

Talamore has a legacy of llamas

SOUTHERN PINES — Players at Talamore Golf Resort often pull more than clubs from their bags when they reach the 14th tee.

They usually bring out their cameras first and start taking photos of the attraction adjacent to the tee box.

Talamore houses three llamas in a large fenced-in area there. The club has been associated with the llamas, which were trained to be used as caddies, since it opened in 1991.

“There’s a lot of photos taken over there by No. 14,” said Talamore pro Tag Leon. “All golfers get a chance to see them when they’re out here. And the llamas are not in danger of getting hit by golf balls.”



Eddie Southards

The club started with four llama caddies but stopped using them about six years ago after three had died and the fourth became too old to work.

But now there are plans to train two more llamas and maybe have them ready as caddies by late fall.

Talamore’s logo is a llama with a flagstick coming out of its back. The logo adorns caps, ball markers and divot tools.

The idea of using llamas as caddies came from Talamore owner Bob Levy, who lives in the Philadelphia area.

“He had read somewhere that Chi Chi Rodriguez used a donkey as a caddie as a kid,” Leon said. “He was ready to open with donkey caddies. But at the last minute, a buddy of his made him aware that llamas are actually better pack animals than donkeys.”

And why train llamas as caddies?

“In an area so saturated with golf courses, Mr. Levy wanted something novel that would stand out about our property,” Leon said. “It was done as a novelty thing.”

The last original llama, Arnie, died about 18 months ago. The club then purchased two more llamas,



Golf pro Tag Leon feeds the llamas that are being trained as caddies at Talamore Golf Resort in Pinehurst.

Dolly and Bandit, without knowing that Dolly was pregnant. Now, Dolly’s son, Tally, is part of the llama collection.

The plans are to start training Bandit and Tally this summer to work as caddies. Dolly is older and less sociable than the two younger llamas.

The llamas are fitted with a saddle that carries two golf bags. Leon expects it will take three to four months to train them.

“The majority of the training is

just being comfortable and acclimated to people,” Leon said. “Once they get out there, we have to make sure they don’t get distracted or spooked. One of our staff members leads them around the whole way.

“The llamas don’t have to read the greens or anything,” he laughed.

Leon compared the training time of llamas to that of dogs.

“The more time you spend with them, the quicker they will learn and the more social they will be,” he

said. “You give them love, and they love you back.”

Leon said the llamas are more of a marketing tool than an integral part of Talamore. But they do make the club unique.

“We’d love to get it back up and running,” he said. “It will never be a big part of what we do, but to make it available again would be a benefit to everybody.”

To make a tee time at Talamore, call (910) 692-5884.

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