

King names new national sales manager, sales associate

ST. CHARLES, Mo. — In a move aimed at doubling employment during 1997, King Safety Products has announced the appointments of Henry Witz as national sales manager of its retail division, and Katy King as sales associate.

Witz will lead King's expansion in the DIY market with safety sealed wire connectors, ergonomic tools, cable ties and wire lubricants. Witz was sales manager at Feit Electric

Company, national sales manager at Caltherm, Inc., and field sales manager at Klein Tools.

With the introduction of two new lines of twist-on wire connectors in 1996, King began to broaden its line to move closer to its goal of a "one-stop shopping" source of electrical items and related tools and supplies.

In other King news, King named Douglas D. Hemphill general manager.

Alternative spikes

Continued from page 53

the alternative-spike market was dominated by Bethesda, Md.-based Softspikes, Inc. Yet, competitors have materialized en masse. Indeed, EPP isn't the only manufacturer to enter the market this year.

Marlboro, Mass.-based MacNeill Engineering World-

wide — a veteran of the golf-spike business — also rolled out its alternative-spike models at the winter trade shows. Hoping to capitalize on the long-standing popularity of its Champ metal spike, MacNeill has unveiled the Champ Tred-Lite, complete with metal screw component. The Tred-Lite also features a metal flange, allowing replacement tools to grip metal instead of rubber or plastic.

With 65 years in the spike business, MacNeill enjoys long-standing relationships with many golf shoe manufacturers. The firm added another this winter: MacNeill will supply cleats to the new spikeless golf shoe from Etonic, which has recently embarked on an advertising campaign extolling the virtues of spikeless golf shoes.

Shoe manufacturers will soon play a pivotal role in the meting out of alternative-spike products. As spikeless shoes proliferate, players who have established footwear preferences will invariably be exposed to the spikes favored by various shoe companies.

Trisport, for example, a trading division of the British BI Group Ltd., supplies its Turf Mate plastic golf cleats to Foot-Joy.

The competition among shoe companies has always been fierce. And it appears the tensions have spilled over into the world of plastic cleats.

In late February, Softspikes filed a patent infringement lawsuit against Trisport. The Maryland firm is seeking an injunction against further infringement of its British patent (No. 2,266,223) and damages.

"It is critical to Softspikes, Inc. that we aggressively protect our intellectual property, as it is the lifeblood of our company," said Jon Hyman, chief executive officer of Softspikes, in a prepared statement. "We have made a significant investment in research and development to bring our cleats to the market. We also have made a considerable investment in obtaining patent protection covering our products. Therefore, we will aggressively protect our technology and our competitive position."

According to David Collins, chairman of Trisport, his firm has not yet been served with any proceedings. In a statement, Collins said Trisport is aware of the Softspikes patent and will "vigorously" pursue its revocation.

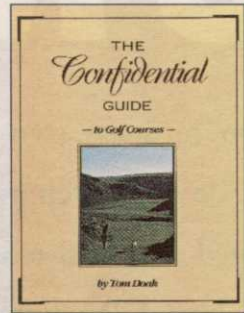
"Trisport will not allow a competitor to restrict Trisport's legitimate use of its own products and will take all action necessary to protect its advantage in the market," said Collins. "And in any case, the British patent obviously does not cover our activities in the U.S.A."

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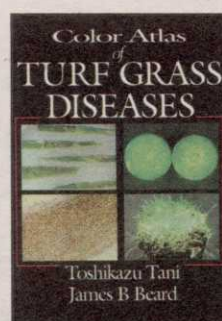
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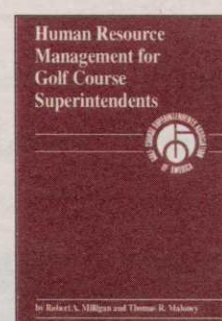
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