

END OF AN ERA



GREEN SIDE UP
BY JOEL JACKSON

On Friday, July 8, 2011, the space shuttle Endeavor blasted off on the final mission for any current American space vehicle.

Many of us have witnessed 50 years of space exploration and technological advances spearheaded by the United States.

On the one hand it is an end of an era, on the other it begins a new era of perhaps even more far-reaching unmanned

exploration thanks to advances in remote guidance technology. And there likely will be a more cooperative atmosphere of joint multinational manned trips to the space station.

The economic crash of 2008 saw the end of a decades-old golf-course-building boom, due to the failure of the associated real estate markets and bank closings. But just as the space industry is morphing into a new configuration, so will the golf industry.

We have seen the multi-association cooperative known as "We Are Golf" emerge as a group that speaks of the benefits and contributions of golf to the nation's economy and social and recreational benefits to people seeking ways to enjoy the outdoors and a little friendly competition. Next February we will join our allied Florida Golf Associations in a Florida Golf Day in Tallahassee to promote our industry and educate people about the issues.

Golf courses across the country are shedding their stuffy, rigid rules of golf's

approach to the game and introducing multiple forward tee options so people can actually score and enjoy the game. Programs like "Get Golf Ready" and "Play Golf America" are gaining traction and courses are allocating times for beginners, juniors and seniors to enjoy the club's course and amenities without feeling like a burden or hindrance to the more skilled players.

Isn't it in the best interest of a club and the industry to foster these changes and accommodations to grow the game? Like the space industry, we cannot afford to keep flying the old business models. We need to come up with some new ideas and programs to make golf viable and desirable.

Most golfers want a nice-looking golf course, but they must also change their perceptions about having it "perfect all the time." Turf perfection is not a requirement to play golf. Reasonably smooth and consistent is a fair compromise for 95 percent of the play. Professional tournament venues and ultra-

high-end clubs that can afford it are welcome to raise their grooming levels for special events.

However, the reality for all of golf — including the PGA Tour and the exclusive clubs — is that the growing pressure on our natural resources politically and agronomically will mandate conservation of these resources and will require some concessions on turf color and sometimes density in the roughs on a course.

We are talking mainly about water availability and quality. More and more moisture-sensing devices and methods to manage our water use on golf courses are emerging, along with ways to calculate and plot distressed areas that can be spot-watered just like we learned to spot-treat with pesticides.

Yes, we are the end of an era in which many of us grew up, but we are also at the beginning of a new one which might be different, but I think will be no less exciting. It will be another new frontier to travel.



ADVERTISER INDEX

Aerification Plus	8
Agrium Advanced Technologies.....	17
Bayer Environmental .. Inside Back Cover	
Bayer Environmental	9
Bayer Environmental	25
Brandt Consolidated	35
Central Florida GCSA.....	7
Classic Greens.....	20
Country Club Services.....	34
Dow Agrosciences	31
DuPont	20

Golf Agronomics Supply.....	27
Golf Ventures	Back Cover
Green-Way.....	34
Harrell's Fertilizer.....	39
Horizon.....	Inside Front Cover
Howard Fertilizer	19
Independent Turf Partners.....	36
John Deere Golf	33
Palm Beach GCSA	5
Pike Creek Turf Farms	36
Quali-Pro	37
Ridge GCSA	3

ShowTurf.....	11
Sod Solutions	8
South Florida Grassing.....	26
Southeastern Turf Grass	6
Spread-Rite	34
Tampa Bay Turf	21
Team UGA	Insert
Tifton Physical Lab.....	38
Tom Burrows Turfgrass	34
Toro Distributors of Florida	22
Westscapes Golf Construction	32
Winfield Solutions	32