CASPER APPOINTS MAURAGAS

VIENNA, Va. — Billy Casper Golf Management, Inc. appointed Robert Mauragas to the position of Regional Golf Operations Manager, a capacity in which he will direct the implementation of myriad programs for several Mid-Atlantic region golf properties under the company's operation. Mauragas will work with onsite, golf course personnel in managing projects related to golf operations, customer service, capital improvements, turf management, equipment/supplies, MIS, financial and activities reporting, training food and beverage, and merchandising. Since 1988, Mauragas, a PGA member, was head golf professional at Fiddler's Elbow Country Club, an exclusive 54-hole private facility in Far Hills, N.J. He also participated in Fiddler's Elbow's development and construction of 18 new holes designed by Rees Jones.

Roberta Mauragas

COBBLESTONE ACQUIRES TWO NEW PROPERTIES

DEL MAR, Calif. — Cobblestone Golf Group, Inc., the Del Mar-based golf course ownership and operating company recently acquired by Meditrust, has purchased Sabal Point Country Club in Longwood, Fla., near Orlando and The Champion’s Club of Apalachee Farms near Atlanta. Sabal Point is an 18-hole semi-private club. The purchase from American Skiing Company, which operates numerous ski resorts and affiliated golf courses throughout the country, represents Cobblestone's third acquisition in Florida. The Champion’s Club of Apalachee Farms is also an 18-hole semi-private club. It was purchased from Fairway Properties, L.P. and is Cobblestone’s second holding in the Atlanta area.

The two acquisitions expand Cobblestone’s portfolio to 27 golf properties in six states.

“We are very excited about the purchase of both Sabal Point Country Club and The Champion’s Club of Apalachee Farms and expanding our portfolio of golf courses in the Southeast Region,” said Cobblestone President Bob Hushand.

In January, Cobblestone Holdings, Inc., parent of Cobblestone Golf Group, Inc., reached an agreement to be acquired by Meditrust Companies. Meditrust is a paired shared real estate investment trust and among the nation’s largest health-care REITs.

The acquisitions totaled $43 million, which will be paid from existing cash, debt and $3.5 million in Cobblestone shares, noted Bruce Simmonds, president and chief executive officer of ClubLink.

The new ClubLink properties include:
• Blue Springs Golf Club (27 holes) located near ClubLink's existing Greystone Golf Club and Rattlesnake Point Golf Club on Toronto's west side. Strategically it is important to us because the west end is an explosive growth area,” Simmonds said. "Presently that market is underserved by high-end, daily-fee courses. ClubLink is also building an upscale, 45-hole facility in [nearby] Oakville called Rattlesnake Point that will open in early 1999. We’re now far and away the dominant player in western Toronto with 120 holes once Rattlesnake opens.”
• Georgetown Golf Club (18 holes) and Bolton Golf Club (27 holes) are also

KEMPER NAMES LESNIK GM AT BANDON

CHICAGO — Kemper Sports Management has named Josh Lesnik general manager of Bandon Dunes, a 54-hole, 2,000-acre oceanfront development under construction on Oregon's South Coast. Lesnik has served as Kemper's marketing director for the past several years. The first course at Bandon Dunes, designed by Scottish architect David McLay Kidd, is scheduled to open in June 1999.

Assumption of risk still a dicey issue

BY EDWARD EVERETT VAII

For years, participants in potentially dangerous sporting activities accepted that their pastimes were protected by the legal doctrine of "assumption of risk," which held that if the participant knowingly or implicitly assumed the risk and was injured, there was no liability. That isn't entirely true anymore. In the wake of some of California's recent legal rulings, it is apparent that assumption of risk is a complex legal area in which the stakes for potential liability to sports operators can be very high. The point is, the provider is never automatically absolved of responsibility in participant injuries.

Two interesting California cases demonstrate the gamut of interpretations of this law and serve to reinforce the need for recreational operators to identify and prevent safety problems, and for participants to use common sense. In some instances that isn't enough, and the issue of fault must be decided in the courts, often at a daunting cost to defendant and plaintiff.

In one troubling 1996 lawsuit, the plaintiff was hit on the head by a golf ball and sued the golf course operator for negligence. A frequent golfer on this particular course, the plaintiff claimed he was injured near the 5th tee, because the operator had removed a diseased pine tree that had protected the plaintiff in the past from balls flying from the 4th tee. The appellate court reversed, holding that as a matter of law, the plaintiff had assumed the risk of playing the course.

Continued on page 68

FULLER SEIZED OPPORTUNITIES, MADE HIS OWN

BY PETER B. LAIS

William "Billy" Fuller, 48, has what many superintendents would consider a dream job. "You don't sit back and plan every activity that happens in your career," Fuller said. "Some of those things just evolve. Opportunities come up and I've been very fortunate in that regard."

Fuller is senior agronomist/associate for Cupp Design, making him responsible for meshing agronomic technology with the golf course architectural firm's design and construction programs.

His involvement begins with the first day of planning a new course, and includes such items as qualifying turf selections, evaluating equipment and "Fuller seized opportunities, made his own" Continued on page 67