

BRIEFS

Mixing public, private players a profitable cocktail



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

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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don't tell me we're not supposed to have fun at work. Why even King David, of Old Testament fame, danced in his night shirt as the Ark of the Covenant was returned to its rightful place after he recaptured it from the Philistines. Sure, some thought he wasn't acting very kingly, but for me that Old Testament story represents a good example for us all. It shows us that even kings can let their hair down. And hey folks, we're not exactly kings.

Let me share with you some ways we have fun at work. First of all, we give everyone a ball mark repair tool and ball spot at the time of their greens fee purchase. But not just any old repair tool and ball spot, no siree! We tell our customers the ball mark repair tools are hand carved Brazilian Ebony and the ball spots are hand-hewn Ethiopian ivory (you carve ebony, you hew ivory, of course).

Lest our customers fear we endanger the rain forests or add to the endangered species list, we are quick to point out that Juan Valdez' cousins (who don't get to pick much coffee due to the extraordinary efficiency of Juan) stake out ebony trees and claim them for us — only if they fall of natural causes. We never chop down ebony trees. And as for ivory, well, we have people who track the elephants for years until they die of natural causes. Then, and only then, do we claim the ivory. If our customers buy in on all of this, we then try to sell them little velvet-lined, mirrored and lighted, hand-hewn Ethiopian Ivory Ball Display Boxes, suitable for office or home.

We give every customer one piece of the world's greatest hard candy. We explain that research has proven that if you suck on the candy while swinging, your slice will be minimized. If you eat the candy prior to swinging, nothing happens. Of course, if you hook the ball, don't suck on the candy. But somehow, when you suck on the candy while swinging, your lateral muscles loosen up and your wrists relax and work a little faster. We don't know why, we just know it works. Of course, they usually want to take more candy just in case it works. However, we promptly explain that only the first piece is free.

After that, candy prices go approximately upwards depending on the degree of improvement they experience.

And then, there's the Annual Columbus Day Horse Barn Sale. Few people know the true origin of Columbus Day sales. Of course, we do. When Columbus told his mom and dad he was sailing to the New World, Columbus' mother said, "Whena

you gonna geta alla you stuffa froma the barn?" When he explained the size of the Nina, the Pinta and the Santa Maria would not allow him to take all of his stuff with him to the new world, his mother said, "Thena you better coma anda sell it, becausea your father and I, we notta gonna keep ita forever!"

Thus was born the first Columbus Day Horse Barn Sale.

Naturally, we celebrate by decorating our shop with hay bales, bridles and saddles and other horse barn items to add an air of authenticity to our sale.

Now dig this! Saturday, Jan. 4, Mr. Stuffed Shirt Owner, (yours truly), got talked into playing two holes with his 15-year old shop helper, Simon. Yes, even I thought I was too busy to play, but alas, I gave in.

Guess what? First hole, par 3,135 yards, eight iron, one swing-
IN THE HOLE ON THE FLY! It was my **FIRST EVER** hole-in-one!

Simon will never forget it, and I certainly will never forget it. Simon said to me the next day, "You know, Vince, if it wasn't for me, you would not have made your hole-in-one."

"You know what, Simon? You're right. Thanks."

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