Club Car and E-Z-GO enter adaptive golf car market

By ANDREW OVERBECK

AUGUSTA, Ga. — Citing a need to make golf courses more accessible, both Club Car and E-Z-GO have unveiled plans to enter the adaptive golf car market. The market for such adaptive cars is potentially huge according the golf car manufacturers. Of the 50 million disabled people in the United States, four to seven million are potential golfers. Versions of the companies' adaptive cars were rolled out at both the PGA show in Orlando and GCMA show in Dallas, much to the delight of fellow competitors in the niche business who feel the entry of the "big two" will help to validate the need for the vehicles.

"For the past five years, I have been saying that courses need to be purchasing these cars," said Nick Pike, president of Mobility Solutions in Southington, Ohio. "With Club Car and E-Z-GO getting involved, people will take notice of the needs of handicapped golfers."

CLUB CAR

While the other companies in the market are primarily start-ups or spinoffs from larger mobility scooter concerns, both Club Car and E-Z-GO have formed strategic alliances to get an immediate foothold in the market.

Club Car's 1-PASS vehicle will be manufactured by Englewood, Colorado-based SoloRider Industries, which has nearly eight years of experience in the field.

Continued on page 24

Ex-PGA president Addis launches Medallion Golf

By JAY FINEGAN

SAN DIEGO — Tom Addis III, president of the PGA of America in 1995 and '96, has teamed up with 14 other golf industry professionals to launch Medallion Golf, a full-service management firm. The new company, based here in San Diego, will train its marketing sights on California, Arizona, Nevada and Utah.

"My main goal is to have four to six facilities in our portfolio in the next two years, courses that we either own, lease or manage," said Addis, Medallion's president and operations chief. "We don't want to spread ourselves too thin while we're getting established. We plan to take a very hands-on approach to every project."

Addis has decades of salient experience.

Continued on page 36

Florida drought approaching crisis

By JOEL JOYNER

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. — In its third year of drought, the moisture-starved state of Florida has learned that the worst is yet to come.

Expecting little rainfall before May, as hot and dry weather patterns sweep across the region, golf courses in central Florida will encounter more dry lake beds and harsher water restrictions.

"When the national drought people show a map of the continental United States, there's a huge bulls-eye that covers Florida from northern Orlando to
Florida drought

Continued from page 1

the Everglades,” said James O’Brien, a Florida climatologist. The situation is little better farther north. The Atlanta region, for instance, is also in the grip of the drought and under tight water restrictions.

After a cool winter that denied most of the state any healthy tropical storms out of the Gulf of Mexico, Florida is once again in the midst of its “dry season” following three years of below-normal rainfall.

“Basically, we need a hurricane or an extremely wet tropical storm to possibly recover from this drought,” said O’Brien. “Any golf courses depending on rainfall are probably not going to get it.

“They’ll have to spend the money to water courses, and in some places even that may be difficult,” he said. “Florida’s also gaining about 2,000 more people every day. This increase in population, I think, is a major problem in regards to the water situation.”

Indeed, if Florida is adding 2,000 people a day, or 730,000 a year, its population will rise 50 percent over the next 10 years to about 23 million. There is rising concern about the state’s ability to handle huge immigration levels in light of the water shortages and falling water tables.

SALT WATER INCURSION

High-stressed locations are evident along the coast, where the burgeoning population drains the aquifers. Greater amounts of ground water are depleted without being replaced with rainfall. As this resource dwindles, ocean water encroachment becomes a major worry for coastal cities like Daytona Beach that have already relocated wellfields inland because of salt water intrusion.

“Water quality is a key issue for superintendents throughout the state,” said Todd Lowe at the USGA Green Section. “When we don’t have adequate amounts of precipitation, salt accumulates in the soil and in the irrigation source.

“Cultural practices can only go so far to alleviate poor water quality and the turf eventually reaches a point where it cannot survive,” Lowe added. “One solution for golf courses here in Florida may be to use Seashore paspalum, which can withstand salt water amounts up to 35,000 parts per million.”

An October storm last year that dropped 20 inches of rain in a two-day period in south Florida was not enough to stabilize water levels. As the drought worsens, water prices are expected to climb and water gluttons throughout the state may find their budgets parched.

ONE OF WORST IN HISTORY

The state is suffering from one of the worst droughts in its history with no relief in sight.

“Our tropical conditions require serious amounts of water to survive,” said Bryan Plummer, superintendent at the Ironhorse Country Club in West Palm Beach. “Last year’s rainfall totals were 20 inches below the previous year, and both years were below our normal yearly average.

The Ironhorse course, he said, is under a phase two, or “severe,” water restriction. Plummer expects to soon face a phase three, or “extreme,” situation.

“We can only water our greens and tees at night,” he said. “Our even-numbered fairways and roughs are watered Wednesday.

Continued on page 13
Houston water
Continued from page 9

courses to have an alternative
source, other than ground wa-
ter, in the next seven to 10 years," said Kane. “Increasing water
pumping fees is a means to reach
that goal.
“We’re hoping to get an efflu-
ent water source from a develop-
ment that’s on the southside of
us,” Kane added. “There’s a treat-
ment plant already in place, and
we’d like to get its effluent. But
there’s a lot of red tape, with
county agencies and such.”

Another problem, he points
out, is transporting the water.
“Who pays the cost there?” Kane
says. “It will probably be us. We
have plenty of water now, but
come next July and August we
could be hurting.

CATALYST FOR CHANGE
One course that has already
lined up an effluent supply is the
privately owned Raveneaux
Country Club, a 36-hole facility
also here in Spring. Management
has negotiated a seven-year
agreement with a local treatment
plant that produces some 3 mil-
lion gallons per day.

“Raveneaux has contracted for
up to half that amount,” said
Randy George, the recently de-
parted Raveneaux superinten-
dent who is now at Pine Forest
Country Club. “Currently, the
water will be available at no
charge. But the associated cost
of infrastructure will be absorbed
by the course.

“Before I left, the pipeline from
the facility to the course was es-
timated to cost about $300,000,”
he noted. “The water authority
has also discussed the possibil-
ity of taxing the use of effluent
water, as well. The tax would be
a source of income to fund the
authority’s main objectives of se-
curing long-term surface water.

“The water use fee, from my
point of view, will turn out to be
a positive catalyst for change,”
he added. “These fees and the
increases will motivate each and
every course to better manage
this limited resource or find an
alternative answer.”

As water rates keep rising,
however, the hard financial real-
ity will be reflected on the bot-
tom lines of golf course balance
sheets.

Smithco Big Vac

This big tractor-drawn sweeper-vacuum holds over 7-cubic yards of compacted debris. But
the first thing you’ll notice is how quiet it runs thanks to a polycarbonate liner inside the
fan housing. The Big Vac works in combination with an optional Verticut-sweeper head for
removing thatch and debris. It’s built rugged with strong rectangular tube framing and
plastic hopper side-panels to eliminate rusting. It’s lower for better clearance and stability.

SMITHCO BIG VAC VS COMPETITION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Smithco Big Vac</th>
<th>Competition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fan Housing</td>
<td>Lined for longer life, quieter operation</td>
<td>No liner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>Rectangular tube frame for added strength</td>
<td>Channel steel frame</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hopper</td>
<td>ABS plastic, smooth inner surface, no rust</td>
<td>Light-gauge tin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tires</td>
<td>Fairway type tires - better flotation / easier on turf</td>
<td>Smaller tires - heavier on turf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clean Up</td>
<td>Port on side of fan housing for complete cleanout</td>
<td>No easy access to fan housing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Smithco Sweep Star V62

Our compact, self-contained sweeper-vacuum system is designed for debris removal from
both turf and hard surfaces. The sweeper head loosens debris while the vacuum breaks
down the materials and loads the debris hopper. Debris is compacted at the rate of 10 to 1.
Sweep Star offers you one-pass debris removal, aeration cores, grass clippings and bird
dropping removal plus the EXCLUSIVE ability to remove fine debris from hard surfaces.

SMITHCO SWEEP STAR V62 VS COMPETITION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Smithco Sweep Star V62</th>
<th>Competition</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Engine</td>
<td>Liquid cooled - smoother, quieter, longer engine life, easier to service</td>
<td>Air cooled, noisier, shorter life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hopper</td>
<td>4 plus cubic yards</td>
<td>3 plus cubic yards</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clutch</td>
<td>Electric - quiet operation when vacuum is disengaged - easy cold starting</td>
<td>No vacuum disengagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tires</td>
<td>13&quot; wide fairway type tires, softer footprint</td>
<td>10&quot; wide turf tires</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controls</td>
<td>User-friendly controls within driver’s reach</td>
<td>Driver must dismount to start/set speed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hitch</td>
<td>5th wheel or standard tractor hitch</td>
<td>Tractor hitch only</td>
</tr>
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Call Toll Free 1-877-833-7648 and we’ll arrange for a demonstration of the new
Smithco Sweeper, Bunker Rakes, Sprayers or any other Smithco product.

Florida drought

Continued from page 11

and Saturday nights only, and
the odd ones Thursday and Sun-
day nights only. If things don’t
improve by spring, we’ll be in
serious trouble.

LOW LAKE LEVELS

Cool winter temperatures
can ease some of the water
woes, but turf management
adjustments can only be
stretched so far. “We certainly
do more handwatering,” said
Plummer. “We have portable
sprinklers for mounds and ex-
cessively dry areas, granular
weeding agents for our mounds,
and there’s been a reduction in
our mowing schedule. The
cooler weather enables us to
get away with longer periods
between mowings on our non-
overseeded areas. “Very low lake levels at this point
worry me the most,” he said. “Our
course is approximately a foot
below normal levels. This doesn’t
sound like much, but we have shal-
low lakes and only two recharge
wells, which are controlled by the
county.”

This hard drought, which first
hit the state in April 1998, is con-
sidered the worst since the 1950s, according to the National
Oceanographic and Atmospheric
Administration (NOAA), with
2000 as the driest year on record.
“We finished low last year,” said
Tony Steppich, superintendent
at the Golf Club of Jacksonville,
and we’re not starting off so
well this year, either.