

## Up to par



Gerry Broome / News &amp; Record

**LAST HOLE:** PGA pro Bruce Lietzke blasts his way Thursday out of Pinehurst's No. 18.

# Ross' ghost keeps pros humble

## Golf course designer's statue to be unveiled

By JIM SCHLOSSER

Staff Writer

PINEHURST — Everyone in the gallery whooped and hollered when John Daly unleashed two mighty swings on the 10th hole — everyone, that is, except the Scottish ghost looking down from somewhere above the long-leaf pines beside the fairway.

Surely, Donald Ross was tempted to swoop down, grab Daly's massive metal-headed, red-shafted driver and wrap it around the lad's muscular neck.

Back in 1907 when Ross designed the 578-yard, par-5 hole, he didn't intend for anyone to get anywhere near the green in only two strokes.

But there was Daly, the PGA Tour's new monster hitter, in the bunker beside the green in two.

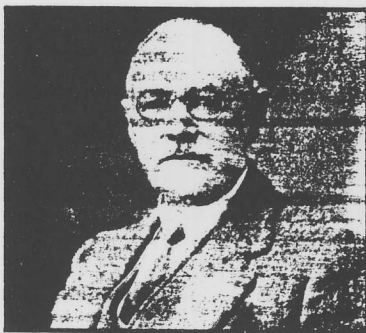
The ghost would prevail, though. By the end of the day Wednesday, only three of 30 pros who played Ross's famed Pinehurst No. 2 course were under par.

"He didn't like to see pros shoot low scores on No. 2," says Fletcher Gaines, who caddied for Ross during the 1940s and still totes bags around the course. Mimicking Ross's Scottish accent, Gaines repeats the exact words Ross spoke every time a pro insulted No. 2 with a low score.

*Damn it to hell, I'll fix him.*

"He would be out there early the next morning messing with those pins," Gaines remembers. Ross would put the flag sticks in the most difficult spots. Scores would soar.

From the heavens, Ross, who died in 1948 and who always wore a tie even when playing golf, surely is watching the PGA Tour's top-30 money winners tackle No. 2



**Donald Ross:** Took pride in tough course

in the \$2 million Tour Championship.

The event is a tribute to Ross, who tinkered constantly with No. 2 from 1907 until his death 41 years later. The pros rave about how the course remains a challenge despite modern golf equipment that allows for longer hitting.

Tonight, behind the 18th green, a statue of Ross will be unveiled, crafted by sculptor Gretta Bader of Alexandria, Va.

"When you see photos of what this place was before he started and what it is now, it's extraordinary," Baden says, glancing down the 18th fairway. "It's like an earth sculpture. What he created out of trees and open space is outstanding."

No. 2 rates as one of the world's premier golf tests and one of the most beautiful. But Ross isn't remembered for just one course. From Pinehurst, where he lived in a spacious house beside No. 2, he traveled widely, designing an estimated 600 courses.

## ■ John Daly shares lead with three others — C1

In North Carolina, he beautified landscapes from the mountains to the sea: the Sedgefield Country Club and Greensboro Country Club in Guilford County, the Alamance Country Club in Burlington, the Forsyth Country Club in Winston-Salem, the Hope Valley Country Club in Durham and the Charlotte Country Club and Myers Park Country Club in Charlotte. He did the resort courses at the Grove Park Inn in Asheville, at Linville and Blowing Rock.

Lillian Pippitt, Ross's 82-year-old daughter, says her dad once redesigned a hole just to save a single tree.

"He thought a course should be interesting to play but also beautiful to look at," says Pippitt, who will attend the statue unveiling.

Jack Nicklaus learned to play on a Ross-designed course in Columbus, Ohio. And though he was long dead, Ross influenced where Nicklaus' son, Jack Jr., himself an excellent golfer, would go to college in the 1980s.

"No. 2 was one of the reasons I went to Carolina," the younger Nicklaus is quoted in a new coffee-table book about Pinehurst by Chapel Hill free-lance writer Lee Pace.

Today, modern golf course architects trick up courses by digging lakes on nearly every hole and bunkers as deep as Hades. Ross used only what nature gave him. Pinehurst No. 2 has no water holes. Its difficulty comes from the natural contours of fairways and greens.

All the attention her father now receives makes his daughter chuckle. Lillian Pippitt says he got up in the morning, ate and went to work like any other father.