The PGA of America has launched its reorganization, Bob Wallace has been named president of KKL (Kemper, Keiser, Lesniki) 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.

Intrawest acquires Hawaii’s Big Island Country Club

By ANDREW OVERBECK

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).

GM, superintendent team up to buy LaCita CC

By JOEL JOYNER

LaCita Country Club will be successful. “It has the same season as Arizona where we have a number of courses,” said marketing manager Ben Keihloltz. “Once you get to May you depend on local traffic, and I think the course is well positioned with locals.”

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

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 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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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 aeration purposes.

OLD BUT STILL SIMMERING
• Some items, although not new in Orlando, are still hot topics of discussions. The Graden dethatcher/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 "Superbentals" and "Ultradwarfs" certainly have 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 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.

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 1,000 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 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 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 annual 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 consistency is back at the club, we believe a lot of members will return."

The club projects anywhere from 35,000 to 57,000 rounds of golf this year, accord- ing to Musick. The course 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.

Toro's Flex 21 gets Hottest Mowing Unit Award

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 [superintendents'] 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

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. It is exploring ways it could work with the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America's Golf Super-Market.