Scenery, playability important to Woods

Tiger designing course near Asheville

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SWANNANOA – The same competitive spirit that has enabled Tiger Woods to win 14 major championships and a total of 71 times on the PGA Tour is apparent when he discusses his work as a course designer.

Woods conducted a walking tour for selected members of the media Saturday at The Cliffs at High Carolina, his first American design. While the project is still in its infancy, several areas have been cleared where fairways will be built.

He already has redesigned the ninth hole three times to take advantage of optimum sunlight. In the end, Woods wants a course players won't forget.

"You can create something that people will remember and want to come back to; that's the whole objective as a designer — to create something fun and challenging but something where people say, 'Hey, I want to come back and do this again,'" Woods said Saturday morning after arriving at the top of the mountain in a helicopter.

"Not all golf courses are like that, but that's something I want to be able to deliver to all of my golf courses."

Woods also emphasized the importance of having breathtaking views, which this course won't lack. At one point during the tour, Woods stood in the middle of what will be the 18th fairway and looked at distant mountains.

"I keep saying I'm from L.A., and you don't see 50-mile views," he said.

John Nachreiner, construction superintendent of High Carolina, said the scenery is very important to Woods.

"Tiger will do everything he can to enhance those views throughout the course," Nachreiner said.

Woods' design company has routed the course 30 times so High Carolina has southern exposure on every hole, which would allow for earlier start times after a frost.

Jim Anthony, founder of the Cliffs Communities, accompanied Woods on his walk.

The two later entertained prospective buyers in a covered tent just off the18th green. Anthony said he is still holding out hope for the course to be completed in fall of 2011.

Woods said building a course similar to links courses where players don't have to worry about long carries is important to him because it will appeal to players of all skill levels.

"The designs I've done so far utilize the ground as an ally, something that some of the modern designers have gone away from," he said.

The yardage has tentatively been set, and the back tees will play 7,715 yards. No. 18 will be a demanding par-4 of 511 yards, which will be a challenge for many players to reach in two.

"It's downhill, so you've got a chance," Woods said with a smile.



JOHN FLETCHER / Asheville Citizen-Times

Tiger Woods talks about the golf course he is designing at The Cliffs at High Carolina near Asheville.

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Tiger Woods and The Cliffs founder, Jim Anthony, give a walking tour of the golf course being designed by Woods at The Cliffs at High Carolina near Asheville, NC.