Image enhanced but golfers insist on ‘green’ look

By PETER BLAIS

ORLANDO, Fla. — Most golfers view superintendents as trained professionals and the person most responsible for course conditions — news course managers should find encouraging considering national efforts to elevate their image.

Disturbingly, however, few golfers recognized the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA) as the superintendents’ national organization.

Also troubling was the unwillingness of most golfers to accept poorer playing conditions in exchange for reduced chemical and water use on their courses.

According to a recent survey of golfers conducted by the National Golf Founda-

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Griffiths, Brauer face off on course costs

By MARK LESLIE

Worried the cost of golf is starting to drive people from the game, the incoming and outgoing presidents of the American Society of Golf Course Architects have presented arguments that would lead developers to make harsh choices about their projects.

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Ciba-Sandoz deal creates new firm: Novartis

By HAL PHILLIPS

Consolidation in the chemical trade continues apace, as Des Plaines, Ill-based Sandoz Agro and Greensboro, N.C.-based Ciba — both divisions of enormous Swiss-owned pharmaceutical and life sciences conglomerates — have agreed to join forces, creating a $6 billion agrichemical giant.

The new entity will be known as Novartis, providing Bill Liles, head of Turf & Ornamental for Ciba, his fourth corporate identity in a decade. First it was Geigy. Then came Ciba-Geigy, fol-

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Point-counterpoint: Brauer & Griffiths

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upscale daily-fee. I think we’ll hit a wall [of those courses] before long. Most of the older golf courses are saturated, and I think we’re starting to price people out of golf.

“The upscale golf course phenomenon has been great for the industry. But that translates to $35 to $50 green fees, and that is out of reach for a lot of people.”

“My high-end budgets [of the past] have become my low-end [budgets],” said Brauer. “Clients’ like-to-have’s have been transformed into gotta-haves. Irrigation costs have doubled and we’ve added more curbing, more cart paths, sod, wider clearings and the grassing that goes with it... And drainage costs have gone from $50,000 to $250,000.”

“Greens construction and irrigation system prices have skyrocketed,” Griffiths added.

But where can costs be cut, and if, so will that harm the developer in the end? Brauer and Griffiths disagree about the difference between the reality the $1.7 million and a $3.2 million golf course and what economic impact it has on those two imaginary courses.

Saying that in the last five or six years his firm has designed only one golf course that cost under $3 million, Griffiths added: “I don’t think the sacrifice in quality of golf is as significant as we make it out to be between a $1.7 million and a $3 million course.”

CARS AND CART PATHS

But Griffiths’ prototype $1.7 million course is built without cart paths, and Brauer countered. “Whenever I’ve built a course without full paths, they’ve been added later. If I hear anything from past clients, two years later they say they should have put in full paths. The market demands cart paths. And those paths pay for themselves in a couple of years.”

“Not since the 1990s arrived have we not recommended cart paths,” Griffiths said. “It’s a dollar-driven issue. But, again, it adds to the green fee.

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Griffiths’ $1.7M Method unveiled

Denis Griffiths spelled out his method for building a $1.7 million course. These guidelines, he said, will not suit all situations and most often will be in less densely populated areas where it is economically more viable. Griffiths’ prototype $1.7 million course was designed for golf courses in the country that have USGA greens.

“One thing both men agree on: The best time to build a golf course is today. Tomorrow it’s going to be more expensive.

Dye Int'l designs Desert Pines GC

LAS VEGAS, Nev. — Ground has been broken on the new $12 million Perry Dye-designed Desert Pines Golf Course on land formerly known as Nature Park.

Cynthia Dye McGarey of Dye Designs International will landscape the golf course. McGarey will help create a pine forest on the course featuring thousands of specimen pine trees ranging from 10 to 35 feet in height.

The 100-acre course is scheduled to be completed by December. It will be 6,800 yards long and feature nine holes on water. There will also be a lighted driving range, a state-of-the-art golf academy and restaurant/banquet facilities. The course will have large greens, short green-to-tee walks, and special forward tees for juniors, ladies and seniors.