Fireman buys Willowbend, adds championship length

Reebok owner puts up $9M-plus, eyes major tournament in the future

COTUIT, Mass.—Paul Fireman, chief executive officer of Reebok International Ltd., has completed purchase of the Willowbend Club for more than $9.1 million. The process has been going on nearly a year, and the new owner’s plans for the course. A $2-million clubouse should be ready for unveiling July 4, complete with a pro shop.

The course will now be totally private, with the 30 original members allowed to maintain their membership and interim members asked to reapply for regular membership. Membership is expected to grow to almost 200 this year.

Reebok has invested heavily in the golf merchandising market, and there is speculation that the company may be seeking to stage a PGA Tour event at the course. There is already a Pro-Am event, sanctioned by the Tour, scheduled for July 17. It will feature 15 top PGA pros from the regular and senior tours, and St. Thomas believes it will be an annual event. There will be 60 amateur spots available and the money raised will be given to a charity designated by the Town of Mashpee.

Willowbend will serve as co-host of the Mid-Amateur Championship in October and a regional qualifying site for the U.S. Senior Open.

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Floating green causing tax disagreement

COEUR d'ALENE, Idaho — Larry St. Thomas, owner of the 135-acre Willowbend Golf Club in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, has already drawn 60 amateur spots available and the money raised will be given to a charity designated by the Town of Mashpee.

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