Del Webb signs Troon to manage its Anthem clubs

By ANDREW OVERBECk

PHOENIX, Ariz. — In a move to lure more members and improve profits at its Anthem Phoenix and Las Vegas Country Club communities, developer Del Webb has turned the management reigns over to Troon Golf.

In addition to managing the golf courses, restaurants and club operations, Troon Golf will take over the marketing duties for the two clubs. Del Webb, which is a division of Pulte Homes, had previously managed the Anthem clubs in-house. It will continue to manage its Sun City and Revere branded golf courses.

“We feel the Troon relationship will bring us a potential home buyer market audience and club user profile that is aligned with our country club products and brands,” said Henry DeLozier, vice president of golf operations for Del Webb.

While DeLozier said the decision was in the works before the economy began to slowdown, he admitted that the two clubs were having profitability problems.

“There were some numbers that we weren’t hitting,” he said. “We have always been patient country club developers and in the past we were willing to subsidize operating deficits. We now have a greater sense of urgency in accelerating the earning power of our country club operations.”

Blinded golfer awarded $2.1 million

By JOSEPH J. DEVANNEY

CLARKSTON, Mich. — Golfer Derek Autio, who was blinded in one eye after being struck by a golf ball, was recently awarded $2.1 million by a Michigan jury.

Autio was taking a cart path through the woods towards the 18th hole at Clarkston Creek Golf Club when he was hit by the tee shot of another golfer. He lost an eye in the accident. In his claim, he alleged that the course was negligently designed.

At first glance, a verdict of negligence, coupled with the nature of the claim, could leave golf course managers and designers everywhere wondering if they are suddenly facing potential and unanticipated claims. It appears, however, that both the facts and the law in the Clarkston Creek case are sufficiently unique.

JURY SAYS ALL THREE ARE TO BLAME

Autio sued both the golf course and the golfer that hit the errant shot.

Following a trial, the jury determined that Autio was 40 percent negligent, the club was 55 percent at fault and the other golfer was five percent culpable. The jury also determined that $2.1 million was the value of Autio’s injury, but, with his contributory negligence factored in, the actual amount would be closer to $850,000.

Ritz-Carlton on the move in Fla.

NAPLES, Fla. — Ritz-Carlton has added to the splendor here in golf-rich Naples with the opening of the Ritz-Carlton Golf Resort.

Greg Norman’s Tiburon Golf Course surrounds the 250-room resort, which opened Jan. 4. The 18-hole layout was carved out of 800 acres of natural Florida foliage and fast in the links tradition. The fairways are lined with pine straw, stacked sod wall bunkers and coquina sand waste bunkers. The fairways on the course, which is certified as an Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary, are maintained at a height of one half inch. The final nine holes of the project will open in November 2002.

In addition, the resort features a Rick Smith Golf Academy, fitness center, outdoor swimming pool, and four lighted tennis courts. Guests will be able to enjoy dining options at the golf resort or at the nearby Ritz-Carlton, Naples.

A COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Ritz-Carlton has also stepped into golf community development with the construction of its first Ritz-Carlton Golf Club & Spa in Jupiter.

The 285-acre gated community will feature a Jack Nicklaus Signature Golf Course, a clubhouse and spa, and three home ownership options. Members will be able to choose from the following options:

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Del Webb, Troon
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“With the growth in private clubs within communities in the last few years, competition has increased,” he said. “When a private club opens it often hits a membership plateau, so now there is a need to find alternative sources of memberships to generate ongoing revenues.”

Greenwell said Troon will use tools such as its Troon Advantage Program, which allows private club members access to daily-fee golf courses in its 110-course portfolio, to help drive membership sales.

Existing workers at each club will become Troon employees and the company is currently developing agronomic and marketing plans.

“The key golf positions at each club are strong,” said Greenwell. “We are in the process of incorporating the Troon standards into the operations.”

If all goes well with the two clubs, DeLozier said Del Webb will likely partner with Troon Golf on future projects.

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NGCOA teams up with Club Car
Continued from page 1

“We thought the previous ‘Smart Buy’ program was very limiting,” he said. “We were not interested in serving up discounts to customers just because they were in the business of buying golf cars. We thought we could bring more value to the association by helping them educate their members and grow membership.”

According to Plummer, there are a number of Club Car clients who are potential members. When a non-member rolls over their Club Car fleet, a membership with the association will be included.

“That is a big part of the deal,” said NGCOA executive director Mike Hughes. “It will help people become more familiar with our association and our efforts to grow the game.”

Additionally, Club Car will be involved in formulating education seminars for the association on subjects ranging from improving profitability to fleet management to energy efficiency.

“Doing this gets us in front of potential customers,” said Plummer. “But you are not going to see a seminar on Club Car’s golf car. We are going to help the association by providing content and expert facilitators.”