KollStar expands into Florida; plans to double size by 2000

By PETER BLAIS
NEWPORT BEACH, Calif. — KollStar, a major operator and developer of golf courses, has acquired seven courses on the southwest coast of Florida, giving the Newport Beach-based firm a dozen courses nationwide.

KollStar purchased six of the courses from National Fairways Ltd. The acquisition includes Sunrise Golf Club (GC), Rolling Green GC and Sarasota GC, all in Sarasota; Hibiscus GC in Naples; Port Charlotte GC; The Tides GC in Seminole; and Eagle Ridge GC in Fort Myers. Each is an 18-hole, semiprivate club. KollStar also manages Metrowest GC in Orlando, giving the company eight facilities in the Florida market.

According to KollStar Chief Executive Officer Joe Woodard, the company plans to be operating 20 courses by year's end. Despite making its first acquisition just seven months ago, KollStar's goal is to reach 40 by the end of 1999.

KollStar has made improvements at all its properties, Woodard explained, including Houston Oaks (formerly Twinwood) in Houston. KollStar rerouted the 36-hole layout with two separate clubhouses so that it could be served from a single clubhouse, established teaching and corporate outing facilities, undertook cart path and irrigation work and repositioned the complex from a private to a daily-fee facility.

Multi-course purchases, like the recent Florida acquisitions, while attractive, will likely be "pretty rare because the golf course business is so fragmented," Woodard said. "We are looking at several purchases now that would involve two or three courses."

Because of the proliferation of management companies, good management deals are becoming harder to find and the market more competitive for those courses that do come available, Woodard said. "Money has become tighter the past couple months, which makes it easier for those of us who have capital, though," he added.

Formed in February 1998, KollStar is a joint venture between Koll Resorts International, a Dallas-based firm, andBeenstock. "I think golf course superintendents, who never get the chance to see how it is done, could be served from a single clubhouse, established teaching and corporate outing facilities, undertook cart path and irrigation work and repositioned the complex from a private to a daily-fee facility."

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BRIEFS

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Golf Trust/Emrald Dunes Team Up

BOYNTON BEACH, Fla. — Golf Trust of America has purchased Cypress Creek Country Club, an 18-hole semiprivate course for $4.2 million. The course will be leased to an affiliate of Emerald Dunes Golf Group, which operates five Florida courses owned by Golf Trust including Polo Trace Golf Club, Bonusaventure Golf Course and Emerald Dunes Golf Course. Robert von Hagge designed Cypress Creek.

Golf Course News
CMAA names student scholarship recipients

ALEXANDRIA, Va.—The Club Foundation has announced the four recipients of its student scholarships for the 1998-99 academic year.

Receiving $2,500 scholarships are Annette Ferguson of the University of Houston; Sarah Giles of Widener University; Narmita Carlson of Michigan State University; and Tara Eastham of the University of Massachusetts. Ferguson is a dean’s list student in her junior year at the University of Houston, where she is majoring in hotel and restaurant management at the Conrad N. Hilton College. She is involved in numerous hospitality-related activities, including serving as vice president and subsequently president of the CMAA student chapter.

A past recipient of the “Salute to Excellence” scholarship, Giles is a senior at Widener University in Chester, Pa., pursuing a bachelor’s of science degree in hospitality. She is spending this fall semester at the Australian International Hotel School, which is affiliated with the Cornell University School of Hotel Administration. She was an intern this past summer at the Los Angeles Country Club.

Lincoln is a dean’s list student in his junior year pursuing a degree in hospitality business from the School of Hospitality Business at Michigan State University.

Carlson, who holds an English degree as well as CGCS status, is already preparing bids to assume management of golf courses in New England and so expects to be looking for employees in all areas.

“I believe in delegation,” he said. “I also believe I don’t know how to do a lot of things really well and you need golf pros, club managers, superintendents, expert people in every aspect of course management. If you can’t delegate and give those people the authority and ability to manage, then you aren’t going to be successful.”

The right people, all believing in the goals and mission of the golf course, are “the best ambassadors you can have,” Carlson said. “Management is all about people.”

The consulting portion of Wild Side will address what Carlson is most experienced in: new construction, establishing proper properties, locating and building maintenance complexes and clubhouses, and “the entire process of getting a golf course from a dream to reality.”

“I’ll always be a superintend-ent,” he said. “I’m going to be very actively involved in that area in the initial stages. I’m always going to be that way — get up early, concerned with how the grass is growing.

“When I set this up, it’s like a superintend-ent’s golf course. I want to keep that flavor about it.”

Carlson can be reached at Wild Side Golf Management and Consulting, P.O. Box 1356, North Eastham, MA 02651; 508-255-2269.