



## BRIEFS

### KEMPERSPORTS MANAGEMENT REORGANIZES

NORTHBROOK, Ill. — As part of a reorganization, Bob Wallace has been named president of KKL (Kemper, Keiser, Lesnik) Golf and Steve Skinner has been named president of Kemper Golf Management, two newly formed divisions of KemperSports Management. KKL consists of KemperSports' owned and leased properties, while Kemper Golf Management is made up of the company's third party management business. In addition to their newly added responsibilities, Wallace and Skinner will continue to oversee the two existing divisions of KemperSports. Wallace will head up AllGolf, the firm's golf practice range division, and Skinner will supervise KemperSports Development, the firm's golf development and construction management business.

### PGA TO HOLD 'JOBS IN GOLF WEEK'

PALM BEACH GARDENS, Fla. — The PGA of America has launched its "National Jobs in Golf Week" in order to showcase the potential for employment opportunities in the golf industry. The PGA will roll out the public awareness campaign during the week of March 18-22. During the week, golf course and industry employers will be encouraged to post jobs, while job seekers will be encouraged to view these opportunities at the PGA Employment Center at [www.PGA.com](http://www.PGA.com).



### INTRAWEST ADDS MCLAUGHLIN

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — Intrawest Golf has added Jim McLaughlin to serve as regional director of operations. McLaughlin, who has been with Intrawest Golf since 1998, will oversee the operation of the firm's four courses in Arizona including two Raven Golf Clubs (Phoenix and Tucson), Trilogy Golf Club (Gilbert), and Santa Rita Golf Club (Corona de Tucson).

### NGF TEAMS WITH ZURICH

SCHAUMBURG, Ill. — The Middle Markets business unit of Zurich North America and the National Golf Foundation (NGF) have formed a strategic joint marketing alliance. Zurich North America helps manage risk by offering coverage designed specifically for golf course facilities.

## Summit Golf adds to growing portfolio

By ANDREW OVERBECK

PONTE VEDRA BEACH, Fla. — Seizing upon the turmoil in the golf course business, Summit Golf Group has added three new management contracts so far in 2002, bringing its growing portfolio to five courses. The company anticipates having 15 management agreements in place by the end of the year.

"The golf business is struggling and when that happens it benefits good operators like Summit Golf. When times are lean you have to watch costs. Clubs will have to evaluate



The Ted McAnlis-designed Preserve at Tara in Bradenton, Fla., is one of three new courses in Summit Golf's portfolio.

how they run their businesses and that will bode well for us this year," said president Kevin Stark.

To handle the growth, the company has brought in Eric Miko to be the director of operations and has hired Julie Reuse as the director of membership and business development.

Summit Golf specializes in turn around deals, and the three it just signed are no different.

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### Editorial Focus: Hiring

## Experts urge clubs to tackle turnover problems

By DAVID HUBBARD

By 2006, the hospitality industry will need to add 20 million more workers to cover the anticipated growth — the highest projected for all major industries over the next 10 years.

The search for new employees to effectively handle the growth illuminates another issue, how to manage existing employee turnover rates.

Speaking at the National Golf Course Owners Association Conference (NGCOA) in Phoenix in January, human resources specialists, John Sibbald, president of John Sibbald & Associates, an executive search firm based in St. Louis, Mo., and Catherine Gustafson, Ph.D., University of South Carolina, cited the more significant problems and offered a few solutions.

"Reducing turnover is critical as the losses can be enor-

mous and are both tangible and intangible," said Gustafson. "Left unchecked, it can cause the loss of consistency and uniformity in the delivery of a business' products and services, the potential for poor customer service,

### EIGHT WAYS TO LOWER TURNOVER

- Managers should fill in for hourly employees
- Have club sponsored social events for employees
- Promote from within
- Be flexible in scheduling
- Offer orientation programs
- Have structured training programs
- Conduct interviews that are 20 minutes or longer
- Do second interviews before making an offer

lost sales, a lowered perception of managerial effectiveness, as well as the time lost in filling vacant positions."

When the employee turnover rate becomes inordinate to the normal flow of workers in and out of a facility, Sibbald encourages business owners and managers to take a more

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## Intrawest acquires Hawaii's Big Island Country Club

By ANDREW OVERBECK

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — Intrawest Golf has completed its first acquisition in two years with the purchase of Big Island Country Club in Kaiula-Kona, Hawaii. The deal includes a Pete and Perry Dye designed 18-hole golf course and all developed and undeveloped real estate around the course.

Although the golf and tourism markets have been volatile of late in Hawaii, Intrawest is confident that its acquisition of Big Island Country Club will be successful.

"It has the same season as Arizona where we have a number of courses," said marketing manager Ben Keilholtz. "Once you get to May you depend on local traffic, and I think the

course is well positioned with locals."

Keilholtz said that while tourism numbers are down, the project should pay off in the long-term.

"It is not the best of markets



The 17th hole at Big Island is modeled after Pete Dye's famous 17th hole at TPC Sawgrass.

right now, but it will pick back up," he said. "If we had gone in at the peak of the market, there might have been some concerns. But to get a return on this asset should be a fairly attainable number."

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## GM, superintendent team up to buy LaCita CC

By JOEL JOYNER

TITUSVILLE, Fla. — Owner and club manager Jim Musick and owner and director of grounds Dale Quinn joined forces to make a dream come true last November by purchasing their own private golf facility here at LaCita Country Club.

The two first met in 1991 while working at the Woodlake Country Club in Pinehurst, N.C. "I was the assistant golf professional and Dale was the course superintendent at the time,"

said Musick. "We've been looking for a facility with the right opportunity since 1997. I, personally, have probably looked at over 100 golf courses in Florida, South Carolina and North Carolina."

The course was built in 1984 and designed by Lee Trevino and Ron Garl. The club is about a 40 minute drive west from downtown Orlando and sits just across from Cape Canaveral. The two managing partners knew from the start that they wanted a private facility. "We had made offers on three clubs that were unsuccessful," Musick said. "A friend told me about LaCita when I was working for American Golf over in Jacksonville."



Club owners Dale Quinn, director of agronomy (left), and Jim Musick, club manager, at LaCita Country Club.

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## Kevin Ross' new product awards

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booths, you can't help but think where we were ten years ago with these units. Fairway topdressers were almost nonexistent, and now every manufacturer has their own model. Turfco introduced new refinements with the **WideSpin 1530**. This unit is being advertised as the dual-purpose machine, to address both super light topdressings and heavier applications for aerification purposes.



Turfco's WideSpin 1530

### OLD BUT STILL SIMMERING

Some items, although not new in Orlando, are still hot topics of discussions. The **Graden dethacher/verticutter** has become maybe the hottest topic in present

day turf management. This unit has gathered some amazing steam since its debut. So much so that it receives my *Imitation is the Best Form of Flattery Award*. At least three other companies have put their Graden version on the market. All the credit should not solely go to Graden, however. The development of the "Superbents" and "Ultradwarfs" certainly has given this machine an assist in its popularity.

• The **Toro Flex 21** gets the *Hottest Mowing Unit Award*. After its debut in Dallas last year, this mower is riding a wave of incredible popularity. It far exceeded its sales projections for 2001, and Toro is looking forward to an even bigger



Toro's Flex 21 gets Hottest Mowing Unit Award

year in 2002. This year Toro has added a **groomer and two different brush attachments** as options for the Flex unit.

These are all the items that caught my eye at "The Big Show" in Orlando. I can't wait to see what Atlanta 2003 can deliver. ■

## ProSource One eyes growth

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ProSource One covers the United States from the upper Midwest to the Southeast and has a small presence in New England and the Southwest that may soon be expanded.

According to Lee, the company has already added two members to the sales team in the Carolinas and has bolstered its staff in Florida.

Hiring will be key to the company's short-term growth, Lee said. "We want to hire people who can bring business with them," he said. "We are getting new, experienced people on board and we are improving our business in the markets we are already in. We also will be looking at some small acquisitions."

The uncertainty surrounding ProSource One has afforded the company some advantages, said Lee.

"We have been through the hardest part," he said. "I think we have taken out most of our weak spots, and now we just need to work on growing the business."

While he admitted that the turf business was going to be difficult going forward, Lee said he is confident that they can grow the business.

"The market itself is not growing and [superintendent's] budgets are going to be conservative," said Lee. "Our sales staff has to be more of a consultant and help customers solve problems. We can't just be coming in and selling on price." ■

— Andrew Overbeck

## Musick and Quinn buy Florida's LaCita CC

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"We thought a private club was the best market to get into for our first club," he explained. "The daily-fee market, especially here in Florida, is such a price conscious market. There are a lot of golf courses in the state and a lot of competition. We felt a private club would give us an edge up on service and the quality of the facility would enhance the membership. It was a good fit."

The club was previously owned and operated by ClubCorp (CCA). The purchase price was more than two million, according to Musick. "There are four of us as partners," he said. "Dale and myself are the managing partners. There's an attorney, Kenneth Senn, in Colorado who also holds a real estate license and helped out with the legal aspects of the acquisition, and Louis Reeder, a businessman in Texas, who brought a great deal of business experience with him. We each own a 25 percent interest in the club."

### WINNING BACK MEMBERSHIP

The initial goal for the two managing partners is to boost the membership numbers. The club once had over 1,800 members, and currently has just over 900 members with about 245 full golf members. The other memberships include pool and fitness, tennis and social memberships.

"We'd like to get the golf membership numbers up to around the 325 to 350 mark," said Musick. "In a five year period, CCA had seven general managers here at the club. It was basically a revolving door. Our objective is to win over the support of our current members and begin to grow the membership through word of mouth. Members have told us that having two of the owners available here on location is a big benefit."

Musick and Quinn closed the deal Nov. 30, on a Friday, and were out on the course making changes the following Monday. "It was a little wet in some areas, and we put in a considerable amount of drainage," said Quinn.

Drainage was installed on holes five, eight, 12, 13, 14, and 15. "The project was

well received by the members. On the fifth hole, members had never been able to take their carts out into the fairway. After the work, they were in the fairway within less than four weeks," said Quinn.

The club is situated on 150 acres of property. "We've also done some landscaping around the clubhouse, and we've recently established an 'adopt-a-hole' program here," said Quinn. "Groups of members have been interested in enhancing the landscape on the course. We'll have four or five families for each hole, and we'll focus on things like beautifying the tee

boxes. They are certainly enthusiastic and want to participate, so they can help out by donating some of their time and dollars. They also can go out in the evenings to fill divots and repair ball marks on their adopted holes."

The club is also creating a memorial for those members who have passed on, according to Quinn. "They approached us about establishing a memorial," he said. "We've already cleared a visible area on the course where members will be able to purchase commemorative bricks. There will be about 900 bricks made available to them, and we expect that they'll sell out rather quickly."

### LOCAL BUSINESS, GROWING MEMBERSHIP

The club is targeting corporate events and building a strong connection with the community. "We've tried to keep a lot of our business local," said Musick. "We do business right across the street at the bank, we have our lease vehicles from the Ford dealership in town, and our carrier for all of our property and liability insurance is just across the street. We're working to remain community focused. They

help make up our membership, so it's a two-way street."

Though private, the club does host outside events like corporate outings and charitable fund-raisers on the agenda. "There's a Hospice fund-raiser coming up, and we've got the fifth an-



The ninth green at LaCita Country Club

nual Space Coast Junior Golf tournament in April during the weekend of the Masters," said Quinn. "David Leadbetter brings his top 20 students to the club, and the field is limited to 84 players." The club is supportive of local junior golfers by inviting young players and high school students to play the course free of charge.

The club has implemented a membership incentive plan that will carry through until the middle of March. "We've sent letters to our members to invite their friends and associates to join the club," said Musick. "By helping us sign up new members, they'll receive a reduction on their monthly bill."

"After the middle of March, we'll be looking at some outside advertising," he added. "In addition, from CCA files, we sent about 200 letters to previous members offering them a 50 percent reduction on their initiation fee if they wish to return to the club. Right now, we think that word-of-mouth will be a key factor for us. Once previous members hear that the service, quality of the course, and consis-

## Golf Ventures

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Nipper said the site will eventually serve up online parts information, technical tips and support.

### OTHER AGREEMENTS

Although Golf Ventures works exclusively with Meadowbrook, that association does not preclude it from offering its services to other management companies.

"We offer management companies an opportunity to control prices," said Nipper. "We see the opportunity there and want to provide them with quality products as well. We are working with other major golf course owners, and we have several national accounts pending."

In addition, Nipper said the company is pursuing an agreement with the National Golf Course Owners Association and is exploring ways it could work with the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America's Golf Super-Market. ■

tency is back at the club, we believe a lot of members will return."

The club projects anywhere from 35,000 to 37,000 rounds of golf this year, according to Musick. The facility also features a swimming pool with a cabana and Jacuzzi, a fitness center with state-of-the-art equipment, a tennis facility across the street with six courts and a separate building with two racquetball courts. ■