KemperSports bows out of Harding Park redevelopment

By JAY FINEGAN

NORTHBROOK, Ill. — KemperSports Management has terminated discussions with the City of San Francisco regarding the redevelopment of Harding Park Golf Course. In short, KemperSports told the city "thanks, but no thanks."

"We were flattered that San

Francisco considered KemperSports for this project," said Steven H. Lesnik, KemperSports' CEO. "We informed the city that, in our judgment, the required high-cost private capital and low resident green fee rates would result in the project not being feasible under current market conditions. We believe that

lower-cost financial alternatives may make this project viable.

"The inspired idea first brought forth by Sandy Tatum and Ken Venturi of restoring Harding Park to its former glory and bringing the PGA Tour Championship to San Francisco, all while still providing access and affordable rates to the residents, may still be attainable," Lesnik continued. "It would be great to see the project pursued in the future with different requirements and expectations," he added. "If it is, we hope to be considered again as a potential partner."

FOLLOWING PALMER GOLF'S LEAD

KemperSports was second to Arnold Palmer Golf Management in their bid to refurbish the dilapidated track.

After investing close to \$1 million and spending more than a



Steven H. Lesnik

year struggling to get renovations under way, Palmer recently pulled out of its contract with the city's parks and recreation department. It also terminated its management of the city's Lincoln Park and Golden Gate golf courses.

Citing economic risks, stringent environmental standards and the inability to manage unionized city gardeners, Palmer Golf president and CEO Tim Tierney decided it was in the company's best interest to leave the Harding Park project behind.

To recover the upfront cost of the renovation – an estimated \$15 million – and the yearly lease charge of \$2 million, Palmer Golf planned to charge non-residents higher green fees. Under a plan mandated by the city, residents would be charged \$25 and non-residents upwards of \$100.

Further complicating matters, 65 percent of Harding Park's 86,000 annual tee times had to be reserved for resident golfers.

FIGHT OVER ROUNDUP

Environmental pressures from local activists and city regulations also spurred Palmer Golf's departure. The company fought a long battle to get the use of Roundup approved to kill off the old turf, but ultimately faced more debilitating fights over San Francisco's intense environmental code.

Harding Park is scheduled to host the 2003 PGA Tour Championship, and the city had hoped to begin renovation work next fall. With the withdrawal of Palmer Golf and now KemperSports, it's unclear how the city plans to proceed.

Girls week at NGCOA courses

CHARLESTON, S.C. — The National Golf Course Owners Association, in conjunction with *Golf Digest Woman*, is sponsoring the second annual "Take Your Daughter to the Course Week" June 18 to 24. More than 200 courses and 2,000 girls took part in last year's event.

The initiative is part of the NGCOA's effort to grow the game of golf through the "Get Linked, Play Golf" player development campaign. Participating courses can structure their program to fit their particular market.

Promotional ideas include free clinics and play for girls, discounts for the adults who bring them, fashion shows and other creative options. NCGOA will provide

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GOLF COURSE NEWS









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Golf accessibility forum crystallizes industry goals

By ANDREW OVERBECK

CLEMSON, S.C. — Preliminary steps towards making golf more accessible to individuals with disabilities were established during the sixth National Forum on Accessible Golf, held here in April.

"The meeting was the best one we've had," said organizer Larry Allen, who oversees the National Project for Accessible Golf. "It was the most action-oriented of all of them and people are now excited and interested in moving forward."

Fifty of the nation's golf experts, members of the medical and rehabilitation professions and accessibility leaders attended the four-day forum. They identified seven areas that need further educational programs, strategies and services.

SEVEN POINTS OF LIGHT

Forum participants aim to:

- develop a management "tool kit" for golf course owners and operators to better serve disabled golfers;
 - · expand the informational services of

the United States Golf Association's Golf Resource Center for golfers with disabilities;

- develop an educational model for teaching golf to individuals with disabilities;
- develop educational materials to clarify the rehabilitative value of golf;
- develop educational materials to promote golf as a means of inclusion and lifestyle development for those with disabilities:
- develop a comprehensive research program to support educational efforts; and

 promote the financial advantages associated with a greater inclusion of disabled golfers.

To implement these plans, organizers are now working with forum participants to develop an oversight committee. "We are developing a consortium that will spearhead these activities," said Allen. "We don't want to perpetuate bureaucratic nonsense, but we want to create an entity that represents all points of view within the golf industry."

Allen expects to form the group over the summer and implement the action plan over the next two years.

Rustic Tobacco Road clubhouse ranks tops in country

SANFORD, N.C. — Named "best new clubhouse in America" by *GOLFInc* magazine, the Tobacco Road facility located here also was number one in the daily-fee, under-10,000-square-foot category of the publication's annual clubhouse rankings.

The rustic-looking stone porches, cedar siding and red tin roof emphasize the simplicity of this farmhouse-style design. Pineplank floors, extracted from the old tobacco barn that once occupied the site, now provide space for golf clubs and accessories displayed amongst old farming equipment.

The structure was built following an electrical fire that quickly torched the original facility six months after it was constructed. "It isn't often you get a second chance, so when you do you had better take advantage of it," said Joe Gay, director of golf. Not including interior design, the new 4,128-square-foot clubhouse cost roughly \$400,000.

PEANUTS ON THE PORCH

The clubhouse design was a first for architectural company Amy Stevens Designs, of Broadway, N.C. "It's the kind of place where people love to sit on the porch, drink beer and eat peanuts after a round," Gay said.

Interior work was handled by local designer Cindy Gay and Associates. "From the outset we wanted the clubhouse to be natural and not forced or contrived," said Tony Woodell, course president and part owner, "and to be as unique and enjoyable as the golf course itself."

The clubhouse is decorated with local nostalgia and provides space for a pro shop, snack bar and dining area as well as conference rooms and offices located upstairs. "This is a victory for developers working on a limited budget," said a contest judge. "This really shows that the little guy can come in and do something creative."

NGCOA's girls week

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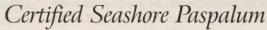
assistance in promoting the week to its members and the golf industry.

Last year's special week for girls was held in connection with the national Take Your Daughter to Work Day, which occured in April. Cool weather held down turnout at some northern courses. A switch to summer is expected to boost participation.

Junior girls represent an underserved segment of the market. Only 13 percent of junior golfers are girls.■

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