

Briefs

University courses among best in U.S.

By Peter Blais

MADISON, Wis. — Last month's opening of University Ridge brought to 40 the number of university-owned-and-operated golf courses in the United States.

Developed as a top-notch resort course, the Robert Trent Jones Jr.-designed facility is located on 225 acres of rolling hills, meadows and woodlands at the University of Wisconsin. The University of Wisconsin Foundation picked up the entire \$5.5-million tab from private donations.

"It's a very good course. The front nine is pretty much out in the open and the back nine wanders through the woods. I expect it will host the NCAA national championship some day," said Jones, designer of Poppy Hills Golf Club in Monterey, Calif., site of last month's NCAA national tournament.

"They built University Ridge with the idea of its becoming *the* course in Wisconsin," said National Golf Foundation Publications Editor Earl Collings. "It should make a name for itself."

Many schools have "name" courses. Yale and Stanford universities and the University of New Mexico had courses rated in *Golf Digest's* Top 100 until "The Great Purge of 1977," as architecture editor Ron Whitten characterizes the three's fall from grace that year.



Karsten Golf Course at Arizona State Univ. is one of 40 university owned and operated courses in the U.S.

"They had all fallen into disrepair," remembered Whitten.

Still, they are excellent courses, added Whitten, as are Eisenhower Golf Course at the U.S. Air Force Academy, Seven Oaks Golf Course at Colgate University and Karsten

Golf Course at Arizona State University.

Just a notch below them, Whitten said, are courses at the University of Illinois, University of Missouri, Ohio State University, University of Michigan, Iowa State University

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Golf ticket taps corporate sports entertainment budget

By Peter Blais

MERRIMACK, N.H. — A New Hampshire company is marketing a ticket that corporations can distribute to clients who could then exchange them for a free round of golf at courses nationwide.

Corporate Sports Incentives is selling the Universal Golf Ticket to national corporations in the hope they will give them to their best customers just as they distribute baseball, basketball, football and hockey tickets.

CSI contends the golf ticket is more valuable than a sports event pass because the golf ticket can be used anytime at many locations, as opposed to the sports ticket that can be used only at a certain date and place. The golf ticket resembles a credit card and can be embossed with the giver's company logo to help the client remember where he got it.

"For the first time, the golf industry can obtain its fair share of corporate funds allocated to entertainment budgets," said company founder Jonathan Adams.

CSI's goal is to sign up 3,000 courses within the next two years. Fifty, mostly in the Northeast, were on board in early June.

"Our major effort right now is to contact and sign up more courses," Adams said.

It costs courses nothing to join and the tickets are not discounted. A course will be reimbursed within 10 days at 100 percent of its published price when tickets are presented for a round of golf.

The program is patterned after CSI's Universal Ski Ticket. Corporations buy the ski ticket for \$42 apiece. It can be exchanged for a free lift ticket at 240 of the country's 300 major ski resorts. Pepsi, Coca-Cola, Hires, Seagrams, General Foods, Nestles', Carnation and Campbell Soups are among the companies that have distributed Universal Ski Tickets to their favored clients over the past five years.

The Universal Golf Ticket works somewhat differently. The price of the \$42 ski ticket was

determined by the lift ticket rate at the most expensive of CSI's participating ski resorts.

With greens fees varying from \$5 to almost \$200 in the United States, a different method was needed. Corporations buy the Universal Golf Ticket for \$32 apiece. Adams anticipates one ticket will be good for a round of golf at 80 percent of the courses joining the program. But some courses require two, three or more tickets, depending on their greens fees.

For example, one ticket is good for 18 holes at Hyannis Golf Club in Massachusetts. Two tickets are needed for 18 holes and a cart at Copper Mountain Resort in Colorado. Three tickets fetch 18 holes and a cart at the Balsams Grand Hotel Resort in New Hampshire.

"If we ever sign on Pebble Beach, it might take something like six tickets," Adams said.

While CSI expects most of the tax-deductible Universal Golf Tickets will be distributed by executives to clients, Adams said they will likely be used as rewards in company sales incentive programs for employees and as gifts for relatives and friends.

"We've sold a lot of ski tickets at Christmastime as stocking stuffers," he said.

CSI has already sold its first load of golf tickets to a corporate customer. Adams expects sales to accelerate, especially as more courses sign up for the program.

More courses will join the program as it gains credibility, he said. Ski areas with golf courses, because of their familiarity with the Universal Ski Ticket, have been among the first to enlist for the golf program, Adams added.

"My only question as a golf course manager would be 'How do I know if I'll be paid if I accept this ticket?' We've got a solid, five-year history with the ski areas. In fact, the ski areas have a greater exposure than golf courses. Killington (Vt.) runs through something like 16,000 skiers a day. A golf course, at most, is only going to have some-

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Royal Golf & Tennis develops innovative training program

HILTON HEAD ISLAND, S.C. — Some innovative career training programs developed by Royal Golf & Tennis, Ltd., in conjunction with local educational institutions, may prove to be trend-setters in the resort operations industry.

Continuing its active role in training and development of its employees, Royal Golf & Tennis has added to its usual in-house seminars by collaborating with Hilton Head-area educators to create a series of training programs designed specifically for the resort industry. Other resort operators are even taking advantage of the training curriculum.

The first step was the development of a two-part Grounds Maintenance Program. Working with the Technical College of the Lowcountry and the Beaufort-Jasper Career Education Center, Royal Golf & Tennis developed the curriculum for Turf Management, designed for golf maintenance senior or supervisory staff; and Horticulture, designed for general landscape staff.

"We first looked at golf maintenance training because it's such a big part of what we do," said Margaret Vaughan, director of human resources for Royal Golf & Tennis, which manages and operates all resort amenities, including 81 holes of golf and 36 tennis courts, at Hilton Head's Port Royal and Shipyard Plantations.

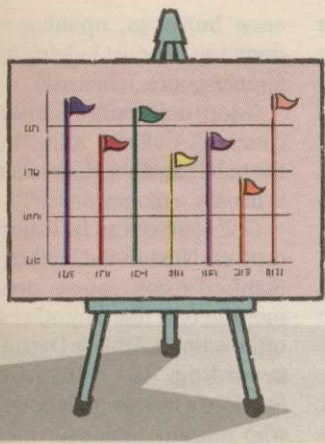
"Our goal is to help people develop themselves so that they — and the operation — are the best they can be."

Jack Kolb, instructor for the Turf Management course, said, "The main thrust of the course is to give students the 'whys' — not to tell them how to cut the greens. We also hit safety real hard."

During 15 two-hour sessions, the Turf Management course covers tractor safety, equipment and tool safety, human relations skills, plant pest control, plant nutrients and turf management techniques.

Royal Golf & Tennis pays the tuition fees for

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MICH. OWNERS FORM CHAPTER

Michigan golf course owners have formed a chapter of the National Golf Course Owners Association.

President Jim Scott, owner and operator of four courses including Gull Lake View Golf Club and Resort in Augusta, said owners "will now have a better opportunity to share information and work toward solving mutual problems. We also have plans to promote the game of golf in our state. As a state chapter we are looking forward to a close relationship with the national association."

Vice president is Bill Howard of Sasketoon Golf Club in Alto, and secretary/treasurer is John Dodge of Timber Ridge Golf Club in East Lansing.

Mike Hughes, executive director of the NGCOA, said creating organizations in each state is important so owners can easily work together on mutually important issues.

"With the legislative and regulatory pressures coming to bear on the golf business, everyone should realize the need to act on both the national and state level," Hughes said.

Hughes said the Charleston, S.C.-based NGCOA has nearly tripled the number of member courses in the last eight months and now includes 900.

VA. COMPANY BUYS THE RESERVE

PORT ST. LUCIE, Fla. — Owners of The Reserve Golf & Tennis Club have signed a letter of intent to sell the facilities to a Virginia-based company. The new owners plan to build a second 18-hole championship course.

Michael Dillman, executive vice president of The Reserve Estates Development, said only the golf and tennis club portion of the 2,690-acre residential development will be sold to The Golf Group, of Leesburg, Va.

Currently, club membership is restricted to residents of The Reserve. Dillman said that policy may change. Still being negotiated, he said, is whether one of the Reserve Golf Courses will become semi-private.

Day-to-day management will be turned over to Landmark Club Management Co., Landmark manages The Palm Beach Polo Club, among others.

CLUB ARTWORK AVAILABLE

BRIDGEPORT, Pa. — Country Club Editions is making available limited edition commissioned art exclusively to golf and country clubs.

Clubs pick a scene, supply photographs or a video, and Country Club Editions will have paintings done by award-winning artists.

Country Club Editions was formed by Bill Vare, a golf enthusiast and former tournament chairman for Manufacturer's Country Club in suburban Philadelphia.

Number of university golf courses growing slowly

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and Oregon State University.

Some of the most famous golf course architects have designed university courses including Charles Blair Macdonald at Yale; William P. Bell at Stanford; Robert Trent Jones Sr. at the U.S. Air Force Academy; Pete Dye at Arizona State University; Perry Maxwell at the University of Oklahoma; Donald Ross at the University of Florida; and Alister Mackenzie at the University of Michigan.

Many university courses, in-

cluding Yale (1926) and Stanford (1930) were built during or on the fringe of the Roaring '20s. The next major construction boom occurred with the aid of federal money in the 1960s when courses at the universities of New Mexico, Georgia and Missouri came on line.

But with federal monies drying up, "no more than a handful of new university courses" have been built since 1975, according to Whitten. University Ridge, Karsten and Trysting Tree at Oregon State University in Corvallis are among the

few.

"You really need a big private contributor to build a university project today," Whitten said.

At the University of Wisconsin, local businessman Karl Dietze and a second anonymous donor were the major contributors, kicking in roughly \$1 million each, Director of Golf David Steffan said. At Arizona State, Ping President Karsten Solheim provided much of the funding.

Schools have become involved in golf courses for many reasons,

Collings said. Often it's to provide a place for the golf team to play. The faculty and alumni may enjoy the game and decide a course would be a nice thing to build or acquire.

Sometimes it's an added amenity to attract new students and alumni back to the campus. It can provide a field laboratory for agronomy and business management students. Or it's simply a way to improve the university for students and the community.

Some schools are also using their courses to attract summer confer-

ence business, opening empty dorms as low-cost lodging for conference-goers, Jones said.

"More universities want to build courses," Collings said. "It gives the public another place to play and is usually a money maker."

Golf courses can be major profit centers. Next to the football team, Stanford's golf course produced more income than any other aspect of the school's Athletic Department, according to Andy Geiger, Stanford's former athletic director, who recently took over the same post at the University of Maryland.

Keeping a university course among the top 100 in the nation is difficult, considering the number of rounds and lack of resources at most school facilities, Geiger said. Stanford installed an \$800,000 irrigation system, helping it climb back into California Top 20 courses during Geiger's tenure at the Palo Alto school. Geiger said he and others also encouraged Stanford to use some of its 8,800 acres to expand the course, an idea still under consideration.

Maryland is also in desperate need of renovations, said Geiger, who plans to seek university and private funds to improve the facility.

Some question whether building and renovating golf courses is consistent with a school's educational mission. Believing university resources should be used elsewhere, opponents of a proposed golf course at Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville helped bring the project to a halt.

"It's been on hold since last fall," said SIUE Assistant Athletic Director Brad Hewitt. "The state's financial problems were largely responsible. The protests have died down and the opponents have moved on to other causes for the most part. Even local competitors (other golf courses) that were against it are starting to get tired of the complaints about lack of starting times at their courses and see the need for another course."

Asked if building and renovating golf courses were incompatible with a university's mission, Geiger replied, "I don't see a well-run operation as being inconsistent, especially if it pays or helps ease taxes, does not use academic funds to make repairs and generates revenue that is re-invested in the course."

Golf ticket

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thing like 240 rounds a day," Adams said.

As for Universal, it makes money in three ways. First, many courses charge less than \$32, or some multiple thereof, and Universal pockets the difference. Second, Universal gets its money up front from ticket buyers and gets to use those funds until the ticket is redeemed. Third, not every ticket sold is used (although purchasers of a certain number of tickets can return the unused ones for credit toward next season's purchase) and that "breakage" helps Universal.



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