Secondary turf equipment market facing growing pains

BY ANDREW OVERBECK

With the popularity of leasing turf equipment surging over the past five years, the market for used equipment has expanded as well. Industry insiders estimate that the used market now exceeds $90 million in annual sales and will continue to grow as more equipment comes off leases.

Sales figures, however, do not tell the whole story. The industry is still learning how to approach the secondary turf market. While high residuals make leasing packages more attractive, they make it more difficult for dealers and wholesale brokers to unload used equipment at a reasonable profit. In order for leases to grow, there

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Drought-stricken N’west faces dry summer

B Y J O E L J O Y N E R

SPOKANE, Wash. — The Northwest is confronting record-low water levels that may result in some severe shortages this summer. The drought also has potentially serious implications for energy-starved California, which relies on hydroelectric power from the Northwest.

In March, Washington Gov. Gary Locke declared a drought emergency for the state. According to Scott Gudes, acting administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the Northwest is the most drought-stricken region of the United States.

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Wolf Creek
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golf course even be built in this rugged site? Only by playing the course can you appreciate the creativity, tenacity and obvious love of the high desert environment that guided the designer, owner and builder, Dennis Rider.
Rider spent two years walking the 160-acre site to learn how to blend the course into the landscape. When construction finally began, he worked with his head superintendent, Kelby Hughes, his son John, three bulldozers, one scraper, and a crew of 30 men to carve out his creation.
Rider and Hughes have worked together here in Mesquite for 10 years, including a stint with Arnold Palmer when he built the Oasis Golf Club in 1995. They have watched the town of Mesquite - 80 miles north of Las Vegas on I-15 - grow from a truck stop into a town of 20,000.

HIGH DRAMA ON SECOND HOLE
With the opening of Wolf Creek, Mesquite is stepping towards becoming an affordable golf destination to rival Palm Springs and Scottsdale.
"The toughest part in building Wolf Creek was developing a routing with two loops," Rider said. "With this rugged terrain you needed to allow players back to the clubhouse after nine. I really just let the land determine where we could go. We did have the chance to add challenge and fun to some of the golf holes."
Rider certainly showed imagination while creating some intriguing golf holes. Five tee shots play off cliffs over 100 feet high.

The course plays at 4,169 yards from the front tees and grows to a healthy 7,018 yards from the challenger pegs. From these back tees the course has a slope rating of 154, one of the highest in the nation. From the middle tees the rating is at 134, but a player can still enjoy the round after overcoming the intimidation factor off the tee.

SLOPE RATING OF 154
This type of feel appears on almost every golf hole at Wolf Creek. From hitting to elevated greens, to gazing down on one of the seven lakes that line the course, to being struck by the contrast of grass, white sand bunkers, and multicolored rocks. You are left questioning if you can even play this wild track.
Rider was careful to measure and plot each shot. He added five sets of tees so that any golfer could have a chance.
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The 12th hole at Wolf Creek

CHOPPER USED IN CONSTRUCTION
To build this course took special care and ingenuity. The sand cliffs look petrified but are actually very fragile. To protect them, much of the large materials were moved by helicopter, including sod, sand, pipes, and sandstone slab steps.
"We were lucky to have the regional airport right behind the golf course," said Kelly Hughes. "We could bring in materials to the chopper and easily load things on the runway. The chopper..."
Nevada desert
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The soft sand was conducive to digging and shaping, but special care had to be taken for drainage as heavy rains could lead to flash flooding. A complex system of drains carries all runoff to a drain line that runs under the center of the course.

The course boasts a state of the art dual-pumping system that handles the natural water for water features and collection ponds and keeps that water separate from the reclaimed water that is used for irrigation. Every effort was made to keep these surroundings a perfect natural habitat for the desert tortoise, desert fox, hawks, roadrunners, Gila monsters, tarantulas, and scorpions that thrive here.

**Harvesting Stray Balls**

The entire course was covered with hybrid Bermuda sod and Dominant bentgrass sod for the greens. The 49 bunkers are filled with crushed white sandstone that was ground specifically to Rider’s specifications for proper color and texture to keep it from blowing away. No extra dirt had to be brought in, as the natural sand was an excellent sub soil for the sod.

“We stress that golfers must stay on the maintained fairways and the golf cart paths because of the fragile nature of the desert,” Hughes said. “We provide ball retrievers on the golf carts. If you can’t reach a ball that you hit into the desert, you must leave it, as footprints cause immediate destruction of the landscape. We have two workers that go out every month to carefully harvest balls in the sensitive areas so they don’t become an unsightly collection.”

**Wolf’s Natural Habitat**

Rider named the course after the Mexican Wolf that was hunted to near extinction by settlers. He feels that as man nearly hunted to near extinction by settlers. He feels that as man

**Monarch Bay**

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"When you’re dealing in this part of the world, that’s not a huge amount of money," he said. "Also, it included some work on the clubhouse and driving range."

The location of the complex – it lies atop an old landfill – also drove up the costs. "We weren’t allowed to cut an ounce of dirt on the property because of the landfill cap," Harbottle said. "We had to import all the materials we used to form bunkers and greens."

Moreover, the native soil on the fairways was nearly useless as a turfgrass base. "You couldn’t grow a thing on it," the designer said. Some 90,000 cubic yards of sand were brought onto the site and spread to a depth of six inches. "We placed it everywhere we were going to plant to get a good firm playing surface," Harbottle said. "The fairways are rye, and the greens are L-93 bentgrass."

Wadsworth Golf Construction handled the heavy lifting. John Harbottle Design, based in Tacoma, Wash., specializes in new golf course design as well as renovation and restoration of existing courses. A member of the American Society of Golf Course Architects, Harbottle lectures on golf course architecture throughout the country.

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GOLF COURSE NEWS

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