Golf Partners ready for action

BY ANDREW OVERBECK

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — Pooling the extensive experience of four golf industry veterans, developer and management expert Marvin French has established Golf Partners Worldwide LLC, a firm that will consult and manage golf course projects from start to finish.

Golf Partners has a depth chart that any National Football League team would kill for. The firm includes: business and real estate lawyer Steven Zavodnick, hotel administrator and real estate broker John Miller, Master Greenkeeper and agronomist Gary Grigg, and golf course and association consultant Edward Gowan.

The company will focus its efforts on managing a golf course project from day one all the way through to opening day. "We would like to find a developer that says 'find the pieces and manage the project through the development process,'" said French.

Gowan.

French expects that much of this renovation work can be done in house. Gary Grigg, who has been involved in the construction and grow-in of more than two dozen golf courses, is looking forward to working on these projects. 'My role will be as an agronomist...'

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TSC Golf

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However, cost savings is not the only issue. "As courses are getting closer and closer to each other in terms of playability and high maintenance standards, the gap between high- and low-end courses has narrowed," Childers said. "To survive, customer service has to be a priority. This means that there must be individual training for each segment of the operation, from the bag drop to the pro shop to the first tee."

At Rolling Hills, TSC's first move will be to bring course maintenance back up to speed. "We are on a six-month plan to get the agronomic practices back up, improve weed control and purchase better and new equipment," said Childers. In addition, the clubhouse and grounds will get a facelift and the course will get new golf cars. At Myrtle West, clubhouse renovations are planned along with some minor changes on the golf course.

Despite the competition, Childers feels Myrtle Beach is still a strong market. "The increase in the number of accommodations being built in the area, combined with the slow down of courses being built, means that we are in a catch up period and the growth is filling out," he said.

...Outside of Myrtle Beach, TSC is managing three other projects through design and construction. One is in the Dallas area and the other two are in Virginia. Construction at each site is due to begin later this fall or early this spring.

THE RENOVATION MARKET

As new construction is tailing off, French anticipates that the renovation market will begin to expand. "With all the new product out there, a lot of the product needs help," he said. "There is a lot of renovation potential. There are a lot of good courses out there that need just a little attention to keep up."

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and as a consultant," said Grigg. "Whether it be helping someone build a maintenance facility or helping someone renovate or grow in a golf course. I have always enjoyed that more than golf course maintenance."

As Golf Partners gets off the ground, French rules nothing out. "We will look at anything," he said. "Ownership is a possibility if it is the right situation - none of us wants to be tied to one piece of property."

"As far as new projects go, the strongest market is in the Northeast. An owner that can put a project together up there is going to have a full golf course. We also will be exploring our international contacts and opportunities."

Periodicals postage paid at Yarmouth, Maine, and additional mailing office. Golf Course News (ISSN: 1054-0644) is published monthly by United Publications, Inc., 106 Lafayette St., P.O. Box 846, Yarmouth, Maine 04096. Phone number is 207-846-0600.

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Golf Course News is distributed in the U.S. without charge to qualified personnel of golf course facilities and to golf course builders, developers and architects. Non-subscribed subscriptions to the U.S. and Canada cost $60. All foreign subscriptions cost $140 annually to cover air delivery. All payments must be made in U.S. funds drawn on a U.S. bank.

For subscription services, please call 215-788-7112. Send address changes to Golf Course News, P.O. Box 3047, Yarmouth, Mass. 02675-3047.

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