VGM Golf aims new program at superintendents

Scotts Co. latest to get on board

BY MICHAEL LEVANS

WATERLOO, Iowa — What started out as a buying group for pro shop managers has moved its way into the maintenance shed.

VGM Golf Inc., part of an alliance called VGM Group, has developed a Superintendents Division that the organization said will save courses money on everything from fertilizers to hole cutters while keeping — in most cases — existing distributor relationships in place.

"As our membership of pro shop managers grew, and our members asked for more and more services, it was a natural for us to add superintendents," said Mike Sawyer, VGM Golf's national sales manager.

It's VGM's goal to roll its more than 1,500 members — mostly pro shops — into the Superintendants Division.

The VGM member contacts its sales representative or distributor, place an order, give a VGM number and the member is locked into the negotiated price.

"We don't resell, so we keep the sales rep involved," said Sawyer. "Many times distributors hear the term 'buying group' and think they're out of the picture. That's not the way we work. We try, whenever possible, to keep the distributor in the picture."

One-time fees to join the superintendents group are $390 for a 9-hole facility and $480 for a 18-hole facility.

Savings vary from product to product.

"I assume we might have a price increase," said Sawyer. "Because, just like anything else, the more our members save the more our service is worth. We do, however, grandfather our current facilities. If you're in at $480 now you'll be in at that price 10 years from now."

At press time, VGM had signed up its first supplier.

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Single-riding golf car market heats up

BY MICHAEL LEVANS

EXETER, Pa. — Pride Golf, a new division of scooter and liftchair manufacturer Pride Healthcare, has entered the single-riding golf-car market with a bang.

It was recently announced that Pride Golf's car, the second single-ride to enter the golf market from the home medical equipment industry, will be the vehicle of choice for disabled golfer Casey Martin, should he earn a berth in this year's U.S. Open at The Olympic Club in San Francisco.

Pride was chosen following a recent testing session held by The United States Golf Association (USGA) in Denver. "They [USGA] were looking for a cart for Casey and if yours met certain specifications they invited you to send a cart out for testing," said Pride spokesperson Craig Otto.

"We sent one out, they put it through the paces and it turned out that it was the most suitable cart for him. It's a great way to get started," Otto added.

Pride will soon be entering the market with two models. No details were available at press time.

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Textron/Ransomes: The dust settles, new structure emerges

BY TREVOR LEDGER

IPSWICH, Suffolk, England — Now that the dust has settled on Textron Inc.'s takeover of Ransomes PLC, a clearer picture of the group's structure and strategy is emerging.

The new company is called Textron Turf Care and Specialty Products and is headed up by the former president of Ransomes, Peter Wilson. As president of the new worldwide organization, Wilson is based in the company headquarters here in Ipswich. The American arm of Textron Turf Care and Specialty Products is based in Racine, Wisconsin, USA, with Jacobsen's Phil Trailles as president. Trailles will report to Wilson.

Peter Wilson is naturally excited with the developments at what is now a very well placed market competitor.

"It creates a very strong company from both a financial and technical viewpoint," said Wilson. "It gives us a wonder-
Par Aide flagpoles ready

Par Aide is making it easier to order poles and flags in a complete package ready to install. The quality, one-piece aluminum flagpoles are designed for decades of active use. Available in lengths of 25, 30 and 35 feet, the poles also include one hayyard.

Custom club flags can be screen printed with either a club logo, a specialized design or course colors as you determine. For more information, contact Par Aide at 888-893-2433.

CIRCLE #203

Standard unveils new Litter Caddie, head trimmer

Standard Golf has unveiled its new stainless steel Litter Caddie and the Irrigation Head Trimmer. Standard’s line of Litter Caddies is designed to help keep trash off the course and simplify cleanup. The mesh design promotes air circulation and reduces odor. Constructed of stainless steel, the newest Litter Caddie is ideal for seaside and humid areas.

The new Irrigation Head Trimmer is designed to remove overgrown grass from around irrigation heads, quick-coupler valves or yardage markers. The clean edge left after cutting eliminates roots for long-lasting grass control. The cutting band can be adjusted one time to precisely fit a course’s needs. For more information, contact 319-266-2638.

CIRCLE #203

LESCO launches LCR2200 and LCR7400

LESCO has introduced its LCR2200 and LCR7400 mowers with two-pedal hydrostatic controls, visible out-front mowing deck for easy operations and independent wheel brakes for tight radius turns. These mowers also feature hydraulic weight transfer valve for increased traction on hillsides and vertical tilting deck for easy removal and installation of blades and maneuvering over curbs.

LCR2200 is equipped with a 22hp diesel engine for economical and reliable operation. Two-wheel-drive with differential lock provides positive traction. A 60" mowing deck with offset side discharge makes short work of the largest jobs.

LCR7400 comes with a 27hp diesel engine for power in demanding conditions. Automatic 4-wheel-drive for superior traction on all types of terrain and your choice of 60" or 72" offset side-discharge cutting tunnel deck, designed to promote maximum air flow for even dispersion of clippings. For more information, contact 800-321-5325.

CIRCLE #205

AgrEvo offers guide to control turfgrass diseases

AgrEvo has announced the availability of the ProStar Tank Mix Solution Central quick reference guide for golf course superintendents. The guide shows superintendents exactly which programs they should tank mix, along with ProStar Fungicide, to control most of the diseases they would encounter.

The ProStar Tank Mix Solution Central quick reference guide is a 22" x 28" four-color poster that lists which products can be tank mixed with ProStar and the diseases each combination can control. For more information, contact 800-843-1702.

CIRCLE #204

PBI announces new label

Barrier Ornamental Landscaping Herbicide is a new label from PBI/Gordon. It’s a granular, soil-active product containing 4 percent dichlobenil and was previously marketed by Gordon as Dyclomec 4-G Granular Herbicide. Applied as a pre-emergent or early post-emergent, Barrier controls grasses and broadleaf weeds by preventing seed germination. Contact 800-821-7925.

CIRCLE #206

Textron/Ransomes

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that the amalgamation is all-consuming. Yet the two companies, Ransomes Textron and Jacobsen Textron will remain as separate entities."

Will we see them specializing in different turf care areas — for example, fine turf care and municipal turf care — in order to expand market exposure? "I don’t think so," said Wilson. "Within both product lines [Jacobsen & Ransomes] there are products which are compatible with both markets. In the U.S., for example, Ransomes has a 700 series of out-front rotaries and Jacobsen has the Turf Cut; both of which are well received in both sectors. Similarly in the golf industry each company has some very good products. But I can see us looking at a day when we are developing, for example, a new fairway mower and then there could be commonality of components, maybe even commonality of power units. Yet they could be differentiated in some other way, be it hoods, different reels, different cutter configurations etc. There are many differences in our machines now, yet both lines are well received."

The merger will not affect the traditional Ransomes green or Jacobsen orange. The need to identify the familial nature of the company will be achieved via a soon-to-be-released blue badge of Textron Turf Care and Specialty Products.

Some machinery, the Ransomes Hawk being one example, will be common through all lines with market expansion outside of golf being a primary aim for such products.

In an era when Single Supplier deals are de rigueur, the new mega company of Textron is handsly placed, what with the deals previously struck by Ransomes at Pebble Beach, St. Andrews and the Belfry giving a firm footing.