right side of the green.

"You have to miss it way right for it to come into play," he joked.

Still, Blair is preparing for what a



FRANK FRANKLIN II is shown in mid-swing during the first round of the Travelers Championship at TPC River Highlands on June 25, 2023, in Cromwell, Conn.

Utah course would eventually look like.

He's already modified some of his original plans. At first, he wanted The Buck Club to be a member-only, private course. Now, he has flipped it to be a public course.

Part of it is so that everyone who helped The Buck Club get off the ground, buying merchandise and going to the golf tournaments, can play. "All those people, I don't think, necessarily want to just join a club that's in Utah," he said.

He also acknowledged that having a private club is more difficult in Utah weather. Golf is seasonal in Utah. Getting members to join from outside the region typically requires good weather year-round. So, for example, when New York has poor weather, people can retreat to their membership club to play. Salt Lake can't offer that.

"That was one of the big things I learned throughout the whole process was just the seasonality of a club in Utah is a lot harder," Blair said. "In Utah, you're realistically trying to get people out of good weather to come to good weather. When it's good weather up in the Hamptons and in the Dakotas, it's good weather in Utah. But the other months, when it's bad weather in those places, people want a place to go."

The actual course design is also in flux. For one, the elevation in Utah forces the course to be a bit longer

than in South Carolina. The soil is also a challenge in Utah compared to different climates. The Tree Farm, for example, was able to use all native soil. That wouldn't happen in Utah.

Plus, in South Carolina, almost all the holes were built into the natural topography. In Utah, there would be some holes Blair would have to build from scratch and the land would come second.

"It was just a completely different style of architecture, building whatever you wanted," he said. "It takes a lot more time, a lot more money and a lot more everything, basically, to make it work. And that was one of the [original] roadblocks that was kind of adding up to the long list."

But just as Blair is keeping that dream alive, he's also living another. As Blair heads into the U.S. Open this week, he thinks his actual game is the best it's been. He had a top-five finish at the Zurich Classic in April and was top-25 at the RBC Canadian Open last week.

He still has days that pull him out of contention too often. But that is something that the 2014 Blair would have worried about. Now, he is in for the journey.

"Feel like it's all kind of right there, just a matter of time before we get it all to click," he said.

And one day, he believes, The Buck Club in Utah will click, too.

BRIDGE

Phillip Alder



You can stop 10 by taking four

David Hilbert was a German mathematician who died in 1943. He discovered and developed many fundamental ideas, including Hilbert spaces in functional analysis. He claimed that if one were to bring 10 of the wisest men in the world together and ask them what the most stupid thing was in existence, they would not be able to discover anything as stupid as ... what?

It does not require a particularly wise man to realize that to defeat a four-spade contract, the defenders must take at least four tricks. How would that thought have helped West in this deal? He leads the diamond ace: five, two, four. What should he do next?

South opened three spades to show a respectable seven-card suit and 5-10 high-card points. West made a borderline takeout

North 06-1234	
♠ A 9 8	
♥ K Q J 10	
♦ Q 8 5	
♣ A J 6	
West	
♠ 6 3	
♥ A 9 4	
♦ A K J 8	
♣ 7 4 3	
East	
♠ 2	
♥ 5 7 3 2	
♦ 10 9 3 2	
♣ K Q 9 2	
South	
♠ K Q J 10 7 5 4	
♥ 6 3	
♦ 7 4	
♣ 10 5	
Dealer: South	
Vulnerable: East-West	
3♠	3♥ 3♦ 3♣ All pass
Opening lead: ♦ A	

double. North raised, hoping his partner was short in diamonds. (Yes, three no-trump works here but is probably against the odds.)

What does East's diamond two say?

That he does not have a doubleton, when he would have started an echo (high-low). If South has two diamonds, can the second card disappear?

Only in layouts where the contract cannot be defeated. Which four tricks must the defenders get?

One heart, one diamond and two clubs, or one heart, two diamonds and one club. This means that it must be best to shift to the club eight, high denying an honor.

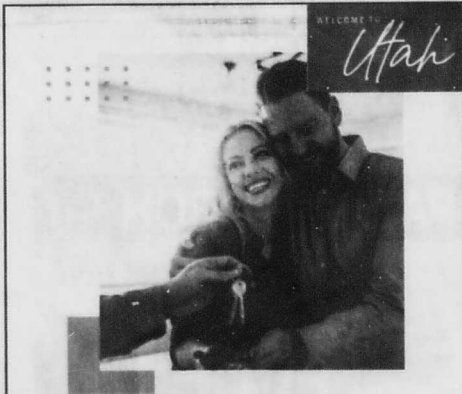
As you can see, this defeats the contract. But if West cashes the diamond king at trick two, South's second club evaporates on the diamond queen.

Hilbert was talking about astrology. Do you agree?

LOOKING FOR THE PUZZLES? » B9

Gordon Monson

Commentary » He brings Utah's sports superstars into focus



UTAH REAL ESTATE RESOURCE CENTER

OUR SERVICES:

- Find a Home
- Home Value
- Communities

LOVE WHERE YOU LIVE
DISCOVER YOUR NEXT HOME

VISIT UTRERC.COM

DRAFTY Windows? Cracked or WARPED Siding?
WE'VE GOT YOU COVERED!



K-Designers has been in business for
45 years and we are a full-service home improvement company
who sells, installs, and warrants all our products!

- We Offer:
- Window Replacement
 - Siding
 - Bathroom Remodeling
 - Entry, Storm, and Patio Doors

50%
OFF*
INSTALLATION



Call For Your FREE Consultation!

385-462-4863



*50% off installation discount requires minimum purchase of \$1,000 w/ 11% off siding. See representative for details. Offer requires 9/30/24

