

Deere/SkyLinks

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Now we have a chance to help the golf course owner justify this technology across various applications."

Just where John Deere can go with this technology married to its turf equipment line is anyone's guess. According to Phillips, the plans for exactly how Deere can take full advantage of this new acquisition are constantly evolving.

"Every time I turn around we're re-writing the business plan because it's getting bigger and bigger," said Phillips. "Due to all the possible applications, we really can't get our arms around it."

At the heart of the Player Systems deal are two components: Precision Turf Care and SkyLinks. Precision Turf Care controls the precise spraying of water, fertilizer and pesticides and is being marketed as a tool for general turf care management.

SkyLinks is mounted on golf cars and acts as an electronic caddy, giving the player distance measurements, tips and graphical representations of greens and fairways. It can also be used to send messages from clubhouse to cart and vice versa while allowing course operators the chance to monitor speed of play.

"The founders of the company realized that the potential of GPS within golf is much more than yardage," said Richard Beckmann, director of sales and marketing for Player Systems. "It's truly information technology. While talking to our customers — directors of golf, owners and general managers — they saw the information technology tracking players, counting rounds, getting information about overall course performance."

Player Systems realized early on that to get to the point where such a system can exist, a GPS system that's more than a yardage reader, the company had to do some partnering. Player worked with Deere for three of the company's four years in existence to make this deal happen.

"This is a way for SkyLinks is to reach the goals and potential that we knew it had," said Beckmann.

According to both Beckmann and Phillips, the Player Systems name, logo and product names will remain intact for the foreseeable future. New personnel are currently being added.

Where can this all lead? Will the golf course superintendent of the next five to 10 years be sitting behind a computer, maintaining his course with GPS controlled robotic mowers and pesticide applicators?

"Anything is possible," said

Beckmann. "You're going to see this technology on every course in some shape or form very soon."

According to Phillips the sky is the limit and Deere is not going to rule any possible application out of its plan. "The key thing for us is to provide our customers with cutting-edge technology and equipment. We saw GPS as a natural extension."



ASGCA puts supplier directory on CD

CHICAGO — Golf industry suppliers can promote their products and services directly to golf course architects through the first-ever CD-Rom version of the Suppliers Directory, published by the American Society of Golf Course Architects (ASGCA).

"For many years, ASGCA members have relied on our bound version of the Suppliers

Directory to specify products, materials and consulting services for new and existing courses," said Bob Lohmann, president of the Society. "We expect that reliance to grow now that the directory is in electronic form, and able to deliver more information more quickly for more suppliers."

Previously, the Suppliers Directory contained brochures, marketing materials and sell sheets from each participant. The pieces were bound into a three-inch binder and distributed to each ASGCA member.

The CD-Rom version is scheduled for release in August, 1999. Reservations will be taken from golf course suppliers through April, 1999.



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