

# GOLF COURSE NEWS

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## COUNTERPOINT

## Velocity kills Poa dead

By ANDREW OVERBECK

EAST LANSING, Mich. — Managing Poa annua has traditionally been an inexact science, but researchers here at Michigan State University (MSU) along with chemical maker Valent USA, said they have discovered a postemergent herbicide that controls Poa and certain broadleaf weeds in bentgrass and ryegrass fairway turf.

"Velocity controls Poa," said Jason Fausey, field market development specialist for Valent. "We are used to managing it, so this is a different approach."

Valent acquired rights to Velocity in the turf and ornamental market from Kumiai Chemical. The Japanese chemical maker has rights to the agricultural market where the herbicide is currently registered for use on rice to control barnyard grass. Velocity's active ingredient, bispyribac-sodium, inhibits the enzyme acetolactate synthase, which plants require to produce three key amino acids.

Valent submitted its approval package for Velocity to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in April. Company officials said

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## Management cos. buck bum economy



The slumping economy has helped ClubCorp, which owns Pinehurst No. 2 (pictured above), focus on lowering overhead costs.

By DEREK RICE

With rounds played numbers down, revenues flat and an economy suffering through ups and downs, there is little doubt that now is a difficult time to be a golf course owner or operator.

For management companies, the challenge of staying afloat is multiplied by the number of properties they either own or operate, each of which comes with its own set of issues and competition in a particular market.

Perhaps surprisingly, many management companies are not

only surviving this economy, but they are actually thriving. The reasons for this are as varied as the companies themselves, but it would seem that a down time is a good time to be in the management business.

John Beckert, president and chief operating officer for Dallas-based ClubCorp, said his company has been able to hold its own for a number of reasons, including the sheer size and scope of its portfolio.

"One of our biggest advantages as a management company is our

size," he said. "Because we have almost 200 other golf and business clubs and three marquee resorts, when we go in and associate with a new club on a

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## Editorial Focus: Utility Vehicles

## Competition expands utility vehicle choices

By ANDREW OVERBECK

With new players on the scene and a bevy of new product introductions slated for the next six to 12 months, competition is heating up among utility vehicle manufacturers. Never before have superintendents had this many utility vehicles to choose from.

Yamaha Golf Car, E-Z-GO and Jacobsen all have new utility vehicles coming out this summer, and both John Deere and Kubota will unveil plans for new vehicles this fall. Toro said it will add an electric version of its Workhorse

utility vehicle line in early 2004.

This spring, Club Car introduced the Carryall 272XL, Lesco rolled out its first utility vehicle and Polaris came to market with an entry-level product to fill out its line.

### YAMAHA'S NEW LINE

A year after opening its \$31 million manufacturing facility, Yamaha Golf Car (YGC) is set to introduce a new lineup of utility vehicles June 7. In a move to bring



A spy photo of Yamaha Golf Car's new utility vehicle

a consistent look across all Continued on page 19

## The First Tee shows major gains in '02

By DEREK RICE

ST. AUGUSTINE, Fla. — In its fifth annual review, distributed in late April, The First Tee reported revenue of more than \$6.8 million in 2002.

The unaudited review reports that 52 percent of the organization's revenue came from oversight organizations, 42 percent from fundraising and 6 percent from sponsorship. After factoring in expenditures, the organization ended up with a cash surplus of nearly \$400,000, bringing its total cash on hand to nearly \$6.7 million.

The numbers seem to support what The First Tee

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## Utility vehicle choices abound

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Yamaha product lines, the front end of the new vehicles sport an ATV-like flair.

"We are trying to match the family resemblance of Yamaha products, yet keep the identity of the utility vehicle," said product development manager Joel Cheek. "The same people that style our motorcycles and ATVs style golf cars and utility vehicles."

Behind the new look, the vehicle will feature two different suspensions, increased traction and ground clearance, heavy-duty bumpers and improved ergonomics and corrosion resistance.

According to Cheek, YGC's new factory played a large role in the development of the vehicle.

"Before the new factory the G21 was largely hand-assembled," he said. "With the new factory we can build down the line, which gives us flexibility and cuts production costs. The system enables us to build more customized vehicles. The first factory was one size fits all."

### E-Z-GO, JACOBSEN REVAMP LINES

Both E-Z-GO and Jacobsen are on the cusp of releasing new utility vehicles as well. On the E-Z-GO side they will be called the MPT 800, 1000 and 1200 (see GCN, Feb. 2003). On the Jacobsen side, they will be called the Hauler 800, 1000 and 1200. The 800 series will come in both electric (36V) and gas versions (9-hp), the 1000 has a 48V motor, and an 11-hp engine powers the 1200. The 1000 and 1200 models will have a polyethylene bed with inserts for tie downs and racks.

Jacobsen will also offer the Hauler 4800 with a 16-hp engine. "The 4800 has a stronger chassis, a locking rear differential, bucket seats, full suspension and high ground clearance," said Jacobsen

product manager Larry Jones.

The new vehicles will be introduced sometime this summer.

### GATOR SET FOR REDESIGN

John Deere's current Gator utility vehicle line was introduced in 1992 and is about to see its first major facelift, according to David Thorne, group brand marketing manager for utility vehicles.

"We would like to refresh the

expect more and more from the machine," he said. "The typical customer buys them and then finds more uses for them. The more experience the customer gets with the category, the more they look for attachments and things to help them work more effectively."

### KUBOTA TO ENTER THE FRAY

Kubota Tractor Corp. will enter the growing market segment this fall with its first utility vehicle.

"We will release the product at

our dealer meeting in October," said Kubota spokesperson Pat Carroll. "It will have a dump bed and will be powered by a diesel engine because that is what we do best."

Carroll said the vehicle will be geared to both the golf

and commercial markets.

### TORO TO ROLL OUT E-WORKMAN

With electric utility vehicles making up an increasing portion of the marketplace, Toro will be adding a mid-duty E-Workman powered by a 48V system early next year.

"I think there is a trend to electric vehicles," said Neil Borenstein, senior marketing manager. "It is our first electric utility vehicle. One of the customer demands is for quiet operation so they don't have to stop for play. The other issue is emissions. We work hard to make sure our products fit our customer's needs, so we are always in touch with customers to make sure we develop the correct products."

### CLUB CAR EXTENDS THE 272

One of this spring's new offerings is Club Car's Carryall 272XL, which offers an extended six-foot cargo bed.

"This car builds off the success of the Carryall 472 which had seating capacity for four," said Ben McElmurray, regional sales manager for Club Car. "Customers liked that vehicle but wanted one with two-passenger capacity and a six-foot bed."

The 272 XL is powered by a 400 cc, 13-hp Kawasaki engine and can carry 1,300 pounds. It also offers higher ground clear-

manager Brett Linden. "Our accessories fit on it as well, so it is a good part of our product mix."

The GT642 is powered by a 20-hp Honda engine, offers four-wheel-drive, and can haul 1,400 pounds. The GT422 is a two-wheel-drive vehicle powered by an 18-hp Honda engine.

### POLARIS FILLS OUT LINE

Polaris entered the utility vehicle market with a big splash last

year with two high-powered models. Polaris rounded out the model line this year with the introduction of the UTV 1500 2x4 that

is equipped with an 18-hp engine and has a 1,250-pound payload capacity.

Polaris' Tony Wixio feels the 2x4 will be more applicable for golf course use.

"This fills in the low end of the line and takes the price leader point out to golf courses," said Wixio. "It is an economic 2x4 suited toward a golf course application."

Utility vehicles are a hot product category in the golf market as of late. New entrants and new products continue to abound and rumors of new players, such as Honda, entering the market are plentiful. With competition among manufacturers at an all time high, one thing is for sure: superintendents have plenty of utility vehicles to choose from. ■



Lesco's new Ground Tamer GT642 rolled out this spring



Jacobsen's new Hauler 800 is due out later this summer.

## Laskowski to lead Lastec

Continued from previous page

supporting it."

Laskowski also plans to push zero-turn mowers (ZTRs) in the golf market.

"Golf doesn't go with ZTRs under the false pretense that they are just yard equipment," he said. "But if we can prove to them they can cut twice as fast and give them better looking turf, I believe we will get that business. Articulation combined with the maneuverability of a ZTR creates another niche."

Lastec already markets the 3377, 3682 and 3696 ZTRs in addition to its original line of out front and pull-behind articulating decks. Laskowski said the company is working on a 72-inch articulating ZTR and a 10-foot wide articulating ZTR to round out the lineup. ■

## Lesco's 1Q golf sales drop

Continued from previous page

But the Northeast will come back as it gets warmer."

DiMino said the company is not counting on sales growth in golf in 2003. Expected growth in golf is projected to be less than 2 percent.

The mixed news is on the whole good for Lesco, which sees its lowest sales volume in the first quarter and has historically generated net losses. The company's net loss was \$5.7 million, as compared to the 2002 net loss of \$13.7 million.

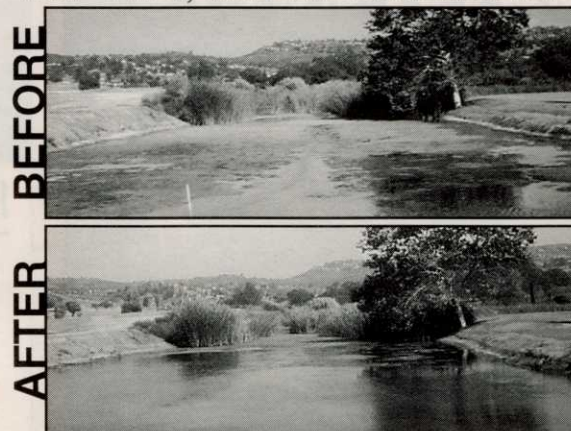
"The first quarter represents 18 percent of total volume from a selling perspective," said DiMino. ■

— Andrew Overbeck

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