Beer & Scribbles From Orlando '02

BY PAT JONES

realistic and call it a 10 percent to 15 percent drop. But at a time when most trade shows nationwide are down 20 percent or more, it's another sign that golf is healthier than expected.

Hammer(ed) — I was privileged to join Florida's Mike "The Hammer" Hamilton and a group of other distinguished — but occasionally grumpy — GCSAA online forum users for golf early in the week. What was remarkable about this — besides the fact that my cart partner, Max Bowden, can drink more beer than any human and still appear sober — was that the Doctor of Hammerology actually said something nice about GCSAA. I can't remember exactly what he said (mostly because Bowden kept restocking the cooler), but maybe he's a kinder, gentler Hammer when he isn't in front of the keyboard.

Bonus Booths — I had less time to wander around the show floor than ever before, but I did see some cool new booths that emphasized fun over sales pressure. Most noteworthy were UHS, with a bank of free video games; PBI Gordon, with a NASCAR simulator; and Bayer, with Golden Tee golf games and an appearance by hot Tour player Chris DiMarco.

Last, But Not Least — The word that GCSAA's Steve Mona collapsed and had to be resuscitated by EMTs and rushed to an Orlando hospital sent shivers through the event. Fortunately, he quickly recovered from what the association said was an "easily treatable" neuro-cardiac syndrome. A few words to this man we apparently almost lost: You're the hardest worker I've ever met (which may have led to this problem). You're honest, candid, kind and visionary. You have a great family. You're respected in both the golf community and around Lawrence, Kan. We can't afford to lose someone like you, Steve, so relax and stick around for a while.

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