National Golf looks outside AGC family for course manager

SANTA MONICA, Calif. — National Golf Properties has contracted with Cobblestone Golf Group of San Diego to manage NGP’s newly acquired Carmel Mountain Ranch Country Club, making this the first course acquired by the real estate investment trust not to be operated by American Golf Corp.

The founders of AGC established the National Golf Properties REIT.

NGP acquired Carmel Mountain from Cobblestone for $7.4 million. Cobblestone, which operates five other courses in San Diego, will continue to manage Carmel Mountain under a long-term, triple-net lease with NGP.

“Cobblestone is an experienced high-quality golf course operator that is capable of achieving significant revenue growth at Carmel Mountain Ranch. We look forward to expanding our relationship with Cobblestone.”

LOWE PURCHASES DENVER TRACK

DENVER — Lowe Enterprises has acquired the former Scanticon Denver Executive Conference Center Hotel & Resort on behalf of a pension fund client. The property has been renamed the Inverness Hotel and Golf Club and will be managed by Lowe’s hospitality management subsidiary, Destination Hotels & Resorts. The property includes an 18-hole course that serves as the annual site of the Colorado Open.

CONTINENTAL MAKES MIDWEST PUSH

MINNEAPOLIS — Continental Golf Corp. has acquired The Edgewater Golf Club in Albert Lea, Minn. Continental will rename the course The Albert Lea Golf Club and begin renovations to the layout and clubhouse. This is Continental’s third acquisition since its founding in 1991. Plans are to focus future purchases and management contracts in the upper Midwest, according to company President David Mooty.

BRENT NAMED CORDILLERA EXEC

VAIL VALLEY, Colo. — Cordillera recently named William Carey Brent Jr., vice president of golf operations and club membership for the private, 3,100-acre mountain-top community overlooking the Vail Valley. His duties include managing the new country club and Hale Irwin-designed course. Brent previously worked at Pinehurst in North Carolina and Innisbrook Resort & Resort on behalf of a pension fund client. The property has been renamed the Inverness Hotel and Golf Club and will be managed by Lowe’s hospitality management subsidiary, Destination Hotels & Resorts. The property includes an 18-hole course that serves as the annual site of the Colorado Open.

CGG TO MANAGE OUTER BANKS LAYOUT

RALEIGH, N.C. — Carolinas Golf Group will oversee construction and future operations of a new course at The Currituck Club, a resort community being developed on the Outer Banks in Corolla, N.C. CGG will operate the Rees Jones-designed course under a long-term lease with developer Kitty Hawk Land Co. Construction has begun and the course will be ready for play by July 1996.

GOODRICH JOINS CASPER

VIENNA, Va. — Billy Casper Golf Management has named Joseph Goodrich vice president of golf operations. Goodrich most recently was director of golf at Casper-managed Goose Creek Golf Club in Leesburg, Va. He will oversee daily, on-site activities at all BCGM operations.

GOLF COURSE NEWS
Signature
Continued from page 53

that offer up-side potential," said company President and Chief Operating Officer Bob Holzman. "RTC and similar-type acquisitions are of greater interest than regular retail sales. The opportunity for preferential financing (available with such sales) is very attractive."

Owning these properties has made Signature sensitive to the hard operating decisions course owners must make, Holzman said. That knowledge has been transferred to the management-only part of the business, which Signature recently established with a management agreement signed in mid-February with Alaqua Country Club in Orlando.

Alaqua's members, which include Bo Jackson and former National Basketball Association player/coach/general manager Matt Goukas, exercised their right of first refusal and purchased the club from developer Westbury Properties in late January. The club features a Gary Player-designed golf course, tennis courts, pool and fitness center. Signature signed a management agreement with the club.

Sky Marshall
Continued from page 53

(GPS) — which sailors have used for many years to track their position at sea, plus CompuSpeak's tracking software and remote radio-frequency communication units installed on board course vehicles, Sky Marshall lets the course manager track every golf car, ranger, mower and maintenance vehicle on the course.

On the playing side, a two-way communication system linking the course manager and rangers allows the on-course patrol to address slow play or restricted-area violations "before they become major problems," Taranino said.

After each round, golfers can be issued a report card on how well they observed club rules. Golfers who avoid restricted areas and comply with the course's time limits can be rewarded, for instance, with a free bucket of range balls, 10-percent discount on their next round, a free drink in the lounge, or whatever.

Once installed, a companion system is also available for golfers. Sky Caddie, as it is called, electronically pinpoints the precise yardage from the car to the center of the green from anywhere on the course and instantaneously provides this information to the golfer. It offers not only another marketing tool for the course, but also a way to speed up play.

On the maintenance side, Sky Marshall can reduce operating costs by monitoring the activities of the grounds crew. How?
The New Lightweight Champion

Introducing the Ransomes® 250 Fairway Mower

No lightweight contender stands a chance against the 250's winning combination of features. All you have to do is demo the 250 to appreciate its drive to outperform, outpower, outproduce and outmaneuver any mower in its weight class.

Floating cutting heads closely hug the turf and rugged hydrostatic drive grips the terrain for an unsurpassed cut. Even weight distribution eliminates "bouncing" for a smooth, clean finish. The 23-, 28- or 33-horsepower engine muscles the 250 up inclines or around any obstacle, but not at the expense of agility. The 250 is extremely quick on its feet.

Before you put your money behind any other lightweight, give the Ransomes® 250 a workout. It's the only mower to have in your corner for a winning performance on the fairway. Ransomes... the real thing.

For a free demonstration or the name of the Ransomes dealer nearest you, call 1-800-228-4444.

© Ransomes America Corporation 1995. All rights reserved.

Smart Buy

Continued from page 1

The program covers most specialty insurance needs such as golf course property, golf course extension endorsement, liquor, pesticide/herbicide, and directors and officers liabilities. Pollution liability coverage is also available with the transportation of designated pollutants endorsement.

The CNA program recognizes that green fees vary from course to course, although rounds remain fairly consistent. To accommodate this difference, credits will be given to general liability rates as green fees increase per round. Referred to as an equitable rating adjustment, NGCOA identified it as one of the program's greatest benefits.

Golf Course Advantage Partnership was developed specifically for public and semiprivate golf course owners. The program covers most specialty course insurance needs such as golf course property, golf course extension endorsement, liquor, pesticide/herbicide, and directors and officers liabilities. Pollution liability coverage is also available with the transportation of designated pollutants endorsement.

Historically, CNA has been very aggressive with this sort of association program," said NGCOA Executive Director Mike Hughes. "Some consider its agent network to be the finest in the business. That and their experience in the golf course industry is why we selected them."

Smithco and Bel-Air were readying to come aboard the Smart Buy program as of mid-March.

Smithco was set to offer NGCOA members a significant discount on its electric bunker rake, one of the most-talked about items on display during the recent Golf Course Superintendents Association of America International Conference and Show, as well as its other turf management hardware (see page 61).

Bel-Air of Leeds, Ala., markets remanufactured turf equipment, reconditioned mowers and Cushman turf equipment primarily, according to NGCOA Director of Purchasing Mike Tinkey.

"We've tested their products and found them to be very reliable," Tinkey said. "And they offer an extended warranty." Other preferred suppliers in the Smart Buy program include:

- NaBanco — credit card processing services.
- Yamaha Manufacturing — golf cars.
- Ag Resources — grass seed.
- NGCOA Golf Course Superintendents Association Program — long-distance telephone service.
- Page & Addison P.C. — legal services.
- Athlete's Edge — private-label golf shirts.

- On In Two Publications — scorecards and yardage books.

"An 18-hole club can save the cost of its annual membership ($325) with a single purchase from just about any of the suppliers," Tinkey said. "Shirts, for instance, are discounted as much as 40 percent. With a minimum order of 150, that's a savings of $45 to $800."

"With Yamaha, you negotiate your best deal with the distributor for an Ultima, send the invoice to the NGCOA office and get a $50 rebate per car. That's $3,000 to $4,000 for a 60-80-car fleet. Even with just 10 cars that's $500."

The Smart Buy program is limited to NGCOA members. For more information, contact 803-881-7736.

Satellite tracking

Continued from page 57

"An 18-hole club can save the cost of its annual membership ($325) with a single purchase from just about any of the suppliers," Tinkey said. "Shirts, for instance, are discounted as much as 40 percent. With a minimum order of 150, that's a savings of $45 to $800."

"With Yamaha, you negotiate your best deal with the distributor for an Ultima, send the invoice to the NGCOA office and get a $50 rebate per car. That's $3,000 to $4,000 for a 60-80-car fleet. Even with just 10 cars that's $500."

The Smart Buy program is limited to NGCOA members. For more information, contact 803-881-7736.

Satellite tracking

Continued from page 57

Says an unexpected thunderstorm forced a sprayer to race towards cover halfway through a fairway application. Once the storm passed, a check of the Sky Marshall screen would allow the operator to return to the exact spot where it had left off, rather than relying on the applicator's memory. This would save time and unnecessary re-applications.

"Sky Marshall can also generate management reports showing everything from which holes have the slowest play to documentation of which Environmental Protection Agency requirements.

Sky Marshall requires little hardware, specialized computer knowledge or maintenance, Tarantino said. CompuSpeak installs the system, provides training and follow-up support.

The system costs approximately $15,000 for an 80-car fleet, Tarantino said. Leasing programs are available for $2 to $3 per round. Maintenance service is free the first year and approximately $15,000 annually thereafter.

The cost makes resort and upscale daily-fee courses the most likely customers, Tarantino said. If a year-round course charging $100 per round adds an average of four rounds daily, that's $146,000 ($65 x $400), meaning the system basically pays for itself in a single year.