BRIEFS

KOCH, ROBBINS JOIN FORCES
TAMPA, Fla. — Gary Koch, president of Gary Koch Golf, Inc. and Richard Robbins, president of Robbins & Associates, International, Inc. have formed Robbins Koch Golf Designs, Inc. Robbins Koch will provide golf course design, master planning and construction management services in the United States, as well as selected projects in Asia. Koch, a six-time winner of the PGA Tour and golf analyst for ESPN/NBC, began his career in golf course design in 1990 when he was selected to design the Las Colinas course at Mission Inn Golf and Tennis Resort, near Orlando. Robbins has actively practiced course design, land planning and project management for more than 20 years. More builders certified

CHAPEL HILL, N.C. — The Golf Course Builders Association of America has approved a second group of companies as certified golf course builders. They are Central Florida Turf of Avon Park, Fla. (Jeffrey Harstine, president); Environmental Golf of Santa Ana, Calif. (S. Gene Giannulli, president); Palway Construction of Temecula, Calif. (Glen A. Gosch); Landscapes Unlimited of Lincoln, Neb. (Bill Kubly, president). GCBAA Executive Director Phil Arnold called the certified builders “a very elite group.”

MASON’S AWBREY GLEN OPENS
BEND, Ore. — The Awbrey Glen Golf Club held its grand opening July 23-25, featuring the groundbreaking ceremonies for the development of Awbrey Glen. The 16th hole at Wailea’s new Gold Course. Robert Trent Jones Jr. adds touches to new look at Wailea resort

Tennessee offers $20M in bonds for golf projects
NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Developers are being invited to apply for $20 million in general obligation bonds the state of Tennessee is offering for construction and operation of golf courses on state land, including eight state parks. Under discussion for years, the plan was passed by the state Legislature on July 1. The deadline for proposals is Sept. 15. Eakin Bonds, who manages the state’s golf courses, said feasibility studies were done in 1988 for Reelfoot Lake State Park in Tiptonville, Chickasaw State Park in Henderson, Natchez Trace State Park in Wildersville, Tims Ford State Park on Normandy Reservoir, Rock Island State Park in McMinnville, Panther Creek, and Morristown, CEDARS of Lebanon State Park in Lebanon, and Old Stone Fort in Manchester, where a nine-hole course already exists.

NIEBUR MOVES, KEEPS BUSY
MEDFORD, Ore. — Niebur Golf, which has been operating out of Atlanta, Ga., has moved its headquarters here, according to Joe Niebur. Niebur recently completed construction of AnnBriar Golf Course in Waterloo, Ill., and is working on an 18-hole course that will be the centerpiece of the Merriwood at Hawks Prairie subdivision in Olympia, Wash. Weyerhaeuser and Vicwood are developers and Bill Overdorf is the course architect for the Merriwood facility. Niebur’s new address is 820 Crater Lake Road; Suite 205, Medford 97504; 503-779-2771. Golf Course News

Mark McCumber: Designer cum Tour pro
Mark McCumber is an anomaly in this world of golf and course architecture. McCumber was designing his first golf course before he earned his PGA Tour card. He learned golf, and to love the game early, growing up at Hyde Park Golf Club in Jacksonville, Fla., where he and brothers Jerry and Tim earned free greens fees by digging up crabgrass. They later formed a golf course design company that has evolved into Mark McCumber & Associates architectural firm in Jacksonville. McCumber has juggled his playing career, winning close to $3 million, with his love for design.

MARK McCumber: I think my situation may be one of the most unusual of Tour players who are doing golf architecture. My brother started a landscape company in the early ’70s—literally working in the ground as a landscape designer, doing state jobs, regional malls, big irrigation jobs. We used to get irrigation jobs for golf courses back in the early ‘70s—always knowing we wanted to be in the golf course building and design business, preferably design. But we had to get into it by the back door by the construction side. In 1978 we got our first piece of land and started designing our first golf course before I even had my Tour card. So I got my Tour card in July of 1978 while we were in the middle of designing our first golf course — the Ravine, which to this day is one of our most dramatic pieces of land. So the irony is that this is something I had been doing before I ever won money swinging a golf club. I have a passion for both — tremendously and equally. The one thing I am trying to do this year — which has made both jobs better — is try to segregate the two. They are intertwined, but while I’m playing I’m trying to only think about playing those five days on tour. Then when I come home, I’m dedicating time to design.