Ransomes expands umbrella

Cushman purchase creates megafource in industry

BY MARK LESLIE

Ransomes PLC of the United Kingdom has continued its American buying spree that finds it boasting a product line covering the gamut of turfgrass care from mowing to renovation.

Ransomes' purchase of Cushman in Lincoln, Neb., from Outboard Marine Corp. for $150 million in late September included Cushman subsidiaries Ryan in Lincoln and Brouwer Turf Equipment in Keswick, Ontario, Canada.

"I'm excited about working with Stuart Rafos (Cushman president) and the rest of the management team at Cushman," said Ransomes America President Helmut Adam. "Its product line complements the Ransomes line of commercial turf equipment extremely well.

Indeed, both companies feel the partnership makes a perfect mix and will help Cushman greatly increase its annual domestic and international sales in the near future.

"I expect our international business — outside North America — will double because of Ransomes' strong distribution network internationally," said Cushman Market Director Clarke H. Staples. "Certainly we will also increase sales in North America at the present rate, about 15 percent a year."

Staples said Cushman has doubled its sales over the last four years.

Accolades open ASU course

The latest Pete Dye designed golf course, the Karsten Golf Course at Arizona State University, was dedicated Sept. 15 as the man for whom it was named celebrated his 78th birthday.

"If someone had told me 10 years ago or 20 years ago that something like this would happen, I never would have believed them. All I can say is that it's been a real pleasure," Karsten Solheim, president of Karsten Manufacturing Corp., maker of Ping golf clubs, said after a standing ovation by the several hundred people who

Continued on page 12 ASU's Karsten course challenges golfers with water on four holes.

Photo courtesy of Evans/Artigue

European Warned about Design

BY MARK LESLIE

American golf course architect J. Michael Poellot told an international audience at Golf Course Europe '89 that more championship courses need to be built the world over but those courses should be designed to accommodate every level of player.

Declaring that golf course architects "lost sight of the strategic element" of golf with the advent of televised tournaments in the 1950s, Poellot said it is "quite possible" to build a high-caliber course for everyone.

Poellot, president of his own design firm headquartered in Saratoga, Calif., and designer of more than 200 courses around the world, said, "Given an adequate budget and the technical capability, any site can be turned into a world-class golf course."

He told the group at the first day of the three-day conference and exposition in Wiesbaden, West Germany: "We believe the golf course architect must set up an environment that more championship courses need to be built the world over but..."
Research
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the ground below the surface. A product made by Cross Equipment Co. of Albany, Ga., that hopefully can be developed to inject liquid insecticide into the ground under extremely high pressure without making a mechanical opening in the ground. A successful implement would bring fourfold results — making it safer for people getting in contact with the turf by injecting chemicals below the surface; killing the pests more effectively; using less chemicals and therefore saving money; and saving money and water because the groundskeeper would not have to water the turf to teach the pesticides into the soil. "Basically, we're trying to eliminate possibilities of humans and pets getting in contact with chemicals," Ozkan said.
Niemczyk added that besides providing the extra safety of not leaving a residue on the surface, the three pieces of equipment will help control insects that live below the surface.

Golf Course
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where every level of player can choose the amount of risk they want to take; the risk must be balanced with an appreciation of the game. "Every hole becomes a strategic decision for each golfer as to how they want to play it." A well-designed golf course rewards the thinking player... Such an approach to course design returns the element of "strategic design" in the centuries-old principle that players coming into the facility is not going to be mandatory in Europe, so we expect those sales to increase dramatically in the last two years, especially with the Turf-Truckster, which can be modified so that for turf after it is mowed — together we have an outstanding full-line array of products that can be distributed to our product line, our equipment, and, compared to the conventional system (of insecticide use), has equal or better grub control," Ozkan said. "Goal our to get better results at the recommended insecticide rates," Ozkan said. "We want to be able to use insecticide less because we are targeting the exact place where grubs live." The professors say that when conventional pest-control methods are used, some chemicals bind to thatch or grass before they reach the insects. This means extra chemicals must be used. Niemczyk cites research showing that less than 5 percent of the pesticides applied to the surface ever reach the insect zone. He says recommended rates for pesticides are usually set higher than actually needed where the insects live. Some special-ordered machines are used by by set of discs that opens a series of narrow slits in the turf. The discs are followed another set of discs that cut into an angle, meeting 1 1/2 inches below the surface. A nozzle injects a solid stream of insecticide into the slits. Ozkan said that for a granular-injection project is in its first season while the granular-injection project is in its first year. Ozkan said the plots and counted crops in the dry system research will be evaluated in November. Meanwhile, he said Rain Saver Jr., though "marketable," needs a little more modification, and the high-pressure injection unit "has potential through the golf industry showed the equipment was "leaving too much (chemicals) on the surface" in turfgrass areas because it couldn't penetrate the blades of grass.
Ozkan said for the Rain Saver Jr., to be more effective, needs to be modified so that the discs that cut into the turf have uneven ground it will still give you uniform coverage, not leaving any area untreated.

Ransom's
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from $50 million a year to $100 million — "a little by acquisition and a lot by new sales programs, products, etc." Cushman Advertising Manager Scott Stuckey said, "The advantage (of the Cushman) is that Ransomes is closer to our core of business than OMC. Ransomes' strength is its worldwide distribution network. We have some strength outside the U.S. and Ransomes' is much more mature. They've been at it for 10-15 years." "The bottom line," Stuckey said, "is that the Ransomes-Cushman partnership constitutes the largest turf maintenance company in the world. And what Ransomes brings in the mowing industry and what Cushman brings in the golfing industry that cares for turf after it is mowed — together we have an outstanding full-line array of products that can be distributed to our product line, our equipment, and, compared to the conventional system (of insecticide use), has equal or better grub control," Ozkan said. "Goal our to get better results at the recommended insecticide rates," Ozkan said. "We want to be able to use insecticide less because we are targeting the exact place where grubs live." The professors say that when conventional pest-control methods are used, some chemicals bind to thatch or grass before they reach the insects. This means extra chemicals must be used. Niemczyk cites research showing that less than 5 percent of the pesticides applied to the surface ever reach the insect zone. He says recommended rates for pesticides are usually set higher than actually needed where the insects live. Some special-ordered machines are used by by set of discs that opens a series of narrow slits in the turf. The discs are followed another set of discs that cut into an angle, meeting 1 1/2 inches below the surface. A nozzle injects a solid stream of insecticide into the slits. Ozkan said that for a granular-injection project is in its first season while the granular-injection project is in its first year. Ozkan said the plots and counted crops in the dry system research will be evaluated in November. Meanwhile, he said Rain Saver Jr., though "marketable," needs a little more modification, and the high-pressure injection unit "has potential through the golf industry showed the equipment was "leaving too much (chemicals) on the surface" in turfgrass areas because it couldn't penetrate the blades of grass.
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Automated tee-time system marketed by Xeta Corp.

Course employees will save time and golfers won’t have to dial the same number a thousand times each week to get starting times with the new automated tee time system designed by Xeta Corp. of Tulsa.

American Golf Corp. of Santa Monica, Calif., is among the first to sign a contract with Xeta Corp. of Tulsa, to provide automated tee time reservations to six American Golf-operated courses in the Houston area, including Bear Creek Golf World, Lake Houston, World Houston and Ransomes.

"At this point it’s too early to tell where Salsco versus Ryan and Cushman products will affect everyone." — Clarke Staples

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edStates.*

The changes will come in the projected major expansion into the European market, she said.

But Cushman's Staples said duplication exists between the Ryan and Salsco product lines. "At this point it’s too early to tell where Salsco versus Ryan and Cushman products will affect everyone."

Staples said Ransomes bought the Salsco line in case it couldn’t negotiate the Cushman purchase.

There is "not a lot of duplication" in the two companies' product lines, so none of their products will be discontinued, one official said.

Cushman has already broken ground on a plant that will double capacity of the Edgewater, Fla., facility. Stuckey added that Cushman bought manufacturing space in Lincoln, Neb., and land next to its present plant.

"The intent of these two purchases is to increase our capabilities. How these resources are going to be used will depend on the demand on our new relationship with Ransomes," he said.

Asked if management changes are forthcoming, Staples said, "We’re a $100-million company; Ransomes is in the $150-million range. I don’t think they’re overloaded with (management) people. When you take on a company this size you need all the talented people you can get — at least at first — and that gives people a couple of years to prove their worth."

Concerning a possible merging of departments between the two companies, Stuckey said, "Not at this juncture. It’s pretty much business as usual, but as we move along we will look at how (to change things) from a marketing standpoint, see how we can get the job done best."

He said, "We have a dealer organization we feel is one of the best in the U.S. The plan is to maintain that distribution and work with dealers on what we have developed..."

"This offers Cushman the opportunity to operate at the same modus as under OMC."

When OMC announced earlier this year that it wanted to sell the Cushman group, several potential buyers came forward. Reportedly, chief players in the talks were Toro, Ransomes, Textron and Club Car.

The negotiations reportedly narrowed down to Toro and Ransomes before the British firm won the bidding sweepstakes.

Staples said that if Toro had bought Cushman, changes in operations would have happened "overnight."