Kolasa named new head of CMAA

By PETER BLAIS

The golf industry will find a knowledgeable ally in new Club Managers Association of America President Richard Kolasa.

"My experience with golf clubs is one of my main strengths. I've been involved with golf since 1953," said the general manager of Tucson, Ariz.'s Skyline Country Club. Kolasa will be elevated from vice president to the CMAA's highest office during late February's annual meeting in Nashville, Tenn.

One of the more interesting situations he's dealt with during that time involves the irrigation system at Skyline. While most Southwest U.S. courses have installed automated systems, Skyline still uses quick couplers. "In the superintendent's mind, it's not a priority. If he came to me and asked for an automated system, I'd consider it. But he's happy with the system he has. So we have two guys out there watering every night," Kolasa said.

Kolasa has been at Skyline since 1978. Before that, he held similar posts at Blue Hills Country Club in Kansas City, Mo., Evansville (Ind.) Country Club and South Bend (Ind.) Country Club.

He graduated from Michigan State University in 1966, joined the CMAA in 1986 and became a certified manager in 1986. He

Cape Cod study reinforced

New data confirms positive findings at sandy-soiled site

By PETER BLAIS

YARMOUTH, Mass. — Groundwater tests at a relatively new Cape Cod golf course substantiate many of the findings of the original Cape Cod study.

Stuart Cohen, director and author of the original Cape Cod study, said: "What the findings show is the minimum impact golf courses can have on ground water when an integrated pest management program is used by an educated and experienced superintendent."

The initial Cape Cod investigation focused on four older courses. The feeling was that if pesticide contamination would be a problem anywhere, it would be on courses built long before today's strict environmental guidelines and in a place like Cape Cod, where sandy soil and a
NGF predicts 250 golf course openings a year through the 1990s

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pipeline may be even longer than that.

Experts agree that local financ-
ing remains a viable source. But
when larger lending institutions
get skittish in 1990-91, the funds
and corresponding construction
abated. In essence, the approach-
ing slowdown will reflect the lack
of funding options during 1990
and 1991 — and the institutional
lending community doesn’t ap-
pear ready to get back on the
horse.

"I’m afraid that lenders need to
have some success in other areas
before they warm to golf projects
again. They need to feel comfort-
able again," said Gary Gilson, a
partner in the Kansas City law
firm of Shook, Hardy & Bacon,
which specializes in golf course
acquisition and divestiture.

"We anticipate 250 openings per
year through this decade," said NGF
Vice President Rick Norton. "Over-
all, the trend is going down some-
what. But I don’t want to sound
doom-and-gloomy because we’re
seeing golf much more realistically
now — as a more publicly access-
ible, fiscally responsible unit.

"We’re still going to see some
pretty strong numbers in ’93, but
not like ’92."

The NGF figures indicate that
236 daily-fee facilities opened their
doors during 1992. Fifty-one mu-

nicipal courses were christened,
while 87 private courses came on
line. These figures, said Norton,
do not include renovations or fa-
cilities gone bankrupt and subse-
tently reopened.

A more sobering figure might
be the number of courses cur-
rently under construction, 616,
which does not include projects
that have been suspended due to
lack of funding, said Norton. Once
financing has been secured, it
takes about three years gain per-
mittting for and construct a golf
course. If you do the math, it’s
clear golf can’t maintain a pace of
300-plus course openings per year.

It also appears that lower inter-
est rates and a nation creeping
out of recession are not enough to
boost the dim financing picture.
"Golf is a funny business. It’s
not like putting up office build-
ings," said Rhodes. "It’s not de-
pendent on traditional market fi-
nancing; never has been. You’d
think [the financing picture] would
be getting better, but it isn’t.

"Lenders tend to react with a
lalg. They will need institutional
evidence for them to get back in.
They’re slow to get in and slow to
get out."

"The RTC (Resolution Trust
Corp.) needs to lighten up," said
Gilson. "There isn’t a lender out
there who doesn’t shudder when
he sees a golf project in his port-
folio."

Lending stagnation in the early
’90s has forced developers to seek
all sorts of alternative sources.
And while the Jones Trail in Ala-
bama has intrigued many with its
inventive use of state pension
funds, industry experts agree that
local equity financing will remain
the most promising source of
funds over the next few years.

"We tend to get caught up in
the real sexy financing, pension
funds, cooperatives and all that," said Norton. "But local financing
is still the most dependable.

Jones Trail
at halfway point
in Alabama

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. —
Alabama’s Robert Trent Jones
Golf Trail has reached the half-
way point of completion, with nine
of the 18 planned courses now
open to the public.

Birmingham’s Oxmoor Valley
and Mobile’s Magnolia Grove, two
of the Trail’s 54-hole facilities, are
fully open, each with two champi-
onship courses and an 18-hole
Short Course available for daily-
fee play.

The Trail’s other 54-hole facili-
ties—Huntsville’s Hampton Cove
and Auburn-Opelika’s Grand Na-
tional — each has an 18-hole
championship course open, with
a second scheduled to open in
1993. Huntsville’s Hampton Cove
also recently opened its Short
Course to area golfers.

"We are on schedule," said Bob
Barrett, vice president of SunBelt
Golf Corp. "With courses open at
all our 54-hole facilities, golfers
across the state can now enjoy a
Robert Trent Jones-designed
course. Since each course is dis-
tinctly different, golfers of all skill
levels will be able to sharpen their
game on the Trail."

In addition to 54-hole facili-
ties, the following three 36-hole
facilities will open in 1993: High-
wood Oaks in Dothan, Silver Lakes
in Calhoun County, and Cambrian
Edge in Greenville.