

BRIEFS



CASPER TO MANAGE PRICE LAYOUT

BEALSVILLE, Md. — Developer Joseph Meyerhoff and the design team of golfer Nick Price and architect Steve Smyers are teaming up to build Four Streams National Golf Club, 20 minutes northeast of Washington. Billy Casper Golf Management will manage the facility once it opens. Meyerhoff's company, Magna Holdings, also developed The Links at Challedon in nearby Mount Airy, Md. Four Streams National is scheduled to open in spring 1998.

TRAFTON JOINS VGM

WATERLOO, Iowa — Mark Trafton has been named director of membership/sponsorship for VGM Golf Inc., a national buying alliance for golf establishments.



Mark Trafton

Trafton comes to VGM from the National Golf Course Owners Association, where he held the same position for two years. Trafton, 46, will continue to be

based in Pine Bluff, N.C. Prior to NGCOA, he was employed at The Landings in Skidaway Island, Ga.

ARYA BUYS NJ COURSE

FREEHOLD, N.J. — Arya Golf Properties has purchased Holly Hills Golf Club, an 18-hole layout in Alloway Township. AZ Golf Management Corp. will manage the facility. AZ Golf and Arya Golf Properties are partnerships between Ram Arya and former PGA Tour professional Mike Zack. Arya is president of a home-building and land-development company in Freehold. Zack played the PGA Tour from 1977-82 and has 20 years experience in course design, construction and management. Arya Golf Properties is seeking to buy additional courses.

MARRIOTT SIGNS COUPLES/BATES

CHANTILLY, Va. — Westfields International Conference Center, a Marriott-managed facility, has signed Fred Couples and Gene Bates to design an 18-hole daily-fee course. Nine holes have been cleared and the new facility is scheduled to open in early summer 1998. Niebur Golf of Colorado Springs is the builder. The 233-acre site is located six miles from Westfields, one of the country's leading meeting facilities.

Buena Vista focusing on total hospitality industry

Florida firm acquires Sun Valley golf resort

By PETER BLAIS

TAMPA, Fla. — "We're not just a golf company" might be the slogan for Buena Vista Golf Holdings (BVGH). The founders of the Tampa-based firm, which recently acquired Elkhorn Golf Club in Sun Valley, Idaho, made their reputation in the resort industry before expanding into the golf market. BVGH's principals have developed and managed such widely known facilities as the 1,028-room Buena Vista Palace Resort & Spa near Walt Disney World in Florida and Seabrook Island Resort in South Carolina.

"We have no qualms about getting involved in a residential/resort golf community, whereas the firms we compete with for golf projects generally want to concentrate on just golf," said Chief Executive Officer Michael Frost. "We are as comfortable with the food and beverage aspects of the business as we are with operating the golf course."

That isn't to say Buena Vista doesn't know beans about golf. University of Florida graduate Larry Webber, a superintendent for 14 years and independent agronomist

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The 18th hole at Elkhorn Resort, a recent Buena Vista acquisition.

Former Marriott exec Maxwell starts own management firm

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — Scottsdale golf executives Richard West, Roger Maxwell and Bill Corn have created In Celebration of Golf Management (ICGM), a new golf course management company.

"The golf industry today is extremely fragmented," said West, ICGM's Chairman and president of Carefree Partners, a Phoenix-based master-planned community developer. "Very few management companies hold more than one golf course in their portfolios and they operate with large staffs and on-site management at each course. This is very inefficient. Our goal is to re-engineer this process to cre-

ate significant competitive advantages for the golf courses and better quality at a more affordable price for our guests."

Coyote Lakes Golf Club and Arizona Traditions, both located in northwest Phoenix, have signed management contracts with ICGM.

The close proximity fits perfectly with ICGM's plans to "cluster" its courses within specific geographic districts, according to Maxwell, ICGM's president and owner of the In Celebration of Golf retail operation in Scottsdale.

Maxwell said clustering will enable

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Richard West (left) and Roger Maxwell



FREE LIGHTNING EXPOSURE ANALYSIS FOR GOLF COURSE FACILITIES

Golf courses can contact Global Atmospheric Inc., owner and operator of the National Lightning Detection Network, for a free lightning exposure analysis which pinpoints and maps all cloud-to-ground lightning strikes detected within a 10-mile radius of their facility for a given time period. Global markets the Electrical Storm Identification Device (ESID), which is an integral part to a formalized lightning policy at over 240 golf courses internationally. Most recently, Bob O'Link Golf Club (Highland Park, Ill.), Castle Pines Golf Club (Castle Rock, Colo.), The Country Club (Cleveland), and Saint Charles (Ill.) Golf Club have purchased an ESID to protect staff, patrons, and electrical equipment from the damaging effects of lightning.

MAN(AGER) ON THE STREET

Management firms mixed bag for superintendents

Should superintendents see the growing influence of management companies as a good or bad thing in terms of career development, professional responsibility, salaries, benefits, etc?

• **Josh Lesnik, Marketing Manager, Kemper Sports** — In our case it's a good thing. We stress the importance of maintenance, which means a talented superintendent would mean as much or more to us than at a single-course operation. Superintendents are very appreciated [well paid].



Josh Lesnik

Our superintendents are in charge of their individual courses. They may answer to someone in the home office. But they make up their own budgets and submit them to people here [corporate office] who understand what they are talking about. You could compare it to the relationship to a managed health care setting.

• **Marc Bergschneider, Chairman, National Fairways Inc.** — It's definitely a plus. There are more opportunities for career development by enhancing the services provided at a single course, grow a particular operation, manage multiple courses or go back to school.

Entry-level positions may not be as lucrative [as salaries at non-management company courses]. But that's

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Kemper Sports makes first foray into California market

NORTHBROOK, Ill. — Kemper Sports Management is set to make its mark in the West with a pair of golf properties in the California market. Kemper is part owner and will manage Hidden Valley Golf Club in Riverside when the 18-hole, daily-fee course opens in early 1997. Casey O'Callahan designed and Kajima Construction built the high-desert layout.

Kemper has also been selected to manage a

pair of Palm Desert municipal courses. Mike Hurdzan designed both layouts, the North Course scheduled to open Feb. 1 and the South Course due to come on line a year later. Golf Dimensions is developing the 36-hole project for the city. Prior to these California projects, Kemper's farthest westward penetration was Falcon Ridge in Kansas City, a Craig Schreiner design that will open sometime in 1997.

Man(ager) on street

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offset by salaries paid head superintendents and those overseeing multiple courses.

• **Tommy Witt, GCSAA board member, chairman of GCSAA Career Development Committee and head superintendent at Wynstone Golf Club in Chicago** — Manage-

ment companies may represent a threat to one superintendent and an opportunity to another.

They generally provide more job security, the opportunity to move to another job without leaving the company and benefits that often surpass those at individually-owned golf courses.

But salaries tend to be lower. When a management company enters an area, they tend to pull down or slow salary increases at surrounding courses. And when a management company superintendent is put in charge of several courses, the increased salary often doesn't match the increased responsibility.

Management companies are here to stay, but they still control a small part of the marketplace [an estimated 5 percent of U.S. courses]. Superintendents should view them as another option. The key is to figure out what the upside potential is and then make an intelligent decision.

• **Tim Hiers, head superintendent, Colliers Reserve in Naples, Fla.** — There are places where management companies can be successful, especially in large, multi-hole facilities. However, I believe it could be extremely difficult for a management company to equal the quality output, level of care, constant attention to detail and the overall efficiency of an experienced, qualified and skillful golf course superintendent on his/her home turf.

If management companies continue to emerge, there could be fewer traditional superintendent jobs. However, other opportunities within a management company, such as a consultant, could present themselves.

Depending on the variety of situations and circumstances, a superintendent who continues to demonstrate value to his/her organization through ongoing education, top-quality management, desire to excel, and a balanced personal life, shouldn't be overly concerned.

There will be exceptions to this. But if the superintendent produces a quality product for a competitive amount and communicates it to the necessary powers, that person will probably continue to be a successful individual in this profession.



Tommy Witt



Tim Hiers

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