

BRIEFS



NICKLAUS, DME TEAM UP

ORLANDO, Fla. — An agreement has been reached whereby the DME Rangefinder is now the official electronic distance-measuring device of Golden Bear Golf, Inc., which includes Nicklaus Design, Paragon Construction, Golden Bear Golf Centers, Nicklaus-Flick Golf Schools and the Golden Bear Tour. As part of the relationship, Golden Bear and its affiliates intend to utilize DME products at Golden Bear Golf Clubs, Nicklaus Design and Paragon Construction golf course sites under development.

CUTLER NAMED OAK RIDGE DIRECTOR

OAK RIDGE, Tenn. — Billy Casper Golf Management, Inc. (BCGM) named PGA Professional Michael K. Cutler to the position of director of



Michael Cutler

golf here at the Centennial Golf Course of Tennessee, scheduled to open in early spring. Cutler will direct all on-site activities to comprehensive marketing and daily operations programs for the upscale, daily-fee facility. He joins the Centennial from Caves Valley Golf Club in Owings Mills, Md.

RDC ACQUIRES N.J. CLUB

LAKEWOOD, N.J. — RDC Golf Management has acquired Woodlake Country Club here. Woodlake is a semiprivate club founded by John D. Rockefeller and designed by Larry Packard. RDC plans improvements to the course and clubhouse, and will include Woodlake in a centralized reservation system and dual-membership program with Jumping Brook Country Club, another RDC course located nearby.

TAFT TO HEAD WESTERN GOLF LINKS

TUCSON, Ariz. — Lindsey Taft has been named director of golf for Heritage Highlands Golf and Country Club, which is part of the active adult community Heritage Highlands here. Prior to joining Heritage Highlands, Taft was head golf professional at The Golf Club at Eagle Mountain in Fountain Hills, Ariz.



Lindsey Taft

Mixing public, private players a profitable cocktail

By J. BARRY MOTHES

CHELTENHAM, Pa. — Can longtime members of a private club suddenly mix happily on the course and in the clubhouse grill with the public? Will it create a profitable, thriving club?

Absolutely, according to Matrix Hospitality Vice President Martin Dickey.

In fact, the reworking of formerly exclusive, private golf clubs to allow daily-fee golf and public dining, social events and entertainment is exactly what Matrix is doing at Ashbourne Country Club, a 1920s-era private club in the Philadelphia suburbs that faced mounting debt and declining membership.

Under an innovative leasing arrangement, Matrix will maintain certain rights and privileges for existing members while improving the club's financial picture by opening it to the public.

Dickey said clubs like revamped Ashbourne, where existing private members and the public are integrated in a blended golf and social expe-



Commonwealth National Golf Club in Horsham, Pa., a Matrix facility.

rience, could be one of the more successful new niches in golf.

"We think there's lots of potential for growth there," said Dickey, who joined Matrix in 1993 as general manager at Forsgate Country Club in Jamesburg, N.J., a private 36-hole country club with 800 members that was Matrix's first golf property.

Dickey currently has direct reporting responsibilities on operations at Matrix's three golf properties.

Matrix is undertaking substantial capital improvements at Ashbourne, including a completely renovated clubhouse and ballroom and renovated locker rooms and card rooms.

Members at the new Ashbourne will still have private locker rooms, dining areas and other social components that will be off limits to the public-access customer.

But there will also be renovated areas open to members and the public, including plans for nightly entertainment four times a week.

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Brassie, Divot Golf join forces to build World Golf Village

TAMPA, Fla. — Brassie Golf Corp. has entered a definitive agreement with Tampa, Fla.-based Divot Golf Corp. whereby the two companies will join either through merger or asset acquisition.

The nature of the transaction will depend upon the treatment of certain accounting policies under each option, which both companies are analyzing.

Divot Golf is a private company, with exclusive development rights to and license agreements for the World Golf Village project in Florida. Under the agreement, the companies will be renamed Divot Golf Corp. and continue to principally design, develop, own and manage golf course and resort properties.

Through Divot, Brassie gains major interests in the World Golf Village resort, a 6,300-acre, multi-billion-dollar resort being developed at St. Augustine. In addition, Divot will expand operations to include joint venture developments with established developers and operators in select properties within World Golf Village.

Upon completion, World Golf Village will be home to the World Golf Hall of Fame Museum & IMAX Theater, World Golf Hotel, Convention Center & World Golf Village Spa, PGA Tour Productions, PGA Tour Golf Academy, three 18-hole TPC courses and many other amenities.

"This agreement with Divot marks the beginning of the true turnaround for our company," said Bill Horne, president and CEO of Brassie.



Kimberling (Mo.) Golf Course is a nine-hole course recently purchased by Vince Alfonso.

PERSONNEL CORNER

Operators need to learn to have fun

By VINCE ALFONSO

Some of us owners and managers are a bunch of stuffed shirts. Too often, we just sit on our logs like Winnie the Pooh and bounce the pointer finger of our writing hand off our temple, while we say out loud, "Think, think, think."

Well! We are the owners and managers, aren't we? Therefore, we must keep up the appropriate image, shouldn't we? No funny stuff for us. We must remain contemplative and exude self-control at all times in order to gain and maintain the respect of our staff.

Forgive me for being so short here, but that's a bunch of baloney! Even Jesus, who was on the most serious mission of all time, played with the kids whenever they wanted to play. It was the apostles who said, "Not now, kids, Jesus is busy," not Jesus.

As important as our businesses are, they should not be so important that we never take time to have fun at our workplace. It has been said that laughter is internal jogging, and that jogging is good for us. There are even books on how to get well and stay well by laughing. So

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Matrix

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Matrix Hospitality, with offices in Cranbury, N.J., and Williamsburg, Va., is an active player in the New Jersey/Philadelphia/Washington, D.C. market with a portfolio that includes private country clubs and daily-fee facilities. Matrix officials said they would like to expand their market north to

southern New England and south to the Carolinas. The company offers services to owners, developers and operators of public and private golf courses, resorts, hotels and conference centers.

Matrix Hospitality is an affiliate of Matrix Development Group, one of the East Coast's largest and most successful real-estate developers.

Golf is becoming an increasingly strong focus for Matrix Hospitality. The company offers concept development, market analysis, business planning, and the development and supervision of management and operations programs for marketing, agronomy, financial controls, human resources, the golf shop and food and beverage. Bob

Ribbons is director of golf course operations for Matrix and has been with the company for 10 years. Billy Ziobro is the company's director of golf.

Matrix entered the golf business in 1984 with the purchase of 36-hole Forsgate, which opened in 1931 but had sadly slid into disrepair. Within 10 years, Forsgate was

flourishing, hosting the Forsgate Pro-Am in 1993-95 and increasing revenues by 500 percent.

The third Matrix golf property is Commonwealth National Golf Club in Horsham, Pa., which it took over in 1992. Opened as a 36-hole facility in 1990, redesigned by Arnold Palmer, Commonwealth National is thriving as an 18-hole private course. Commonwealth National has shot up in Pennsylvania course rankings and received an Outstanding Land Development Award for environmentally-sensitive design.

Robert Twomey is the senior vice president in marketing and hospitality and is responsible for overseeing operations at Commonwealth National, Forsgate and Ashbourne. Twomey, Dickey and other leading Matrix executives bring strong credentials in food and beverage management.

"What helps differentiate us from so many of the other golf management companies is a more non-traditional approach with food and beverage," Dickey said. "We like to focus on creating food and beverage environments that provide what we call 'moments of truth,' where a member and a guest or a member and client can experience that level of service and experience that create lasting impressions, not only with a unique golf course but with the uniqueness of the food and beverage program."

Dickey, who helped create Matrix's own employee service-training program which they call "Memorable Service," cited personal touches like recognizing members or guests birthdays, remembering their favorite drinks, and knowing and using guests names as the kinds of things that can energize a clubhouse grill room or a pro shop, increase comfort, and increase profits.

"I believe for too long clubs have had wine lists, menus and entertainment that lull the membership to sleep, to the point where they say, 'that's about the best we can have at this club.' You should be able to have the same quality experience at a club that you do at a free-standing restaurant," Dickey said.

Contracts with two more golf properties were pending and should be official by April.

"By the end of 1997 we should have six (golf) clubs and from there we should add two or three clubs a year over the next three to four years," Dickey said.



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Golf Course Photo by John R. Johnson

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