Fore Star's style works well in U.S. Southwest

By PETER BLAIS

LUBBOCK, Texas — Visit 36-hole Meadowbrook Golf Course here and you're likely to see Fore Star Golf President Steve Yonke parking golf cars, bus ing tables, serving drinks or working behind the pro shop cash register. "This is a people business," said Yonke, who doubles as Meadowbrook's general manager and head of the six-course management firm that stresses a hands-on management style. "I'm always talking to our customers. Some of their suggestions may be off the wall, but people generally give you good ideas about your operation.

"When we first took over here, we asked the customers what we could do to improve. They wanted us to do a better job handling the golf carts, put starters at both courses, and start a marshaling program. We did those things and the course runs much more smoothly than it did."

Yonke gained this insight into the need to quiz customers while working at the course level. He joined Jim Colbert Golf in 1984 and managed several different operations before becoming Colbert's quality manager. Prior to founding Fore Star in 1992, Yonke received the National Golf Foundation Public Golf Award for his efforts to promote and enhance the game. Brothers Jeff and Gary Miller soon joined...

Minimum wage hike to have little impact

By PETER BLAIS

The 90-cent increase in the minimum wage to $4.75 per hour scheduled to take effect this month will have little impact on course maintenance operations, according to superintendents.

While some courses likely pay close to the minimum wage, those contacted by Golf Course News said they already pay laborers more than the new lower limit.

"Most courses in our area are well above the minimum," said Lee McLemore, head superintendent at Birmingham (Ala.) Country Club. "Our wages have gone up significantly the past few years to compete in a small labor pool where unemployment is running around 3.5 percent.

We're competing with other businesses, like McDonald's, for workers and they're already above $5 per hour."

McLemore said he starts laborers at $5 to $6.50 per hour. That's 25 percent more than the $4.75 limit scheduled to take effect in October and the $5.15 that becomes law Sept. 1, 1997.

The best part of the [minimum wage] bill from our perspective was the change that now allows private clubs to start 401k retirement plans for employees," McLemore said. "I called our senators to encourage them to support the bill because of that. A 401k plan allows us to...

PLAYER REMODELS KIAWAH COURSE

The second hole at Cougar Point Golf Course is part of a $4 million renovation recently completed by Gary Player for Kiawah Island Resort owner Virginia Investment Trust (VIT). Cougar Point opened Sept. 8 on the site of the former Marsh Point course, also a Player design. VIT acquired Kiawah in a Resolution Trust Corp. auction of Landmark Land Co. properties in October, 1993. Since then, VIT has also purchased the Pete Dye-designed Ocean Course for $27 million, started construction of a $5 million clubhouse at Tom Fazio-designed Osprey Point, made improvements to the golf facilities and opened the new Business Center and Food Court. VIT has so far invested a total of nearly $50 million in the resort.

Trash talking your way to a cleaner course

By VINCE ALFONSO

Bob had worked for me since he was a sophomore in high school. The soon-to-be graduated college senior was in his last season at our golf course. He was doing his usual good job.

I walked out the south door of our clubhouse and looked toward the range to see if I could spot a customer who had a phone call. As my eyes panned the range tee, I noticed the range garbage container was overflowing. I immediately called out to Bobby, who was moving some golf cars nearby.

I said "Bobby, would you please go out to the range and empty the trash container, and while you are there, would you run over to the outing tent and pick up the debris overlooked by last night's closing crew?" I explained in more detail about the debris and sent him on his way.

I watched Bobby drive his Yamahauler past the range trash...
Red Hawk web page
Continued from page 1
company President and major shareholder George Badger said in late August. "We'll use photos of the groundbreaking this Friday [Aug. 23]. We can display the golf architect's drawings or sketched designs of some of the amenities. "The information is accessible to brokerages and investment firms who deal with potential investors. We can put SEC [Securities and Exchange Commission] filings, stock values and real-estate values, as well as photos of what is actually happening on the course or house lots right on the web page. It's a great marketing tool." Red Hawk is GVI's flagship project. The St. George area is being marketed as a second Palm Springs, cooler in summer and hotter in winter than nearby Las Vegas, Badger said. The company president expects Red Hawk to draw most of its members and homeowners from the Utah Front Range communities of Salt Lake City, Ogden, Provo and Logan as well as from the surrounding states of Montana, Idaho, Colorado and Wyoming. Public play will be allowed until the course reaches 300 members, according to the company. "We're looking at four other projects that are within a couple of hours of St. George by air," Badger said.

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