

New Lives for Old Golf Courses

Where do fading golf courses go in a tough economy? In some Florida communities, they become playgrounds. ■ When a 100-acre golf course in Deerfield Beach, Fla., shut down several years ago, the owner first proposed a housing development, but eventually agreed to revamp half of the course into a cemetery, and half into a park with a playground and ball field. Proposed plans are pending. ■ "My hope is to get the property in development into a park for athletic use," says Bob Harbin, director of parks and recreation for Deerfield Beach. "The city is so



deficient in that area."

■ Royal Palm Beach, Fla., is replacing an old course with a 160-acre park, complete with kayak rentals, volleyball courts and playgrounds. ■ "Unfortunately, there is a supply-and-demand issue along with the unstable economy," says the National Golf Foundation's Greg

Nathan, adding that 61 of some 16,000 courses nationwide closed permanently in 2010. "But whether a course is closed and converted or stays in business, you hope that whoever is making the decision makes it with intelligent information on the market." —Stacy Gilliam