NEWS IN BRIEF

PALM BEACH, Fla. — An alligator was trapped and killed in mid-April at Palm Beach Polo & Country Club here after the reptile bit a diver attempting to collect golf balls from an on-course pond. The diver was hospitalized with a puncture wound in the foot, said club officials Lee Wilson, a licensed trapper, who was called in to apprehend the 350-pounder.

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — With a grand opening slated for January 1995, construction on the 18-hole, par-72 Legend Trail golf course and its 6,000-square-foot clubhouse will begin immediately. Formerly named Desert Ranch, developers have sold the golf course property within the 573-acre Legend Trail community project to New York-based Ziff Communications and golf professional Al Mengert.

LEESBURG, Ga. — The Lee County Commission has approved the zoning changes necessary for more than 300 acres of south Lee County farmland to become Grand Island Golf Course and subdivisions. The decision allows Ledo Properties, which owns the land, to begin construction on the county’s first course. John Gay, managing partner for Ledo Properties, hopes the course will open for play by late summer.

SHAWNEE MISSION, Kan. — A woman has sued a golfer at Mission Hills Country Club here after she was struck in the face by an errant shot while sitting in her car. Filed at the federal courthouse, the suit alleged golfers and builders demand preciseness, as environmental mandates become more stringent, and water conservation becomes mandatory. The court amusingly disagreed, but did rule the woman’s suit “sufficiently stated claim for negligence and is for management of wildlife of all types...affecting water quality and quantity do not bode well of for the green industry.”

Architects meet by the Bay: Dr. Watson honored; Knott succeeds President Matthews

By MARK LESLIE and PETER BLAIS

SAN FRANCISCO — Green areas, especially golf courses, are a national treasure and must be preserved, effectively maintained and expanded, according to Dr. James R. Watson, who received the Donald Ross Award from the American Society of Golf Course Architects during its annual meeting here in late April.

Watson — founder of International Turfgrass Society and the USGA Green Section Turfgrass Research Committee — challenged the architects to continue as industry pioneers in the agronomic sense, as well as the artistic sense.

He reminded them that Robert Trent Jones Sr. and other led the way in improving the greens mix from the old standard — one-third peat, one-third sand, one-third soil. These forward-looking architects, he said, began to recognize the one-third mixture was inadequate to support the increased play and moved the industry toward an 80:20 sand-peat mix, even before agronomists proved it was the best solution.

“As technology expands, as golfers and builders demand preciseness, as environmental demands become more stringent and water conservation becomes mandatory, I think it will become incumbent on anyone who builds golf courses of any type to follow very rigid specifications,” said Watson. “Whether they are USGA specifications or not, remains to be seen. Those specs are changing and being revised as new technology becomes available.”

Environmental concerns, wetlands legislation, increased play and moved the industry toward an 80:20 sand-peat mix, even before agronomists proved it was the best solution.

As a member of the National Academy of Science technology board on the future of irrigation, Watson reported: “Already, it is very apparent that some of these issues affecting water quality and quantity do not bode well of for the green industry.”

In spite of “a very favorable environment for management of wildlife of all types...golf courses will not be given the amount of water they deserve,” he predicted. “All of water was recycled, storm, gray, non-potable water of all types, including brackish and saline — must be considered as a potential sources of future irrigation for golf courses.”

Even though breeding, selection, bioengineering, genetic engineering and proplastic transfusion will all provide superior plants in the future, Watson said, “None...