Hurdzan to receive GCSAA President’s Award

LAS VEGAS — Golf course architect Michael Hurdzan has been selected to receive the 1997 Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA) most prestigious environmental honor, the President’s Award for Environmental Leadership.

The award was established in 1991 to recognize “an exceptional environmental contribution to the game of golf: a contribution that further exemplifies the golf course superintendent’s image as a steward of the land.”

GCSAA President Bruce R. Williams will present the award to Hurdzan during the Government and Environmental General Session, Feb. 9, during the 68th International Golf Course Conference and Show in Las Vegas. Hurdzan is only the second individual to receive the award.

Study indicates growth, predicts more

By PETER BLAIS

JUPITER, Fla. — A recently released National Golf Foundation study details a generally healthy golf business over the past 10 years, especially for the public golf market, and predicts continued good health well into the next century.

Three major national trends emerged over the past decade, thanks in large part to the effect of aging Baby Boomers on the golf market, according to “Golf Industry: 1986-1995.”

- Growth in golfers and rounds played. Rounds played have been stable for the past 10 years, especially for the public golf market, according to NGF. From 1991 to 1995, the rate of inflation over the period. However, from 1991 to 1995, the rate of rounds played has slowed considerably, from 6 percent annually to 4 percent.

- Growth in golf course development activity. Participation in golf has increased more slowly than the number of golfers, with new course openings accelerating through the 1990s, hitting a record high in 1995. Public golf (especially daily-fee) led the upsurge, according to NGF. From 1986 on, 80 percent of new course openings were either daily-fee or municipal, reaching 86 percent in 1995. Four out of five of those new public layouts were privately-owned, daily-fee operations with just one in five of the municipal variety. Since 1986, the proportion of public courses nationwide has grown from 61 percent to 69 percent of the total U.S. course supply.

- Growth in golfers. Golfers grew 2.6 percent during the same period. The growth has been particularly strong in the 18-34 age group, with the number of new golfers in that category growing 10 percent per year from 1991 to 1995.

The last is particularly interesting. While golf participation increased significantly between 1986 and 1991, golf course development expanded relatively slowly. Tough lending practices, brought on by the failure of many residential communities in the 1980s, made it difficult for golf developers to obtain financing. Consequently, courses were delayed and projects stuck in planning reached an all-time high in 1990.

After 1990, lending practices loosened somewhat and more specialized golf lenders entered the business. Spurred on by the participation increases of the late 1980s, the number of new course openings accelerated through the 1990s, hitting a record 486 in 1995.

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