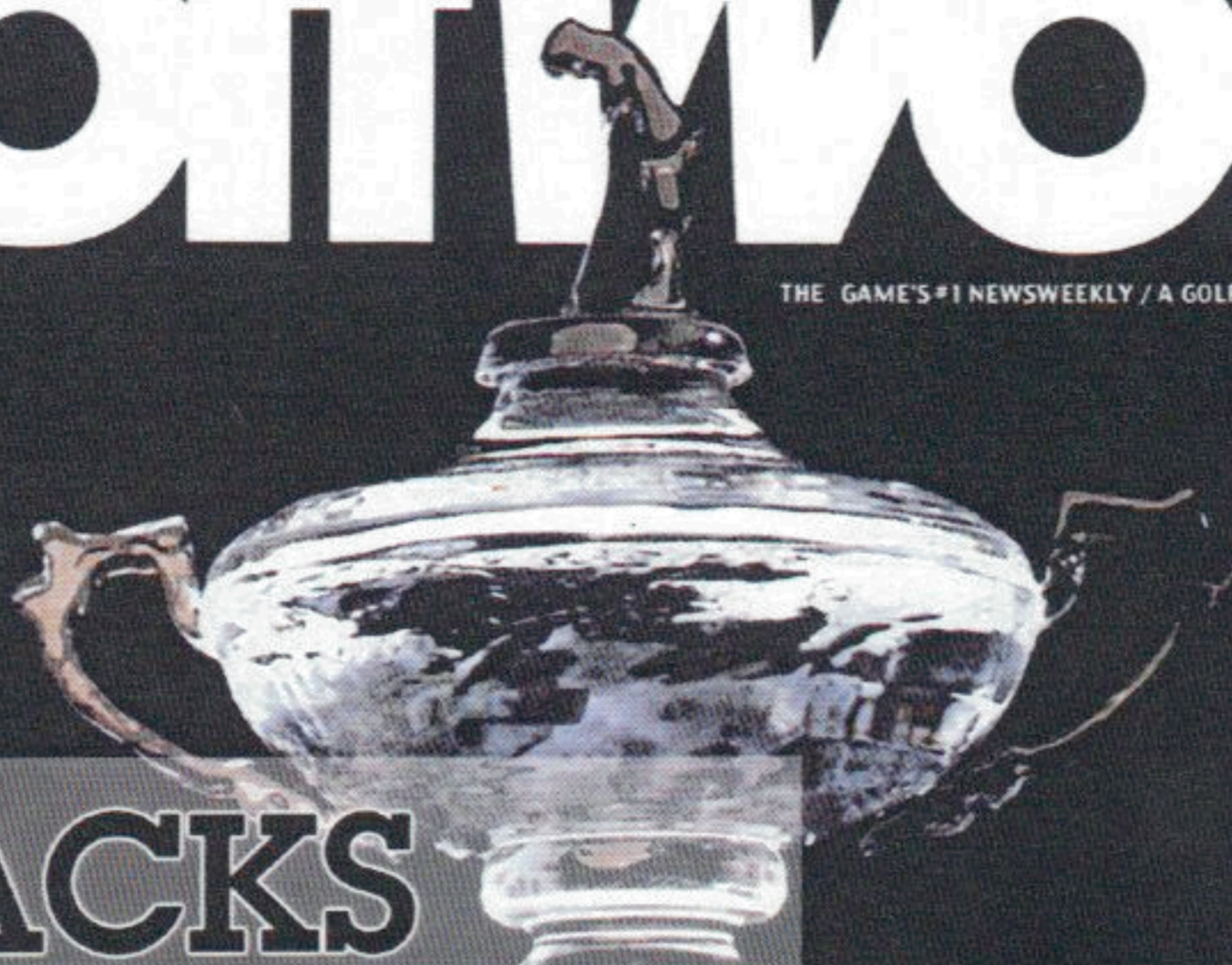


ANNIKA SORENSTAM: THE EIGHTH WONDER OF HER WORLD

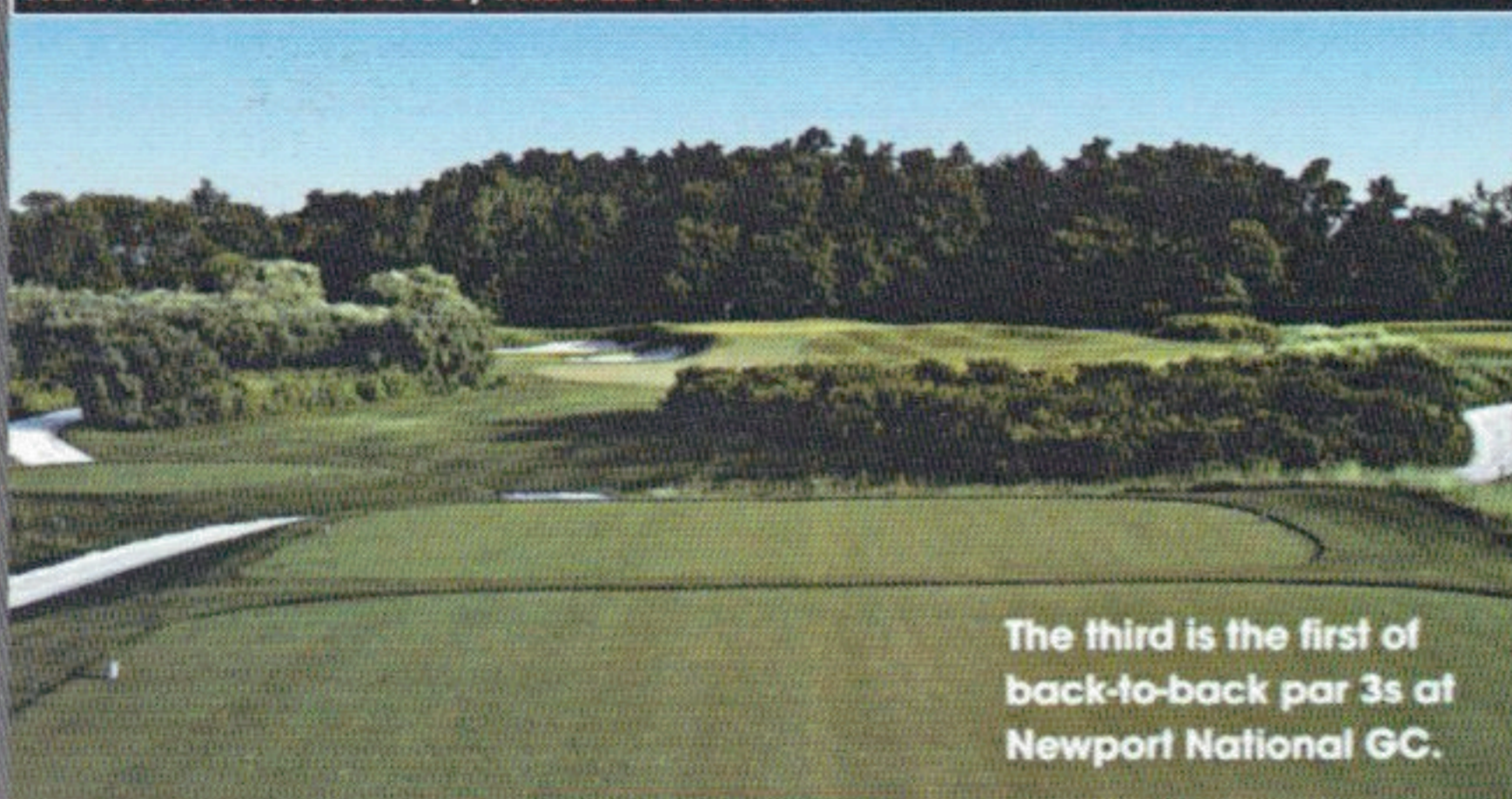
Golf World

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HOT TRACKS

NEWPORT NATIONAL GC, MIDDLETOWN R.I.



The third is the first of back-to-back par 3s at Newport National GC.

IT lacks the Founding-Five pedigree of stately Newport CC or some of the grand-scale ambitiousness of nearby Carnegie Abbey GC, but the Orchard Course at Newport National GC, an Arthur Hills-Drew Rogers design that debuted this summer, is a worthy addition to the Aquidneck Island golfscape.

Built on a former nursery farm and apple orchard that offers views of the Atlantic Ocean and Sakonnet Passage, Newport National aspires to be a modern links and, more often than not, succeeds. As is true of its neighboring tracks, the National is best visited when the wind is up, making its par 72 a legitimate test even when tackled from tees forward of the 7,244-yard tips.

The private course, which will be joined in 2004 by an upscale daily-fee layout (Vineyard) designed by Brad Booth and Brad Faxon, shines brightest

on the homeward nine, but the front is not without its moments. The 198-yard third is a straightforward, visually pleasing par 3, gently framed by clumps of Japanese Pieris shrubs that obscure the foreground of the elevated green. The par-5 eighth concludes with a rectangular green that'll remind you of Ireland, but the real punchline is a large mound that protects the front right of the green.

The first major public showing of the National will be next month's Adams Cup when top college teams, including highly ranked Georgia, pay a visit. A stretch beginning with the 567-yard, par-5 14th and ending with the par-4 17th, 489 yards strong, likely will rate high marks. The former sports a green nestled amongst fescue-covered dunes; the latter presents a yawning, 140-yard-long bunker that sets up the day's most demanding drive. For more information call 401-846-1489. —Tim Murphy

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