

Allen unveils venture to promote architects worldwide

By ANDREW OVERBECK and TREVOR LEDGER

GUANGZHOU, China and MUNICH, Germany — Stephen Allen, president of Golf World Group and organizer of the China GILTS International Conference and Expo, has launched yet another venture.

The International Association of Golf Course Architects (IAGCA), which was formally introduced at China GILTS 2000 in Guangzhou, China, aims to provide its members with more exposure, recognition and job prospects.

While Allen has already signed on JMP Design Group, Robert Trent Jones II, Thomson Wolveridge & Perrett, Michael Coate and Associates and Graham Marsh Golf Design, other architects are decidedly more skeptical about the worthiness of the new association.

"The goal is to get more designers more work," said Allen. The IAGCA will do this by initially representing its members at six exhibitions worldwide.

"Many architects are one-man bands with limited resources," he said. "The organization allows them to be exposed to property developers and potential clients without having to spend time and money traveling to all of the various exhibitions."

To qualify for membership, architects must have designed at least three 18-hole courses internationally. Membership costs \$2,500 per year and a five percent fee will be charged for each job brokered by the IAGCA. In addition to architects, there will also be membership categories for builders and constructors.

According to Allen, the organization will not have a political or educational focus. "The IAGCA will not compete or conflict with the American Society of Golf Course Architects or the European Institute of Golf Course Architects [EIGCA]," he said. "It is purely focused on promoting its member architects."

Promotion is exactly what JMP Design Group principal Mark Hollinger is after. "I can justify this more easily than I can one of these shows," he said. "One project or one good lead that we would not normally have gotten makes this deal make sense. We'll have to wait and see what happens."

However, Hollinger is also concerned about potential conflicts of interest. "Our big concern is how does he [Allen] promote the group and what kind of legitimate leads come out of it. But if everyone is made aware of the same information and has the same shot at pursuing leads, it could be a way to keep our hands in areas that we don't nor-

mally get to."

European architects, on the other hand, are more reserved about the new association. "An annual fee is one thing," said architect David Kidd. "But the five percent fee element is fraught with problems. This is a commercial venture and I would

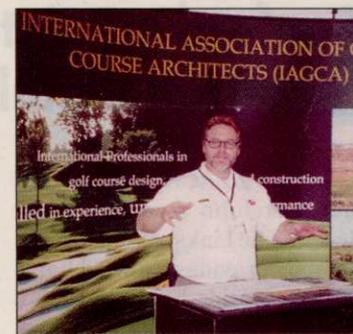
be very surprised if many people took up the offer."

David Williams, president of the EIGCA, is equally hesitant. "I personally cannot see it being relevant to many European architects, but it certainly doesn't conflict with the EIGCA's objectives of education and training,"

he said.

Allen, meanwhile, is confident that he can grow the association.

"We have identified 1,100 architects, designers and builders globally that are potential members," said Allen. "Our goal in the next five years is to have 150 members."



Stephen Allen launching the IAGCA.

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