European development lacks long-term focus

By RON FREEM

Golf development in Europe is not a growth industry today. The present economic slowdown (recession, or worse) throughout Europe has only added to the problems of many golf course operators. The boom years of the mid- to late 1980s, saw an explosion in golf development, especially in Spain, Portugal and other countries with warm climates.

While new golf development is generally on hold in Europe today, the sport is still a popular one which is attracting more players than it is losing each year. In light of this, the overall demand for golf facilities will resume or continue to grow at a rate of perhaps 3 to 5 percent per year. But please temper it by realizing humankind. But please temper it by realizing resources are environmentally sound and in the best public interest. This can be done by spending wisely or efficiently. It is easy to spend too little on golf construction. It is perhaps even easier to spend too much on golf construction.

Unfortunately, many would-be developers of golf courses in Europe and Scandinavia are first-time players in what really is a complex, no-holds-barred business. Naïve development opportunists would be golf architects, consultants of questionable knowledge and ability, and greenskeepers of modest capabilities have frequently attempted projects themselves or served as "consultants" on projects where the developer, promoter or money-man perhaps knew more than "his consultants". At worst, the financial situation was no more experienced than the neophyte consultants.

Financial feasibility studies, market analysis and market targeting can help to guide the planning and design of a project. It is simple economic analysis which points out that a creatively-designed golf course which cost the equivalent of 4 or 5 million US dollars to build, and plays to full capacity, can generate approximately 150 or 200 rounds per day will generate more profits than a signature or "name" course costing 2 to 3 times more which can only realize half the play with significantly higher green fees.

It is becoming obvious, almost world-wide, that making the number of dollars favorably in the long-term may not be a sure thing when big name, big budget, marketing and financial backing are involved. The need for future developers of golf projects to more clearly and precisely define both their market and its long-term financial capacity. Examples of poorly designed, cheaply built, miserably maintained golf courses which are little more than cow pastures are common. But these poor courses are common because they were designed and build from a lack of planning and planning with careful thought.

He writes as a scientist and doesn't get involved in the politics. The strongest part of Gore's book is his writing, which he has nothing to do with the human spirit and how we lose in terms of caring for the land around us, as God would have us.

But beware of one thing: There's a mixture here. Mr. Gore mixes this with changes in the atmosphere; and, despite what he says, no one has near conclusive evidence in that area. When expedient, he downplays opponents of his views in the scientific community. He is the only 2 percent who disagree with the claim of the dangers of global warming. Indeed, among the agricultural scientists, he agrees with him. Because of Gore's emphasis on ecology and the human spirit, we need to review some of his thinking. Gore states, "The ecologist's perspective begins with a view of the whole, an understanding of how the various species interact in patterns that tend toward balance and persist over time."

He adds, "Ecology is the study of these interdependencies and some of the same principles that govern the healthy balance of the glove club facility at the environment also apply to forces making up our political system."

But the fact is that ecological principles have nothing to do with balances. Life forms flourish or perish in response to environmental fluctuations as they adjust or fail to adjust to never-ending changes. It's only when humans place value on one life form over another that the element of balance comes into play. Politically, we tend to place greater importance on perpetuating our standard of living and quality of life at all costs.

Gore defines politics broadly as "the means by which we make collective decisions and choices."

In another sense, politics is the art and science of the possible. When you or I believe a certain course of action is possible and we desire to see change, we become political in our effort to make something happen. Politics has nothing to do with right or wrong, fact or fiction, good

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Not much balance in Gore's environmental treatise

By DR. ELIOT C. ROBERTS

Public concern for the state of our environment is real. Golfers, course superintendents, and neighbors must know that practices followed in managing resources are environmentally sound and in the best public interest. This can be done by spending wisely or efficiently. It is easy to spend too little on golf construction. It is perhaps even easier to spend too much on golf construction.

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Hassenplug, 84, a golf course architect, died Sept. 24, from cancer. While new golf development is generally on hold in Europe today, the sport is still a popular one which is attracting more players than it is losing each year. In light of this, the overall demand for golf facilities will resume or continue to grow at a rate of perhaps 3 to 5 percent per year. But please temper it by realizing resources are environmentally sound and in the best public interest. This can be done by spending wisely or efficiently. It is easy to spend too little on golf construction. It is perhaps even easier to spend too much on golf construction.

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