

Illinois club sued over cart mishap

By JOE DEVANNEY

VERNON HILLS, Ill. — A recent lawsuit winding its way through the Illinois courts demonstrates the need for golf course developers, architects and managers to take a proactive approach to prevent on-course accidents.

Following a mishap in July 2000 where he flipped a golf cart, Donald Nelson is suing White Deere Run Golf Club alleging that faulty design led to the accident that left him with spinal injuries.

Nelson was golfing with three friends at the club when he flipped his golf cart as he approached the tunnel that runs between the 16th and 17th holes.

The path twists downhill and continues into another turn as it nears the tunnel. Nelson stated that, as he ap-



Emergency personnel attend to Nelson.

proached the tunnel he applied the brake on the cart, but it nonetheless skidded and toppled on the drivers' side with the wheels apparently locked. His companion Gary Joy was unhurt, but Nelson was pinned underneath. Although Nelson was airlifted to a local hospital, he suffered spinal injuries that, he claims, leave him unable to walk without assistance.

ACCIDENT POTENTIAL

Nelson, represented by attorney David C. Wise of the law firm Corboy and Demetrio in Chicago, is suing the Village of Vernon Hills, which owns

the golf club, and Dick Nugent Associates, which designed and developed the course.

In the complaint, which was filed in

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Intrawest to expand Raven brand

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Raven club in Phoenix had its best year ever. The Raven courses have done better than any of the others in our portfolio."

This is the primary reason why the company is eager to expand the brand beyond its existing Raven courses in Arizona, Colorado, Florida and West Virginia.

"We want to go into every major market and align new Raven courses with existing Intrawest properties," said marketing manager Ben Keilholtz. "For example, Cabo San Lucas makes sense because we already have the Intrawest Club there and other real estate interests. It makes sense to add them where we have more than one revenue stream."

PROTECTING THE BRAND

However, the Intrawest team is working hard to ensure that the Raven brand does not get diluted — a task made more difficult when dealing with management clients.

"A lot of courses would like to have the Raven brand on them," said Stipec. "But if you don't protect the brand it loses value. We will not put the Raven name on any course unless they add value to the Raven brand."

Stipec said that each potential Raven club must meet four criteria:

- courses must provide a high level of service;
- be maintained to a high conditioning standard;
- be playable by both high- and low-handicap golfers; and
- be located in dramatic settings.

"The first two requirements can be met at any course," he said. "The last two requirements you either have or you don't. At our Raven facilities you have dramatic landscapes from the Appalachian Mountains to the Rockies and from the desert

to the ocean."

Playability is also a large concern when it comes to repeat play. "There are plenty of big name courses that people only go to once because they are too hard," Stipec added. "We want to provide a challenge, but we also need to give people the ability to get around the course without being too penal."

When it comes to signing third party contracts, the company has to be especially vigilant.

"Cabo is the first property where we have branded a course we did not own," said Keilholtz. "The contract is more extensive. It is for a longer term than usual and it is more strict on what the

owner, The Resort Group, is required to do in terms of capital expenditures. We have to ensure that when we fly the Raven flag our brand equity is protected."

As a result, the course at Cabo will not only be renamed The Raven Golf Club at Cabo San Lucas, The Resort Group will be investing capital to renovate the Pete Dye-designed layout.

"We are not concerned with the level of service or operations, but course conditions need to be improved and that will take time," added Keilholtz. He expects the Raven flag to fly in Cabo by February.

ATTACKING NEW MARKETS

Intrawest is currently working on its first Raven property in Canada. The Raven at Lora Bay outside Toronto is in the design phase at the moment and the company is working to finalize environmental permits. Keilholtz said the course could open as early as 2003.

Intrawest also has plans for three more Raven properties in the works. The company is eyeing markets in the Northeast, California, Texas and south Florida. ■



BCG-managed Stoneleigh GC to enhance layout

ROUND HILL, Va. — Billy Casper Golf (BCG) has announced a \$1 million capital-enhancement program at Stoneleigh Golf Club in Round Hill, Va. Nestled in the rolling hills of Loudoun County, Stoneleigh is less than 10 miles from the Appalachian Trail and less than one hour from Washington, D.C.

To improve the club's layout, condition,

and playability Stoneleigh is adding new bunkers, building four new tee boxes and expanding the irrigation system. The club is also obtaining new maintenance equipment and a new fleet of golf cars, and is paving the golf car paths throughout the course. Ault, Clark & Associates designed the layout enhancements and T.A. Turner Construction Services is handling construction.

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