Perry Dye says busy time ahead for builders

BY MARK LESLIE

The man who will lead the Golf Course Builders Association into the 1990s feels it's "a great time" to be president of the organization.

"When golf course architects and builders were not doing well, in the 1970s, it was tough," said Perry Dye. "But this is 1989 and the industry has really changed — and changed a lot in the last four or five years in my opinion."

Challenges abound in finances, the environment and in the mechanics of building golf courses, but the bottom line for builders is that demand for their services is high.

Dye, who was elected president in February at the International Golf Course Conference and Show in Anaheim, Calif., said that while golf course developers around the world are clamoring for experienced American builders, "the truth is that we really don't have enough people to handle the demand." Dye, who has 15 employees working and living in Japan, said, "If what the National Golf Foundation says is true about demand (needing a golf course every day by the year 2000) quite honestly we don't have enough people — builder/doctors, shapers, irrigation technicians, that sort of thing — to supply that demand."

He said the Golf Course Builders Association is bringing together "all the people who are talented and trying to promote them to the architects and the owners" as the people with experience in building golf courses. I mean I started building golf courses working for my dad (Pete Dye) when I was 12." With business booming, Dye said the builders' problem is getting to the new course sites and "making sure the job is done correctly when you get there."

He expects a lot of people to enter the business who have never built a golf course before. "And we have to be able to recognize them for what they can do and try to get clients to recognize that not everyone can build a golf course," Dye said. "It may appear to be simple. It appears to be kind of like road construction or any major type of dirt construction, but golf course construction is totally unique..."

"And I've worked with a lot of contractors trying to get into the industry, but they tend to get not too enchanted because it is just so specialized that even though they are in the construction industry they can't switch into the golf course construction industry and pick it up real quickly...

"It's the shaping and USGA greens mix, and all that sort of (technique) that is a specialty. And now it's a specialty in demand." While the developer owns the course and the architect draws up the design specifications, Dye sees the builder as "the construction heart of that deal."

Because of that specialization and the enormous amount of money spent on a golf course today, Dye believes developers should take care in selecting a builder. "People may spend a lot of time selecting an architect," he said, "but the architect's fee is usually 6 or 7 percent of the total project cost while the builder deals with around 95 percent. It's important that you deal with a good qualified person who is experienced, has done it before and knows how to give you the product," Dye said.

As the demand for builders' services increases, so does the demand that they master new fields of expertise, Dye feels.

"More and more nowadays we're having to deal with things we've never had to deal with before because premier, easy-to-build land is now taken by houses and what is left is what the golf course is allowed to go on, so we're usually left with a swamp, a hole, a landfill to build on," he said.

"A golf course is used to cover up a lot of blunders. We haven't quite gotten into putting golf courses on toxic waste dumps, but it is something that would be an added amenity."

Animals, fish, alligators, birds, all types of vegetation — all are causing problems for golf course developers in one place or another around the United States.

"But I don't think that green grass and golf courses are going to be eliminated by our society for any reason. The open space created by a golf course and the maintained environment it brings are going to go unchecked by problems — especially environmentally speaking," Dye said. "We have problems we are going to have to deal with."

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Burton's Walton

W. Morris Walton, president of Burton Manufacturing Co., Inc., is the new chairman of the National Golf Foundation board of directors.

Other officers are Vice Chairman Glenn Raney of Aurora, Colo., president and chief operating officer of Wilson Sporting Goods Co.; Secretary-Treasurer Stephen Cadenelli of Acacia Country Club in Lyndhurst, Ohio, second term.

Charles Yash, vice president of marketing/sales for Golf Products of Spalding Sports Worldwide; and Treasurer Allan Solheim, vice president of Karsten Manufacturing Corp., who was re-elected.

Appointed directors were Gary Wiren, president of Golf Around the World; Terry Williams, director of McKinsey & Co.; Gail Braddock, president of golf prescitions for American Golf Corp.; and Joseph Greenaday, president of Golf Writers Association of America Inc.

GCSAA changes its hierarchy

Gerald L. Faubel of Saginaw (Mich.) Country Club is the new vice president of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America.

Faubel was elected at the association's recent International Golf Course Conference at Anaheim, Calif., during which Dennis D. Lyon of Aurora, Colo., was installed as president.

Stephen G. Cadenelli of Metedeconk Country Club was re-elected vice president-secretary-treasurer.

Cadinelli and Randy Nichols of Cherokee Town & Country Club in Dunwoody, Ga., were re-elected directors.

Gary T. Grigg of Shadow Glen GLC in Olathe, Kan., is a new director. Randy P. Zidik of Rolling Hills Country Club in McMurray, Pa., will fill Faubel's unexpired term.