**Legacy seeks to keep owner involved in management**

*By J. Barry Mothes*

WELLINGTON, Fla. — Originally, Steven Braley thought he wanted to start a golf management company for the newest phase of a successful golf industry career that has spanned more than 20 years.

He quickly decided, however, that that idea was too simplistic and restricting. Braley — who worked for Landmark Land Co. for nearly 20 years alongside some of the most active, visionary and successful golf management executives and became vice president himself — did want to manage golf courses. But he wanted to do it in a way that directly involved owners and operators in a hands-on, give-and-take, learning relationship.

And so, the Legacy Golf Group, a golf management consulting firm offering everything from nuts-and-bolts, day-to-day management plans and construction supervision to clubhouse and golf course business plans and financial evaluations, was born.

“We’re not a typical management company,” Braley said. “We’re an alternative to the stereotypical management-type company. I’m not really pursuing long-term management contracts, that’s not what I set out to do. My services diminish the longer I’m involved with a project and the more the owner becomes comfortable and understands the business.”

Braley, who is also a former professional golfer, launched the Legacy Golf Group in 1994. His first project was the Virginia Oaks golf course outside Manassas, Va., which opened in the spring of 1995.

“I got a call one day from P.B. Dye and Brian Bowles and they were looking for professional management.

**OB Sports strengthens itself in Vegas**

MESQUITE, Nevada — OB Sports’ recent agreement to manage the 45-hole Oasis Golf Club has solidified the Portland, Ore.-based firm’s position as one of the leading, if not the leading management company in the Las Vegas market.

WSR Inc., the parent company for Si Redd’s Oasis Resort Hotel and Casino and the Mesquite Vistas planned residential community, selected OB to manage the project’s golf operations. OB Sports already owns and manages two upscale public golf properties, The Legacy and Angel Park in Las Vegas with several similar properties on the West Coast.

The Oasis Golf Club has received national attention for its Arnold Palmer-designed course, which was named in the top five new resort courses in 1995 by Golf Digest magazine. The Oasis Resort has 1,000 hotel rooms and a 300-room golf village, which OB plans to use to help promote stay-and-play golf programs.

“We felt their [OB Sports’] expertise in high-end, resort-style operations and their extensive network in Las Vegas made them a perfect fit for our management needs,” said WSR Inc. President Alan Green.

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**Intrawest Co. takes golf to new heights**

*By Peter Blais*

COPPER MOUNTAIN, Colo. — The folks at Intrawest have reached the literal pinnacle of North American golf with the recent purchase of Copper Creek Golf Club, reputed to be the highest golf course on the continent.

The Pete Dye-designed layout at the Copper Mountain ski resort plus January’s acquisition of the Tom McInroe-crafted Mont Ste. Marie ski resort and golf course near Ottawa, Canada, brings the number of Intrawest golf properties to five.

The British Columbia-based “mountain resort company” as it likes to be called, plans to open a Doug Carrick-designed 18 at Panorama ski resort in
Legacy
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help on a course in northern Virginia near Washington, D.C.,” Braley said. “I came on as Virginia Oaks was 75 percent finished and helped them complete the course. I basically opened the golf course for them and ran it for two years.”

Virginia Oaks has become a successful, semiprivate facility on Lake Manassas overlooking the Robert Trent Jones National, where the first two Presidents Cup competitions have been staged. Today, as he envisioned, Braley is involved “only on a consulting basis,” checking in by telephone and visiting the course a few times a year when and if needed.

Since then, the Legacy portfolio has expanded around the south, up the Atlantic coast, into the Midwest, and into south Texas. Legacy was recently selected to manage two, 18-hole courses in Maryland’s Eastern Shore market for the Ruark Family Trust. Rum Pointe Seaside Golf Links, near Ocean City, Md., is a new P.B. Dye and Pete Dye daily-fee design overlooking Assateague National Seashore Park with dramatic bay views. Rum Pointe will open to the public this month. Braley, who got involved about halfway through construction of the course, is now consulting on setting up the clubhouse and developing an overall business plan for Rum Pointe.

The other Ruark Family Trust-owned course that Legacy will serve as management consultant for is Nutter’s Crossing, a semiprivate course designed by Ault, Clark & Associates that opened in 1990. “I find there’s much less conflict between my organization and the owner than you often get with a typical management arrangement,” Braley said. “In my scenario, we’re both on the same page.”

Moving into the Midwest, Legacy is managing the construction of a new 18-hole public course for the city of El Reno, Okla., a western suburb of Oklahoma City. P.B. Dye and Bowles will design the $4 million project. There are also hopes for a new project in south Texas.

Not all of Legacy’s projects are from the ground up. Braley and Legacy were involved in the purchase and $2 million renovation of the former Calusa Country Club in Miami into what is now known as the University Country Club, a semi-private layout that has become the official club for the University of Miami for social and alumni functions. The University Country Club, which reopened last September, is also the home course for the University of Miami’s golf team. “I find most people are looking for long-term management situations that exclude input from the owner,” Braley said. “I think there’s an untapped market of people that want to be involved and are smart enough to know that they need some guidance to learn the business, but they enjoy golf and the golf business and they want to be involved.”

Beyond day-to-day, week-to-week, or month-to-month management consulting, the Legacy Golf Group also offers what Braley calls “asset management” services for absentee course owners, like banks and investment houses, who find themselves owning a golf course, but may not necessarily know much about the golf business. Legacy recently handled an evaluation and study of a semiprivate, 18-hole course in Princeton, N.J.

“I get the greatest pleasure helping people avoid the common mistakes in the business,” said Braley. He mentioned quality hiring procedures as an example of the kind of important, but often neglected, detail that can make a business successful. “You want to make sure your project employees are the right employees rather than maybe relying on an acquaintance. You should interview multiple people, ask the right questions. You want to get it done the correct way the first time.”

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