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 Tuxwood) in Houston. KollStar redone 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 and Pride Golf Associates of America and is based in Beverly Hills. His plan is to join with people nationwide who share his objectives. "It’s too early to announce associations," Behrstock said.

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Pride will consult with developers and owners to assist them with financing, management contracts, marketing and sales.

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Bahrstock departs Meadowbrook for Pride

BEVERLY HILLS, Calif.—Roger Bahrstock, founder and former chief executive officer of Meadowbrook Golf Group, has resigned from the company and started a new firm.

Meadowbrook recently merged with International Golf Management, a Florida-based course management and supply company.

Bahrstock said he felt the staff in Florida, "who have extensive golf course management skills," could best run the company. "There would be too many conflicts if we did not turn over the reigns to them," Bahrstock said.

Meadowbrook was founded in 1996 with Bahrstock and Arnold Rosenstein as the only employees. Today, the company has more than 1,800 employees and 66 courses under management, lease or development. Bahrstock said he would hold onto his stock in Meadowbrook.

"With the financial and management capabilities available to the company, I am very optimistic about its future," he said.

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Meadowbrook completes $15 million stock sale

BEVERLY HILLS, Calif.—Meadowbrook Golf Group Inc. has completed the sale of $15 million of additional Class B Convertible Preferred stock to Apollo Real Estate Investment Fund III, L.P.

Arnold Rosenstein, Meadowbrook's chairman, said the company is commencing a program of acquiring existing courses, and the additional equity, together with outside financing, will assist in meeting the company's goals of acquiring approximately $75 million to $100 million of golf properties in the near future, and further expanding the company's lines of businesses nationwide.

With this new investment, the Apollo Real Estate Investment Funds have increased their total equity investment in Meadowbrook Golf Group to $25 million.

Meadowbrook Golf Group is a leading golf course management company, engaged in the maintenance, management and development of golf courses. The company is a major provider of outsourced golf course maintenance services and a supplier and distributor of equipment and products to many courses.

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Jeff Carlson

Carlson starts own management firm

By MARK LESLIE

NORTH EASTHAM, Mass.—Believing that "the superintendent is always the one who first spends all the money but who never gets the chance to see how it is made," Jeff Carlson has made the move to remedy that rule.

A certified golf course superintendent (CGCS) who has gained national recognition for his work at Widow's Walk Golf Course in Scituate, Carlson left his position in October to start Wild Side Golf Management and Consulting.

"I think golf course superintendents, in many ways, are a natural fit for this type of operation," Carlson said from his office here. "The superintendent is always the one saddled with all the capital projects. Today's superintendent is well educated and adaptable to that situation."

Working with Corcoran-Jennison Hospitality Co. Inc. for 14 years, the last three at Widow's Walk, the country's first environmental test course, prepared him to manage facilities, Carlson said.

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IMG assumes control of Shanghai golf club

SHANGHAI—Tianma Country Club has announced the appointment of sports management company IMG as club manager. Tianma Country Club will be IMG's first fully managed country club in China. Under the management contract with IMG Real Estate Services (IMGRES), IMG will be responsible for the club's day-to-day operations and maintenance of the golf course.

"We are delighted to have the support of IMG. Their involvement will certainly help ensure that Tianma Country Club offers a world-class experience," said Gilbert Mar, president of Tianma Country Club.

As an IMG-managed facility, Tianma Country Club will be a member of the IMG SportsClub program, providing Tianma members with access to more than 25 golf clubs in Asia, Australia, Europe, and the United States.

IMG appointed George Shay as director of golf and Chris Gray as golf course superintendent. Shay is a Certified Class "A" U.S. PGA Golf Professional and has more than 14 years experience in golf gained during a career in the United States and Asia. Prior to joining Tianma Country Club, Shay spent three years as club manager of Dumar Indah Golf & Country Club, Indonesia.

Gray has more than 13 years experience in golf, including nine years in Australia and the United States. In 1994, Gray moved to Asia as golf course superintendent at Anai Resort and Golf Course, West Sumatra, Indonesia.

Located in Shanghai, one of China's 12 National Vacation Areas, the club is a 30-minute drive from Shanghai Hongqiao International Airport.

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Troon promotes Garmany, Sauter to new positions

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz.—The board of directors of Troon Golf, the Scottsdale-based management, marketing and development company, has appointed Dana Garmany chairman of the board.

While maintaining his present title and responsibilities as chief executive officer, Garmany’s move to this newly created role is representative of the growth the firm has experienced since its inception in 1999.

Troon Golf has grown from one facility (Troon North) in north Scottsdale to an international organization with management agreements at more than 40 high-end golf properties located in 10 states and four countries.

Said Garmany of his new post with Troon Golf, "The transition into this role will allow me to devote more of my time toward our firm's national and international alliances and the overall future of Troon Golf."

In a separate but related action, Chief Operating Officer John Sauter was promoted to the position of president.

Sauter comes to Troon Golf via his background in real estate development. Before joining Troon in 1997, he served as managing partner of Investec Real Estate Company in Santa Barbara, Calif.

Sauter received his master’s degree in business administration from the Anderson Graduate School of Management at UCLA.

Behrstock

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"Although the golf business is getting crowded," Behrstock said, "I see opportunities for honorable individuals to come together with Pride and become part of our new team."