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GOLF COURSE NEWS

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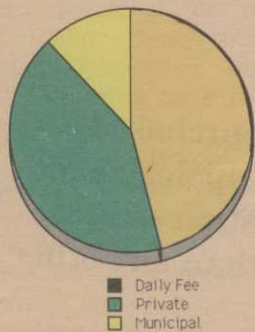
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Ransomes expands umbrella

Cushman purchase creates megaforce in industry

BY MARK LESLIE

Ransomes PLC of the United Kingdom has continued its American buying spree that finds it boasting a product line covering the gamut of turfgrass care from mowing to renovation.

Ransomes' purchase of Cushman in Lincoln, Neb., from Outboard Marine Corp. for \$150 million in late September included Cushman subsidiaries Ryan in Lincoln and Brouwer Turf Equipment in Keswick, Ontario, Can-

ada.

"I'm excited about working with Stuart Rafos (Cushman president) and the rest of the management team at Cushman," said Ransomes America President Helmut Adam. "Its product line complements the Ransomes line of commercial turf equipment extremely well."

Indeed, both companies feel the partnership makes a perfect mix and will help Cushman greatly increase its annual domestic and international sales

in the near future.

"I expect our international business — outside North America — will double because of Ransomes' strong distribution network internationally," said Cushman Market Director Clarke H. Staples. "Certainly we will also increase sales in North America at the present rate, about 15 percent a year."

Staples said Cushman has doubled its sales over the last four years,

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Accolades open ASU course

The latest Pete Dye designed golf course, the Karsten Golf Course at Arizona State University, was dedicated Sept. 15 as the man for whom it was named celebrated his 78th birthday.

"If someone had told me 10 years ago or 20 years ago that something like this would happen, I never would have believed them. All I can say is that it's been a real pleasure," Karsten Solheim, president of Karsten Manufacturing Corp., maker of Ping golf clubs, said after a standing ovation by the several hundred people who

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Photo courtesy of Evans/Artigue

ASU's Karsten course challenges golfers with water on four holes.

Europeans warned about design

BY MARK LESLIE

American golf course architect J. Michael Poellot told an international audience at Golf Course Europe '89 that more championship courses need to be built the world over but those courses should be designed to accommodate every level of player.

Declaring that golf course architects "lost sight of the strategic element" of golf with the advent of televised tournaments in the 1950s, Poellot said it is "quite possible" to build a high-caliber course for everyone.

Poellot, president of his own design firm headquartered in Saratoga, Calif., and designer of more than 200 courses

Architects
have 'lost
sight of
the
strategic
element.'
— Poellot



J. Michael Poellot

around the world, said, "Given an adequate budget and the technical capability, any site can be turned into a world-class golf course."

He told the group at the first day of the three-day conference and exposition in Wiesbaden, West Germany: "We believe the golf course architect must set up an environment

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Professors report breakthrough

BY MARK LESLIE

Two Ohio State University professors are optimistic that research on three projects will result in safer and more effective ways to control insects in turf.

Entomologist Dr. Harry Niemczyk and agricultural engineer Dr. Erdal Ozkan have made modifications to:

- Rain Saver Jr., made by Clearwater Industries in Nez Perce, Idaho, so that the machine can inject liquid chemicals and biological agents into the ground rather than spread them on top.

- The machine so that it will insert granular fertilizer or insecticides into

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Research

Continued from page 1

the ground below the surface.

• A product made by Cross Equipment Co. of Albany, Ga., that hopefully can be developed to inject liquid insecticide into the ground under extremely high pressure without making a mechanical opening in the ground.

A successful implement would bring fourfold results — making it safer for people getting in contact with the turf by injecting chemicals below the surface; killing the pests more effectively; using less chemicals and therefore saving money; and saving money and water because the groundskeeper would not have to water the turf to leach the pesticides into the soil.

"Basically, we're trying to eliminate possibilities of humans and pets getting in contact with chemicals," Ozkan said.

Niemczyk added that besides providing the extra safety of not leaving a residue on the surface, the three pieces of equipment will help control insects that live below the surface.



Research looks good for Rain Saver Jr.

Insects such as white grubs live 1 inch below the surface where thatch and grass meet the soil.

Grubs eat the roots of grass and thatch. Niemczyk adds that skunks and raccoons also often tear up turf looking for these grubs.

Ozkan said in September that research on the Rain Saver Jr. has met with the most success.

"It leaves very little residue on the surface, is more compact than the high-pressure injection unit, and, compared to the conventional system (of insecticide use), has had equal or better grub control,"

Ozkan said.

"Our goal is to get better results at the recommended insecticide rates," Ozkan said. "We want to be able to use less insecticide because we are targeting the exact place where grubs live."

The professors say that when conventional pest-control methods are used, some chemicals bind to thatch or grass before they reach the insects. This means extra chemicals must be used.

Niemczyk cites research showing that less than 5 percent of the pesticides applied to the surface

ever reach the insect zone. He says recommended rates for pesticides are usually set higher than actually needed where the insects live.

Rain Saver Jr. operates by a set of discs that opens a series of narrow slits in the turf. The discs are followed another set of discs that cut into the turf at an angle, meeting 1 1/2 inches below the surface. A nozzle injects a solid stream of insecticide into the slits.

Ozkan says the slits in the turf are barely noticeable.

The machine can also apply fertilizers, growth regulators, fungicides, biological controls and some pre-emergence herbicides.

The injection method makes the whole environment safer, Ozkan says.

Dry chemicals are usually less hazardous to the environment because, if spilled they're easier to clean up than liquid chemicals, Ozkan says. Also, problems associated with disposing of liquid chemical containers could be reduced if dry chemicals are used

with the injection machine.

Research on the liquid projects is in its second season while the granular-injection project is in its first year.

Ozkan said the plots and counted crops in the dry system research will be evaluated in November.

Meanwhile, he said Rain Saver Jr., though "marketable," needs a little more modification, and the high-pressure injection unit "has potential," although last year's tests showed the equipment was "leaving too much (chemicals) on the surface" in turfgrass areas because it couldn't penetrate the blades of grass.

Ozkan said for the Rain Saver Jr. to be more effective, needs to be modified so that the discs that cut into the turf are independently suspended.

The machine now has a fixed axle. But, he said, with the modification, "if you have uneven ground it will still give you uniform coverage, not leaving any area untreated."

Golf Course Europe

Continued from page 1

where every level of player can choose the amount of risk they want to take; the risk must be balanced with an appropriate reward so that every hole becomes a strategic decision for each golfer as to how they want to play.

"A well-designed golf course rewards the thinking player... Such an approach to design returns the element of finesse to the game so that finesse can equal, or better, the element of strength or power."

Poellot decried the effects of televised golf tournaments: "Courses were designed to defeat the professional player. Courses were lengthened for difficulty and power became the most predominant aspect of the game. You had to hit it long and you had to hit it straight, and that was it."

"To this was added new elements from the 'penal' design philosophy that gave us railroad-tie embankments, island greens, 200-meter-long 'waste bunkers' and 10-meter-deep sand bunkers for errant approach shots," he added. "Golf became a heroic struggle for even the professional golfer, and a near impossibility for the average player."

Poellot recommended that architects worldwide return to the centuries-old principle of "strategic design" in meeting world-class standards, building that strategy into the golf course.

He said the worldwide golf boom has affected course design by raising the expectations and standards of the golfers themselves.

Asking why these standards are so important and how they affect new or existing courses, Poellot said, "The reason starts with the current worldwide boom of golf enthusiasm. It's happening in the United States, it's happening in Japan and Southeast Asia, and it certainly is now happening in Europe."

"This boom requires the rapid construction of new courses to accommodate the explosive growth of new players coming into the marketplace."

Poellot said more golfers are traveling all over the world and playing different courses, and thus have a more sophisticated knowledge about golf facilities and higher levels of expectations.

"This means your golf facility is not going to be judged just against those in your local neighborhood, region or even in your country. It will be measured on the basis of the highest standards in the world," he said. "Every golf course is now in the worldwide market whether or not it wants to be."

Poellot pointed to the golfing evolution in Japan, where they have been importing American know-how to build championship-type courses.

By recognizing in the planning process that his course will be judged on a worldwide basis, Poellot said, a developer "can create a golf facility that will be competitive with not only what's present in today's golf market, but by the world-class standards that will be demanded for years to come."

"If you remember that the quality put in up front will pay off for years, and design the course accordingly,

you can keep pace with worldwide standards. Yes, you can remodel, but it's difficult and costly. You're far better off to look ahead and determine what your competition is going to be for the future before you decide how your course will be designed today," he said.

Poellot said that for a developer to make his golf facility competitive in the international marketplace, he should get an architect involved early in the planning stages; decide the target golfers the facility will reach and what type course is best suited for them; decide the benefits and drawbacks of the site and how the budget affects the site's potential; and develop a route plan that works best for the site.

Discussing the need to not build a course too difficult for a facility's prospective golfers, Poellot said, "Sometimes it's best to plan multiple courses of varying degrees of difficulty, if your site and your budget will allow. However, it's also quite possible to accommodate different levels of a market into a single golf course."

"It may require a little more land and cost a little more to construct, but a good golf course architect can incorporate varying strategies into the course so that players of all levels of skill can enjoy a game of golf."

A number of Americans lectured at the conference or displayed their equipment at the exposition, showing the global nature and interest of the industry. The event was organized by Expoconsult of Maarssen, The Netherlands.

Ransomes

Continued from page 1

from \$50 million a year to \$100 million — "a little by acquisition and a lot by new sales programs, products, et cetera."

Cushman Advertising Manager Scott Stuckey said, "The advantage (of the purchase) to Cushman is that Ransomes is closer to our core of business than OMC. Ransomes' strength is its worldwide distribution network. We have some strength outside the U.S. but Ransomes' is much more mature than ours. They've been at it for 10-15 years."

"The bottom line," Stuckey said, "is the Ransomes-Cushman partnership ... constitutes the largest turf maintenance company in the world. And what Ransomes brings in the mowing industry and what Cushman brings in equipment that cares for turf after it is mowed — together we have an outstanding full-line array of products and distributors to distribute our products wherever turf is being maintained."

He said Cushman's foreign sales has increased dramatically in the last two years, especially with the Turf-Truckster, which now is being offered with diesel.

"Diesel is almost mandatory in Europe, so we expect those sales to increase a lot," he said. "We are also increasing our product line, our engine offerings, and the golf market boom in the world (will affect us)."

Stuckey said, "Everyone's looking at it as a good business move and

partnership... We're all very excited by it."

OMC decided to sell Cushman because it thought "its best interests were energized in the recreational boating industry and marine products and that is where they want to put their money," Stuckey said.

"Cushman has been doing well and could command a good price. Cushman has been very successful the last few years, golf is booming and we have maintained our name during that boom. OMC decided it was best to cash in."

Cushman, Ryan and Brouwer are just the latest acquisitions in a two-year buying binge in North America by Ransomes.

Ransomes PLC, headquartered in Ipswich, England, now owns Steiner Turf Equipment of Orville, Ohio, which it bought in March 1988; the product line of Salsco, which manufactures turf-renovation equipment, purchased in August; Colorado Outdoor Power Equipment of Denver; and Turf Equipment Northwest of Redmond, Wash. It also recently bought Westwood, a major manufacturer of garden tractors in the United Kingdom.

Ransomes' Adam said Cushman will operate as it has. "It is a well-run company with a good name. We are not going to change something that runs as well as Cushman," he said.

A Ransomes spokesman said Cushman's operations will be "status quo in the United Kingdom."

Continued on page 25

Automated tee-time system marketed by Xeta Corp.

Course employees will save time and golfers won't have to dial the same number a thousand times each week to get starting times with the new automated tee time system designed by Xeta Corp. of Tulsa.

American Golf Corp. of Santa Monica, Calif., is among the first to sign a contract with Xeta Corp. of Tulsa, to provide automated tee time reservations to six American Golf-operated courses in the Houston area, including Bear Creek Golf World, Lake Houston, World Houston and

Kingwood Cove.

Xeta Corp. is a pioneer in the automation of tee-time reservations. The process is relatively simple to run and golfers may telephone for tee times 24 hours a day, seven days a week by calling 713-777-1100 from any touch-tone telephone. Golfers can also cancel or confirm reservations and obtain course information and directions through the system.

Reservations may be made three days in advance but American Golf Club members may make reservations seven days in advance.

The service is free for weekdays but a 50-cent-per-player charge is added to green fees on weekends and holidays.

Ransomes

'At this point it's too early to tell where Salsco versus Ryan and Cushman products will affect everyone.'

— Clarke Staples

Continued from page 24
edStates."

The changes will come in the projected major expansion into the European market, she said.

But Cushman's Staples said duplication exists between the Ryan and Salsco product lines. "At this point it's too early to tell where Salsco versus Ryan and Cushman products will affect everyone."

Staples said Ransomes bought the Salsco line in case it couldn't negotiate the Cushman purchase.

There is "not a lot of duplication" in the two companies' product lines, so none of their products will be discontinued, one official said.

Cushman has already broken ground on a plant that will double capacity of the Edgewater, Fla., facility.

Stuckey added that Cushman bought manufacturing space in Lincoln, Neb., and land next to its present plant.

"The intent of these two purchases is to increase our capabilities. How those resources are going to be used will depend on the demand on our new relationship with Ransomes," he said.

Asked if management changes are forthcoming, Staples said, "We're a \$100-million company; Ransomes is in the \$150-million range. I don't think they're overloaded with (management) people. When you take on a company this size you need all the talented people you can get — at least at first — and that gives people a couple of years to prove their worth."

Concerning a possible merging of departments between the two companies, Stuckey said, "Not at this juncture. It's pretty much business as usual, but as we move along we will look at how (to change things) from a marketing standpoint, see how we can get the job done best."

He said, "We have a dealer organization we feel is one of the best in the U.S. The plan is to maintain that distribution and work with dealers on what we have developed..."

"This offers Cushman the opportunity to operate at the same modus as under OMC."

When OMC announced earlier this year that it wanted to sell the Cushman group, several potential buyers came forward.

Reportedly, chief players in the talks were Toro, Ransomes, Textron and Club Car.

The negotiations reportedly narrowed down to Toro and Ransomes before the British firm won the bidding sweepstakes.

Staples said that if Toro had bought Cushman, changes in operations would have happened "overnight."

EQUIPMENT NEWS

RedMax wins industry award for innovation

The Innovative Products Award at the 1989 International Lawn, Garden and Power Equipment Expo in Louisville, Ky., was presented to the RedMax Reciprocator.

The award was based on design, safety and innovation, with the judges examining RedMax's configuration, researching its specifications and testing it in the field.

RedMax President Hiroo Taguchi and Senior Vice President John Kelly accepted

the award for the product, which uses two reciprocating blades, each containing 20 teeth, and cuts through heavy weeds and brush, can be submerged to trim under water, and stops immediately when the engine is switched off. The blades eliminate kickback and the danger of debris becoming projectiles.

It was chosen from thousands of products exhibited by 550 companies.

If These Nationals Climbed Hills any Better They'd Have Four Legs, Two Horns & Live in the Rockies!



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