South Africa is on the move
Larry Gould and Ted Johnson wire in the definitive snapshot of one of the hottest golf markets — 51

GCSAA ’99: It’s a wrap
The GCN staff covered the big show from tee to green. Here’s what you need to know — 28-33

AGC/CCI to buy Cobblestone Golf
By PETER BLAIS
DEL MAR, Calif. — Two major players in the golf course management industry — American Golf Corporation and ClubCorp Inc. — have joined together to acquire Del Mar-based Cobblestone Golf Group from the Meditrust Companies for $40 million. The new partnership, Golf Acquisitions LLC, is expected to close on the 45-course acquisition by March 31. Upon closing, the two companies will divide the Cobblestone portfolio.

Meditrust, a Massachusetts-based real estate investment trust (REIT), bought Cobblestone in late 1997 for $241 million. Cobblestone nearly doubled in size under the Meditrust banner. But the REIT experienced some

Continued on page 56

Griffin walks the walk
By MARK LESLIE
ORLANDO, Fla. — Griffin Industries has become the first company to join the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary System, committing its 20-odd properties around the country to environmental stewardship.

Announcing the move at a press conference here, Audubon International President Ron Dodson said Griffin has “picked up the mantle of conservation activism at their plant sites and corporate facility. They are, indeed, walking the walk and talking the talk.”

Continued on page 56

Audubon to open first course this fall
By MARK LESLIE
MEMPHIS, Tenn. — It was a different process but the same result: The first Audubon International Golf Course will open here this fall — the Jack Nicklaus-designed Spring Creek Ranch.

“This is not how we thought we’d get there,” said Audubon International (AI) President Ron Dodson, “but it is truly the first Audubon International Golf Course.”

Al courses, thought for the last year to be on the verge of reality, have been stalled for one reason or another — to a great extent because Dodson and AI-affiliated scientists are writing the “rules book” as they go. In fall 1997, the AI Golf and the Continued on page 43

Richmond 1st Tee ready to roll
By MARK LESLIE
RICHMOND, Va. — A judge’s stunning reversal of his own decision has paved the way for the Richmond First Tee project to finally, get under way.

Richmond organizers, who had hoped to open the nation’s initial new First Tee facility, had been stalled for months by opponents using legal challenges and appeals to administrative-county approvals. Now, it appears, they can proceed.

On Feb. 3, Circuit Court Judge Jack B. Stevens reportedly told a Continued on page 49