Rupp targets international market for NGF

By Mark Leslie

The new chairman of the National Golf Foundation board of directors said the NGF will get involved in golf internationally while remaining active inside the United States.

Glenn Rupp, president and chief executive officer of Wilson Sporting Goods Co. in River Grove, Ill., said: "We are partly research-driven in terms of keeping track of course construction, golfers, etc. Our numbers for the U.S. are good, but the knowledge and integrity of our data is significantly less outside the U.S. We want that to change."

Rupp said the NGF's first international project is a study being planned with a firm in Canada "to get hard numbers on the Canadian market."

This extra research, he said, will not necessitate adding staff at the Jupiter, Fla., headquarters. "We have a well-run organization and a professional staff who can handle some extra challenges," he said.

Rupp was elected on Jan. 27, succeeding W. Morris Walton, chairman of Burton Manufacturing Co. Walton had had been chairman for two years.

Rupp, who served as vice chairman under Walton, is joined by Vice Chairman Charles J. Yash, general manager and corporate vice president for the Golf Division of Spalding Sports Worldwide; Secretary Wally Uihlein, president and chief executive officer of Titleist and FootJoy Worldwide; and Treasurer Peter Bonanni, publisher of Golf Magazine.

Officers serve one-year terms and can be re-elected for an additional term.

Rupp deferred some of the criticism leveled at the NGF for its optimistic projections of the demand for golf in the next 10 years. The NGF has said the country needs to add one golf course a day through the year 2000 to meet the demands of the increasing number of golfers. Some have called that estimate into question.

"We still believe — in spite of the criticism — that over the next 10 years, the (inadequate) supply of golf courses, particularly in large metropolitan areas, will limit the growth of the game and the ability of people to enjoy it," he said.

"I think the future will be bright. Over the 10-year horizon, the demographics and the very nature of the game itself will make it an increasingly popular sport. Particularly, one of our prime threats is to..."

County board OKs $4.2M loan

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